



## FY20 GRANT WRITING TIPS



Read the grant guidelines thoroughly and follow the directions. Answer every required question, and submit all required support material. Make sure that your organization/project fits within funding guidelines. Review panel comments from the previous year (if applicable), and use them to strengthen your current proposal. Call the NAC if you have questions or to discuss project eligibility.

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### NARRATIVE

The narrative section of an application is your opportunity to present your project in a way that panelists will find compelling and persuasive.

1. Write your answers first using a word processing application such as Microsoft Word, Pages, or Google Docs, in order to spell-check, save, and back-up your work. Composing your responses in a separate document also allows applicants to monitor the word count for each response. The online system does not display the number of words in each response, and will only alert the applicant if the maximum word count has been exceeded. Note, formatted text (bold, italics, underline) is not accepted in the online application.
2. A good narrative is like a good story and flows and builds from one section to the next. The application should clearly make a case for your grant request. Tell your story! State who you are and what you want. Be proud. Be passionate. Be honest.
3. Remember that panelists are reading many applications. Assist them and yourself by keeping your proposal focused on the main points. Be specific and do not make the reader hunt for information.
4. Provide specifics about your programming/project. Even if you have not confirmed certain artists, listing artists you are proposing and attempting to contract with is better than being vague and saying “some artists.”
5. Present evidence/data that supports your statements. For example, if you claim that your audience increased last year, tell us how much and how you evaluated this change.
6. Include demographics and statistics to clarify those in your community that you actually serve, or plan to include.
7. Don't be repetitive. Use each question as an opportunity to flesh out more of your story.
8. Don't use jargon or words that only people in a specialized field will understand. If you use your own “lingo” then define it clearly (“at-risk youth” or “community outreach”, there terms can mean different things to different people).



## NARRATIVE (continued)

9. Don't exaggerate or make statements that can't be proven/backed up (i.e. "everyone in the city loves our programs").
  10. Write in an active voice and maintain a positive tone, even when addressing issues of financial, managerial or programmatic problems. Funders hedge their bets by backing proposals that describe worthwhile programs that will meet identified needs and match the criteria set forth by the grant-maker.
  11. Don't assume your reviewers know anything about you, your proposed program, your partners or your beneficiaries.
  12. Check your spelling and grammar! Proofread, then have someone else proofread.
  13. Before you submit your application, let someone who is completely unfamiliar with your project read and critique the narrative. When they are done, ask them: Did they understand the proposal? What do they remember? Was anything confusing?
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## BUDGET

Consider the budget a restatement of your proposal, but this time using the language of dollars. It is imperative that the budget supports the goals of your narrative.

1. Estimate your projected expenses/income/in-kind (obtaining cost estimates as necessary).
  2. Projected expenses MUST match projected income (in the Final Report, you will enter in your actuals which do not need to match).
  3. Make sure you are demonstrating the grant's required match (cash and/or in-kind)
  4. Support from the community (both in audience and donations) is essential. Keep track of and report in-kind donations (volunteer hours, donated goods/facility space, etc.). We recommend that you request a statement of donation or invoice with "in-kind" noted on it from any entity that provides you with in-kind goods and services to keep for your records.
  5. Check that you are not requesting funds for non-allowable expenses (see grant guidelines for general and grant-specific non-allowable costs)
  6. Check to be sure that the budget as a whole makes sense and conveys the right message to the grant panelists. Review the budget through the eyes of the individuals who will be reading your proposal.
    - Where would more budget explanation be helpful?
    - Can you accomplish the intended proposal with the proposed budget?
    - Is the budget consistent with the proposal's program plan and methods?
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## SUPPORT MATERIALS

The quality of your Support Material is integral to your grant application. Read the guidelines carefully and submit exactly what Support Materials have been requested.

1. Support materials should be recent, relevant, and of good quality.
2. Less can be more. Don't be afraid to edit clips to show only the best portions. Quality is more important than quantity when it comes to support material. Your work samples should be of the highest quality you can attain.
3. Support Materials should enhance assertions in your narrative. If you write that you are collaborating with the school district, enclose a letter from the Superintendent for verification.
4. Your Support Materials should be clearly labeled and adhere to the stated time limits (audio/visual samples).

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## QUESTIONS:

**Nevada Arts Council – Grant Management Team**

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