



Completing a Strong Grant Proposal

Writing a grant proposal differs from filling out an application or submitting a portfolio. Strong proposals demonstrate high-quality projects and the ability to successfully carry out the plans for the project. Keep these tips in mind:

- **Read, research, and plan.** Read the guidelines thoroughly before you begin to write your application. Is your project eligible for the program? What are the criteria? How can you tailor your project to fit those criteria? Are there any priorities that the grant is specifically focusing on? How will you answer questions about [accessibility](#)?
- **Talk to the Vermont Arts Council staff.** We welcome conversations in advance of your application. Our role is to help you prepare the strongest application possible. Ask for sample applications. We are here to support your process.
- **Be realistic.** Can you commit to successfully executing your project? If funded, can you meet all of the [requirements of a grantee](#)?
- **Start the application well before the deadline.** Give yourself plenty of time. Leave room to ask questions, or resolve technical issues. Be sure you can successfully log in to the online application (new users will need to create a profile). [Contact Meredith Bell](#) if you need technical help.
- **Draft, draft, draft.** Preview the application and draft your answers. It is often good practice to write your answers in a separate document. Then you can copy and paste your answers from there into the online form.
- **Save your work often.** Not all of our online tools perform auto-save. Save your work before moving onto a new section.
- **Don't assume anything.** Write your application for the person who doesn't know you or your organization. Provide enough detail and present all the necessary information up front. Support materials are meant to reinforce what you've already written. Tailor your answers to the criteria and answer the questions directly. When you need to demonstrate a goal, be specific and concrete. When you need to show how your project falls within program priorities, be clear.
- **Follow the instructions.** Click on the help text for valuable information. Proofread your work. Submit pertinent work samples. Only ask for amounts that fall within the range of the program (don't ask for \$2,500 if the maximum grant amount is \$1,000 for example).
- **Be clear and direct.** Have someone else read your proposal to see if it communicates what you intend. Watch for unnecessary information or wordy, jargon-filled language. Are there areas that seem confusing, vague, or even overly detailed?
- **Check your math.** Does the budget balance? Do total expenses equal total income? If a match is required, have you demonstrated that in the anticipated income? Have you included only income, in-kind, and expenses related to the project or are there unnecessary amounts in your budget? Provide a concise, reasonable, and balanced budget.
- **Is your application complete?** Did you answer all of the questions? Are all of the support materials uploaded? Do your work samples adhere to the requirements?
- **Keep trying.** The grant process is competitive and has limited funds. If you don't receive a grant, don't get discouraged or take it personally. We can provide feedback on how to improve your proposal for future applications.