How to write and prepare a grant application

Practical advice for completing your grant application

Welcome to our guide designed to provide universal advice about preparing, writing and submitting an effective grant application.

There are also a number of existing grant resources and support documents available to you to help with questions about the content of your application and program design, including:

- Program Information and Grant Guidelines
- FAQs
- Resources
- Digital Factsheet
- Industry Briefing video
- Program Design resources
  - Program Design 101
  - Community Consultation
  - Risk Factors and Protective Factors
  - Risk Assessment and Risk Management
  - Activity Design
  - Cultural Safety
  - Accessibility
  - Program Referrals
  - Program Evaluation
  - Program Reporting

Our aim is to make the grant application process as straightforward as possible for you. By providing clear explanations and helpful tips, we want to empower you to submit a strong and compelling application to help address the needs of your community.

> **A reminder that to maintain probity and support procedural fairness for all applicants, the department cannot discuss the suitability of or give feedback or advice on individual proposals.**

Preparing your application

Before you begin writing your grant application, there are a few essential steps to take to set yourself up for success. The groundwork you lay before you start writing your application will help you craft a compelling, well-aligned proposal that resonates with your chosen funding body.

Select the right grant for your proposal → Understand the grant → Understand your proposal

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These key points guide you through selecting the right grant for your proposal, understanding the grant's goals and criteria, and thoroughly knowing your own proposal and its potential impact. Investing time in these preparatory stages will strengthen your application and ensure it aligns with the goals and priorities of the grant.

Once you have clarity about these points, you will be able to clearly explain how your proposal aligns with the grants.

Select the right grant for your proposal

| Select the right grant for your proposal | Understand the grant | Understand your proposal |
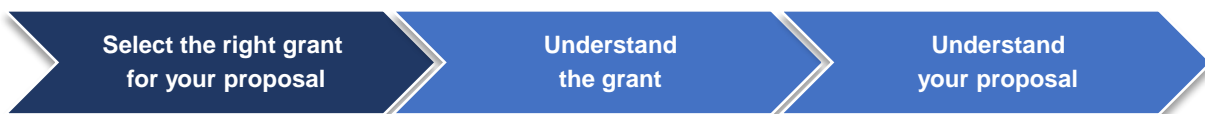
Embarking on the journey of applying for a grant can be both exciting and daunting. It's natural to feel an urgency to secure funding, but before you invest time into crafting an application, first, confirm that you are pursuing the right grant for your proposal, as misalignment can lead to wasted effort and missed opportunities.

Your first expenditure of energy is to confirm you are applying for the right grant in the first place. This requires a thorough review of available guidelines and information to gain a clear understanding of the grant's:

- Aims
- Priorities
- Outcomes
- Criteria

- Objectives
- Cohorts
- Limitations

While it can be tempting to mould your existing program or concept to fit a grant opportunity, resist the urge to force a square peg into a round hole by either leaving your proposal unchanged despite misalignment or adjusting it unnaturally. Instead, ensure your proposal is a genuine fit for the funding criteria, or you can create a new proposal that fits the grant.

It is not uncommon to see compelling applications for great programs that simply (and sadly) do not fit the grant's specific focus. Taking the time to find the right match will ensure your first step is in the right direction.

Understand the grant

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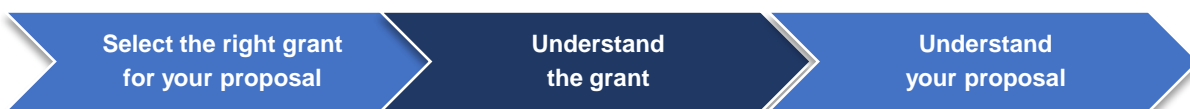
Grants may become available at any given time and grant rounds may close quickly. It's essential that you are fully prepared and organised so you can apply for opportunities as soon as they become available.

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Successful grant applications rely on several important elements. You must:

- familiarise yourself with the grant funding guidelines, process requirements and application form
- read any accompanying documents (e.g. Program Information and Guidelines, FAQs, resource page, and factsheets.)
- check the eligibility criteria
- meet the grant eligibility criteria
- have a thorough understanding of the grant requirements, terms and conditions, project approval timelines, and the supporting documents required
- allow enough time to prepare, write and review your grant application well ahead of the closing date

How will your application be assessed?

Knowing how your application will be assessed is crucial in crafting a strong, targeted proposal that resonates with assessors. By understanding the assessment process, you can structure your application to directly address each stage of the review, from establishing eligibility to demonstrating alignment with local priorities and needs. This approach allows you to effectively communicate how your project meets the grant criteria and delivers value for money, improving the strength of your application.

The Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support applications go through a 3-stage assessment process:

1. **Eligibility.** Has the applicant provided all the legal documentation needed to evidence they are an eligible organisation?
2. **Regional assessment.** Does the application address local priorities and needs and has the application demonstrated an alignment to the funding criteria?
3. **Central moderation.** Do all the prioritised applications fit within the budget available?

Eligible applications that progress to an Assessment Panel will go through a merit-based assessment process and review of each application against the below criteria:

- **Enhance community safety and reduce youth crime**
  - How strongly the proposed project addresses the risks and needs of young people, supports re-engagement with education, training, or employment, and demonstrates local partnerships and evidence of consultation with relevant stakeholders including First Nations stakeholders.

- **Benefits and delivery of the project**
  - The application is inclusive, clearly outlines how the project is to be delivered and provides evidence of how the program will achieve its intended outcomes.

- **Value for money/cost effectiveness**
  - The extent to which the project has been costed realistically (including justification of budget items), provides value for money (as demonstrated in the project budget) and any in-kind contributions of project partners.

Understand your proposal

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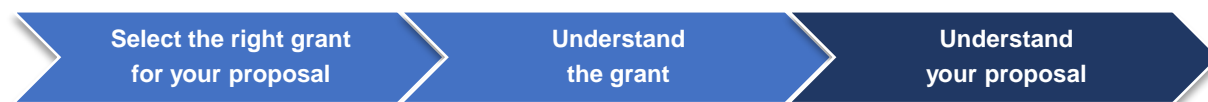
Before you start your grant application, consider how your proposal will translate into action and ensure you understand the fundamentals of what it is you're delivering.

Take the time to plan your response and determine a clear understanding of what it is, what it's trying to achieve and how that aligns with the funding criteria, and exactly how you will do that. This clarity is needed to so you can clearly communicate that alignment as part of your application.

Our Program Design resources offer information and guides to help you not only design an appropriate programmatic response, but also to review and refine your existing programs. This includes using a Program Logic Model to help you identify gaps and opportunities for strengthening your program and enhancing its impact.

Grant assessment panels should be able to read your application and get a very clear understanding of the basic headlines of **what, why, how, who** and **where**.

You can ensure these points are covered by:

- **Thorough planning.** Take the time to plan and define your idea's objectives, strategies, and unique features
  - How your idea aligns with the objectives of the grant program
  - How does it address community need?

- **Providing clarity.** You need to be able to clearly and succinctly answer key questions in your application:
  - What is your program about?
  - Where will it be delivered?
  - Who are your participants and how will you be receiving referrals?
  - Can you provide relevant and current evidence of community support of the program through Letters of Support, survey results, community meeting minutes etc?
  - If you have established partnerships, give specific, relevant names of organisations/services/businesses
  - How have you explicitly considered cultural safety?
  - How are you appropriate to deliver your intended program?
  - How is your organisation positioned to appropriately deliver your intended program?
  - How are you competitive in your sector?

- **Considering additional factors.** Think about budgeting, evaluation, sustainability, necessary certification and training, and risk management.

By incorporating these tips and understanding the basics of your program, you'll be better equipped to create a compelling grant application.

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