



ARTS SERVICES INITIATIVE OF WESTERN NEW YORK INC

Grant Writing Tips

The most important part of grant writing is to fully understand your project and what you are requesting money for. You can't write a clear proposal if you are not sure what you are asking for and why. Give yourself plenty of time to write your proposal. Successful grants cannot be written in a day (or even a week).

- ✚ **Make sure you can answer: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How?**
- ✚ Write a thorough, but clear and concise narrative. Assume that not a single panelist is familiar with you, your organization, your program, or your field. Would your mother, grandfather, spouse, etc. who is not in your field understand your request?
- ✚ This is a formal, professional document – do not make jokes or use sarcasm or slang.
- ✚ Bullet points mixed with paragraphs makes your narrative easier to read. Format your narrative in an exciting way (underline, headers, bullet points, etc.) that utilizes white space, but don't overdo. That can also be difficult to read.
- ✚ Write out acronyms. Do not assume the panelists will know what they stand for.
- ✚ DO NOT give one sentence responses unless asked for only one sentence. If the question is asked, assume it is a vital part of the decision making process.
- ✚ Make statements like “we will” rather than “we plan” or “we would like to” (confidence is key!):
 - “When” not “if”
 - “Will” not “would/could”
- ✚ Demonstrate your ability and capacity to complete the program or project.
- ✚ If you mention a partner or collaborating organization in your narrative, be sure to discuss this project and proposal with them first. A letter of commitment from the partner or collaborating organization would go a long way in building credibility and capacity.
- ✚ Have clearly defined goals and outcomes and realistic metrics for measuring success.
- ✚ Demonstrate your passion. This is why you do what you do!
- ✚ Make sure any supplemental materials (work samples, bios/CV's/resumes, etc.) are relevant to the project you are requesting funding for and that they are best the representation of your work.
- ✚ Your budget should add up correctly. Always double check your math. Budgets should include:
 - What personnel or consultants will be required
 - What are the direct and indirect expenses (supplies, rental space, insurance, postage/marketing, etc.)
 - What are your other income sources – list pending and confirmed
 - In-kind counts! But only for professional services you would normally have to pay for.
- ✚ Gather your attachments and supplemental materials well in advance; it is not possible to pull everything together in the hours before the deadline.
- ✚ PROOFREAD! And then ask someone else to proofread your work.
- ✚ Be open and communicate! If you're not sure, ask.