

Opportunities to develop your practice always require financial underpinning. If you're looking to develop new work, travel for research or develop a new skill, a grant can be a timely investment that propels your practice and allows you to maximise an opportunity. But grant opportunities are becoming increasingly competitive, so this toolkit is here to help you put your best application forward.



Masamichi Yoshikawa. Photograph Grant Hancock.

Before you start:

Read through the grant application handbook or guidelines. Make sure you meet the eligibility criteria and check that your project dates fit with the application and notification times.

Make sure that your project suits the objectives of the grant. If you need to make significant changes to your project to suit the grant, then you may need to consider other grant opportunities.

If there is a specific application form, read through it in its entirety and list any questions you have.

Contact the relevant grant or project officer to discuss your project and ask any questions. It is almost always recommended that you speak to the funding body before submitting an application.

Do your research. Look at other projects or artists that have been funded by this grant and consider what may have made them successful.

Writing the application

It's time to find that winning combination - a succinct, articulate and punchy description of your project. Be aware of any word or character limits on the application form and don't exceed them.

Write the application as though the person who will read it knows nothing about your project or your capacity to deliver the project. Never assume the organisation knows what you're trying to achieve.

Prepare your application in a word or text document, do not write directly in the online form. You will almost certainly need to make edits before it is ready to submit so have your application as polished as possible before going to the online form.

Here are some key areas to address:

The project. What does the project/opportunity involve? What outcomes will it produce? Who will it impact or benefit? Keep all information accurate, clear and succinct. Don't make any assumptions - write the

application as though the person who will read it knows nothing about your project or your capacity to deliver the project.

The need. Clearly state why you are the best person for this grant and why now is the best time for you to be selected. Speak to the need for this opportunity and the impact it will have at this point in your practice.

The key players. Aside from you, who are the other key participants in this opportunity? Be sure to include the credentials of the other artist(s) if you are applying for funds to work with other creatives. If you are applying for funding toward a residency, explain the merits of the institution and why it's the best fit for your practice. Be clear about why these participants/partners are critical to your practice/project.

Define the process. Explain how the project or work will be implemented, defining the key milestones in its delivery. See also the timeline section of this toolkit.



Photograph David Campbell

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Images

Include the best images you have of your work. It is worth investing in professional photography that will best showcase your work and communicate your practice. Images are often the first way that people connect with your work and it is critical to make a strong, professional impression.

When an assessment panel is looking at many applications, it is often strong images that will make an application stand out.

Timeline

You may be asked to submit a timeline with your application. This highlights the milestones/important dates of your project in one succinct list or table.

Letters of support

If you're working with other artists, venues or organisations ask them for a letter of support (on letterhead if they have it). Evidence of the support of people you want to work with will strengthen your application.

Referees

You may be asked to provide referees on your application. Select people who have a good understanding of your practice and can speak positively about your professional capacity to deliver your project.

Artist statement

See our toolkit for advice on writing your artist statement.

<https://guildhouse.org.au/artist-statements/>

CV

See our toolkit for advice on writing your CV.

<https://guildhouse.org.au/writing-cv/>

Budget

See our toolkit for advice on preparing a budget.

<https://guildhouse.org.au/budgets/>

BEFORE SENDING

Ask others to read your application and seek honest feedback.

Check that you have included everything required and that all of your support material is clearly labelled as part of your application. Use an application checklist if it's provided.

IF YOU'RE UNSUCCESSFUL

Seek feedback from the funding body. Grants are usually very competitive and demand usually well exceeds available funds. By seeking feedback from the project officer you may gain insights that will improve your future applications.



Jess Dare's studio. Photograph Jonathan VDK

