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Grant Writing Tips

When you submit an electronic application, you are competing with other worthy applicants for funding. Whether you are new to grant writing or a seasoned veteran, please consider following a few basic grantwriting strategies that will help strengthen your application.

1. Review the guidelines and application instructions carefully. Make sure you understand the grant program's criteria so you can tailor your application to align with the IAC's priorities. Be sure to confirm your eligibility, and make sure your organization can fulfill the responsibilities of being a grantee.
2. Submit your application before the deadline. Applications received after the deadline cannot be accepted, so submit well in advance of the deadline to avoid last minute technical issues.
3. Call us if you have any problems or questions. We welcome your questions and are happy to help you find a solution to a problem with the online grant system. If you have questions about the application, contact the grant program's manager whose information is listed in the program guidelines. IAC staff can even review draft applications to help you make sure you're headed in the right direction. For technology questions or troubleshooting, call or email Deanna Poelsma, the Grants, Research & Information Technology Manager, at (317) 232-1278 or dpoelsma@iac.in.gov.
4. Prepare for a great first impression. Your grant application is first contact panelists will have with your organization. Allow yourself enough time to write, edit and assemble the necessary materials for your grant application. Before developing the first draft of the application, gather the appropriate information: Evaluation criteria Organizational calendar/timeline (administrative and arts program activities, events, etc.) Budget information Marketing, promotional, and artistic documentation Strategic planning documents (if applicable) Last year's application and panel review notes (if applicable)
5. Be concise. Longer does not necessarily mean stronger. Concentrate on the basics – who, what, when, where, why, and how. If you are having trouble staying within the character limit, you are not being concise enough.

6. Be clear about your individual or organization's goals. Use specific, measurable goals. Action phrases like "participants will demonstrate" or "they will create" are a great way to start a statement about your goals or objectives.
7. Illustrate how your programs or operations are effective and demonstrate community engagement. You are making a case for why your project or organization's operations are important. Think about how you are measuring your success and working toward fulfilling your mission and serving a community need. In other words, tell us more than "200 people participated". Tell us how you engaged with them, what they gained from the program, and how you evaluated the process.
8. Double check your budget. Make sure the narrative and budget match. The IAC requires your totals for income and expenses to match, so this is very important to a successful application.
9. Polish your prose. Double check for grammatical and typographical errors. These small details may negatively impact panelists' perception of your organization. We strongly recommend having someone else read your application prior to submission.