



Artist Development Grant – Sample Applications

Attending a conference, seminar, festival, symposium, fair, expo, market, etc.

Eligible expenses (*excerpt from grant guidelines*): Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to: attending a professional conference to build business or artistic skills or knowledge.

An example of a successful application has been provided below, with commentary (*italicized in blue*) describing what worked, and how the artist's answers met the grant criteria.

Project Description: Grants funds will be used to attend the (name of literary conference), for which I've been juried and already accepted (*While it isn't necessary to have been accepted to an activity, it can strengthen a request*).

Narrative Section:

Question: Describe your status as an artist and your current goals.

Response (*Artist gives specific examples that establish their status as an artist. Note that it's the specificity of information, rather than the prestige - or quantity of examples - that strengthens the artist's response to this question*) At this point in my development as an artist, I'm experiencing some excellent omens. That my manuscript, (name of manuscript), was a finalist for the (name of an award) is itself quite an honor, and individual poems from the book have appeared in prestigious journals (names of journals) as well as several of the world's largest newspapers (names of newspapers). Based on the strength of my work, I've received a (name of fellowship and institution), and a coveted (another award and institution).

(*Artist provides background framing their challenges – as they relate to their request*) However, publishing a first book of poetry has never been more competitive. Often, this process involves 5-10 years of entering the various book contests, at \$25-\$35 a pop, until the manuscript finds a home. As a low-income writer from a family where I'm the first to graduate from college, I feel an acute disadvantage in navigating this process. Not only is money too tight to throw away gambling on contest, but I don't have a network of mentors from an elite college or MFA to help me through the revision process.

(*Artist details why the conference is relevant and important to their goals*) I've always looked to peers at moments of uncertainty, and I was inspired when I discovered my friend (name) on the (name of conference) website, lauding it as a crucial step in placing (their) (name of award)-winning manuscript, (name of manuscript) with (name of press). (Name of friend), too, has taken a somewhat non-traditional path into the literary world, and if I were to describe my current artistic/business goals, it would have

the same basic architecture of (their) life as a poet: a first book leading to many other opportunities. In (their) case that meant working with the (name of 2 publishers) (a connection (they) told me (they) made at (name of same conference the artist is requesting funding to attend)).

In my own life, I can't know what the future holds for me, only that I want to work as hard as I can to get there.

Question: Describe your proposed activity and how it will advance your craft or business.

Response: *(Artist provides specific details about how the conference will address their needs/goals, and why these are important to their craft and business)* The (name of conference) is an intensive 3 days of developmental editing from leading poets, publishers, and editors. The faculty is a real dream-team: (Names of faculty members and their respective skills and accomplishments here).

Beforehand, there's a rigorous process of pre-conference assignments, which are then used during the conference itself to help writers make the hard choices in arranging, revising, cutting, or expanding their manuscript, in order to ready it for submission to book contests and open submission periods. For poets trying to place their first book, this process is mind-bogglingly competitive. Often, it involves many years of trial and error, as poets inch towards the final version of their work that's polished enough for judges to select above a thousand others.

The (name of conference), then, occupies an extremely valuable place in the literary ecosystem: a chance for emerging poets to get their work in front of editors and publishers for in-depth review. This opportunity has the potential to save the author many years of frustration (and a small fortune in contest submission fees)—not to mention create the professional connections and camaraderie that comes from getting intimately acquainted with other emerging writers' work.

As far as how publishing with a well-regarded press would advance my craft/business, I think of another friend and peer of mine, (name). Like me, (they were) involved in various small publishing endeavors, until (their) book, (book title) won the (award name), which catapulted (their) work and career to a whole new level. (Their) trajectory as a poet is a true inspiration, especially as a fellow born-and-raised Vermonter from the younger generation.

Question: Why is this particular activity important to achieving your goals?

Response: *(Artist provides additional context detailing their challenges, and explains how the proposed activity is an important opportunity that is critical to meeting their goals)* I'm a kid from rural (name of county). My writing has taken me all around the world and back to Vermont—and yet, despite all my magazine publications and occasional prizes, my career and development as a poet will always have a ceiling until I place my debut collection. The last few years have taught me that publishing a debut with a well-regarded press is much like a key that will unlock some very specific doors: teaching, of course, but there's a myriad of other opportunities in the literary world as well, fellowships, invitations to panel discussions, and so on.

Apart from these professional reasons, though, I think my book (title of book) has something important to say as a work of art—it happens to be an explicitly political work, addressing the very tumult our nation is going through. Getting it published isn't just about being invited to be on panels or landing a teaching gig—I sincerely believe that poets are, as Percy Shelley claimed, "the unacknowledged legislators of the world." More than a pretty phrase, I think this quote refers to the power of poetry to affect change on a large scale, even if that affect is indirect.

Key Individual Section:

key individual #1 (*Artist provides details about instructor, and explains how the individual's skillset relates to their goals*) (Name of instructor and bio provided) (Name of instructor) is a beloved poet and publisher, who runs one of my favorite presses. (Name of press) is high on my list of "dream publishers", but whether or not (they're) interested in my work, I know (their) advice would be invaluable about where I might place it. And we've already met ... so working together at (name of proposed conference) would be an ideal way of reconnecting.

key individuals #2 - #5 (*Artist provides four more faculty names and bios, along with explanations about why they are important to helping them meet their goals*)

Budget Section: (*Balanced budget provided: total expenses = total income*)

Anticipated Expenses

Workshop fees - \$1,000

Expense Total \$1,000

Anticipated Income

Grant request - \$500

Applicant cash contribution - \$300

Other contributions - \$200

Income Total \$1,000

Budget Narrative Section:

Question: Explain how you arrived at each of the numbers in your budget.

Response: (*Artist demonstrates commitment to the proposed activity by reducing costs where possible, and investing their own resources as able*) The full cost of the (name of conference) is \$1000; however, after I was accepted I wrote to (name of conference staff) and explained that I was a low-income, first-gen writer seeking outside sources of funding, and (they were) extremely kind to offer me the alumni rate of \$800, based on the strength of my work and experience. While the remaining \$300 would still be a burden, it's one that I'm confident I can take on.

One bright spot among all the devastation of the Covid-19 epidemic is that events such as this are currently offered online, through Zoom. While Zoom certainly isn't an ideal format, in a sense it makes events much more accessible financially, since attendees won't have to pay for housing, meals, and travel expenses (not to mention, take off time from work, paying for childcare, etc.). To be honest, if it wasn't for this, I wouldn't even have bothered applying to (name of conference), since I would never have been able to pay the full cost, even with Development Grant support from the Arts Council.

Question: The grant will pay for which specific expense(s) in the project budget?

Response: (*All expenses covered by grant are eligible for funding. Eligible expenses may be found in the grant guidelines*) 100% of the grant will pay for the cost of attending the (name of conference).

If received, how might this funding impact your proposal? (This is your opportunity to explain the importance of funding support.)

Response: If received, this funding will have an enormous impact on my proposal: it will mean the difference between attending a professional conference using resources I can comfortably spend, or going into debt to do so (or not going at all).

Support Materials Section: *(Artist provides evidence of costs, workshop description and artistic practice)*

- Artists' CV uploaded
- Copy of award letter and confirmation of discount applied to conference fees
- URL for conference website is listed with description of conference, faculty bios and costs
- Artists' website URL provided