GRANT WRITING FOR ARTISTS

● ● ●

1

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Having a plan as to how you want your artistic life, career, and objectives to play out enables you to clarify exactly what it will take to materialize your vision.

- If you need time to work
- If you need cash for living expenses while you work
- You need studio space
- You need to travel to complete a project

This will help you to identify what kind of grant you should apply for.

2

READ THE INSTRUCTIONS THOROUGHLY

Not only is it critical to understand and complete all forms according to instructions, but just as necessary is knowing how that application will be evaluated once the person, persons, or panel who reviews it has it in their hands.

Whenever possible-- in addition to reading instructions and before filling anything out-- speak with someone at the organization and ask a few basic questions about their decision-making process.

Find out how they'll be looking at your art. Test-view your images in advance so you can make sure they look their best OR if not possible then just follow the directions perfectly

In general, the more application specifics you can learn about ahead of time, the better you'll be able to customize presentation.

3

#1 BEGIN WITH A "NEED STATEMENT"

Begin with the need statement, a description of the artistic need that your project is addressing. (Some funders refer to the need statement as the "problem" statement.)

Support your need statement with persuasive evidence such as slides, photographs, news reports, etc.

Use language and a format that are easy to read and understand, and be sure your need statement is consistent with your ability to respond to it responsibly.

4

#2 DEVELOP THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal defines the ultimate result of what is being proposed,

The objectives are the measurable steps you expect to accomplish in the process of reaching your goal. Simply put, a goal is the end result that the objectives help you to reach.

The goal is to solve your "problem" or your "need", the objective explains how you do this.

"This is what I need this is how I would like to get it"

5

One way to write a good objective is to start your objective statement with wordings that suggest a purpose, such as "to reduce," "to increase," "to decrease," and "to expand." Here's an example: "The objective of my photographic exhibition is to address the issue of child labor in South Asia."

Objectives must be clear and concise. Your goals and objectives should tie directly to the need statement.

6

#3 METHODOLOGY SECTION

Then comes the methodology section, which refers to the methods you will use to reach your objectives. A method is a detailed description of the activities or strategies to be implemented in order to achieve the end specified in the objectives. This is the section in which you explain what methods you will be using for the artistic project and why you have selected those specific methods.

How does your method support your idea? How will it help you reach your goal?

7

Specify the activities that need to be done to meet the objective.

- State the starting and ending dates of the project. (what?)
- Name the person(s) responsible for completing each activity.
- Spell out the criteria for selecting participants.
- Tell why this particular method was chosen.(why?)
- Show how the methods are congruent with resources requested in the budget. (How?)
- Specify the population that will be served and, if applicable, how they will be chosen. (Outcome?

8

#4 BUDGET SECTION

Details the funds you will need to carry out the artistic project. This isn't the

place to surprise the reviewer with any unrelated expenses.

9

Every item that's written in the budget must tie into the rest of the proposal. Funders want to know exactly where their dollars will be going.

The budget section can be itemized using topics such as art tools, framing costs, film rolls, personnel, salary, travel and living expenses.

If partial funding for the project has already been received, the budget section is the place to note it.

10

EVALUATION SECTION

Finally, the evaluation section is where you show how you will measure the degree of success in meeting the objectives in the grant application.

11

The program's objectives and how you (and the grantor and the public) will know if they have been met?

The data that will be collected to evaluate the project?

Who will provide a report of the artistic project?

Closely tied to evaluation is dissemination. Most private foundations want their applicants to share the findings of the project with others. Dissemination refers to the spreading of the information, which can be achieved via a report, video, book, conference, radio program or any combination of these.

- For artists dissemination is especially important. If you are making art, who is going to see this work? And what are they getting out of seeing this work?
- Also, it is good to think in terms of "what will the institution be getting out of choosing you?"

12

Be aware that you can sometimes apply for a grant or other form of assistance based only on an idea.

But be prepared to show your credentials and back your ideas up with experience.

13

A FEW DON'TS:

* "I need money" or "I need studio space" or "I want to go somewhere exotic" may be your motivation but they are not good enough reasons to apply for assistance.
* Don't write one paragraph when the application gives you two pages or a maximum of 800 words for your answer. Skimping on information makes you look lazy.
* Avoid discussing or showing random work samples that don't relate to your project or proposal.
* Avoid vague descriptions of what you need to accomplish your goals. For example, "I need $10,000 because that's how much I think this will cost" is not adequate.
* Do not submit template applications. Reviewers can tell when you're sending out the same answers or packet of information over and over again. Always customize to the specifics of the organization.
* Don't list people as references unless they know you're listing them.
* Don't add superfluous materials that are outside the parameters of the instructions. Include only what they ask for. Reviewers are overwhelmed enough already without having to sift through irrelevancies

14

A FEW DO'S

- Be clear and concise in all your answers. Avoid difficult, dense or arcane convoluted artspeak. The quicker and cleaner you get your points across, the greater your chances for success. Reviewers do not like getting bogged down in jargon.
- Make sure whatever you're applying for is a fit with what you already do, and that you have a good well-thought-out justification for applying. Reviewers can tell when you don't know what you're talking about-.
- References are important-- particularly ones you can rely on, particularly people who have some sort of profile in the art community and who are solidly behind you and your work. Make sure you talk to whomever you list as references before you list them though to be sure they genuinely support you.

15

BUDGET

Artist Fees
Travel Expenses
Equipment rental, books, supplies
Other Expense

16

17