Grant Writing TIP SHEET: Preparation

Top 10 things you can do to ensure a SUCCESSFUL START:

1. **Start Early & Plan Ahead**: the most successful grant writers are always preparing for their next grant. They know their ‘audience’, they are ready when the announcement is made, they have their grants pre-reviewed, and they have a flexible plan for the ups and downs of getting grants.

2. **Get to know your audience**: the funding agency & review committee; know the language they speak, their mandate, the kind of research they fund, who the reviewers are (anticipate how they will react to your work).

3. **Ask for advice**: peers, mentors, ORS, the funding agency can all provide you with tips on developing a successful application.

4. **Create a writing template**: use evaluation criteria and funding program guidelines to create headers/sub-headings, create a logical outline; Ask colleagues and ORS to share copies of previously successful grants with you to use as a model.

5. **Make time to write daily**: secure at least 30 minutes a day for writing (this will need to increase as you get closer to a funding application deadline).

6. **Draft your summary page first**: This is one of the most important pages of your application – it deserves a lot of attention! It should guide the development of your application and will be revised and refined throughout the process.

7. **Review & be reviewed**: reviewing other grants will help your own grant writing; having your own grant reviewed will help your chances of success.

8. **Publish and present your work**: build a reputation in your field, show that you have the capacity to disseminate your work; stay up-to-date with changes in your field (literature); attend relevant conferences & network.

9. **Get the tedious, but time consuming work started first**: keep your CV up-to-date, request letters of support well in advance, set up your reference database, get cost estimates etc.

10. **Create a timeline**: Sketch out a workplan and stick to it. Putting together a grant application always takes longer than you think it will. Don’t wait until the last minute – you won’t have time.
Grant Writing TIP SHEET: The Application

Top 10 things you can do to complete a STELLAR APPLICATION:

1. **Follow the rules!:** read and follow instructions carefully and exactly; if you cannot meet a requirement, talk with the agency and get a written exception if possible (don’t think that they won’t notice missing information). Any questions? Call ORS and/or funding agency.

2. **Address all Evaluation Criteria:** be sure that you’ve addressed each criteria clearly and explicitly (e.g. use these as headings/sub-headings).

3. **Understand the reviewer’s perspective:** they may not have in-depth knowledge of your research area; they will have limited time to review your application; they will be trying to weed the ‘winners’ from the rest.

4. **Help your reviewer help you:** Do everything you can to help reviewers: understand your research goal/plan, why it is important, and why it is reasonable and feasible. Engage your reader, make your proposal “a pleasure to read”. You need a champion at the review table.

5. **Looks matter:** present an attractive package (use headings, white space, diagrams/flow charts) and organize your application in a logical manner.

6. **Tell a story:** Write clearly, concisely with a beginning, middle and end; keep your reader in mind at all times; Use examples, metaphor, analogy to make difficult concepts accessible; use an active voice.

7. **Remember, it’s a competition:** distinguish your application from the rest; be persuasive not just descriptive, you need to make an argument/build a case for funding.

8. **Anticipate questions:** anticipate questions that may arise and address these explicitly in your narrative. Be explicit, do not assume that reviewers know what you mean, show them. Address any limitations and provide alternative approaches.

9. **Seek a pre-submission review:** ask someone with your expertise, someone in your field, a colleague in a different field, ORS, a friend/family member. Then, revise, revise, revise to ensure you’ve addressed all concerns raised.

10. **Submit on time:** know internal deadlines (DSS, review, internal cut-off times), as well as funding agency deadline.