

# Hints + tips

## How to prepare your grant application

The following information is designed to assist you with your grant application. If you have any queries that are not covered in this document, please contact us at [grants@hw.qld.gov.au](mailto:grants@hw.qld.gov.au)

## Writing a grant application

**Read** the guidelines, application questions and hints provided within the application form carefully.

**Check eligibility.** Applications that do not meet all eligibility criteria do not get shortlisted. Eligibility is the first hurdle to cross in the application process. Clear this hurdle early by reading the guidelines carefully to identify what and who is eligible and ineligible. If you are unsure after reviewing the guidelines, contact the Health and Wellbeing Qld (HWQld) Grants Team for assistance.

**Allow enough time – start early and plan your project.** The longer you have to prepare for, and write your grant application, the better your submission will be. Look at the *SmartyGrants* application forms to see what information is required and give yourself a realistic timeframe for each requirement. Start gathering your information and assets (e.g. evidence of partner support, quotes, etc) ahead of time.

**Don't try to fit a square peg into a round hole.** We try to make our objectives and guidelines as clear as possible, so please read the funding objectives carefully and refer to our [Strategic Plan 2020–2024](#) to ensure your project is in with a chance. Ensure you're a great fit for the funding opportunity. Back your claims and develop a compelling case as to why you require funding. This will help you look at the bigger picture and this information will be useful during the application process.

**Prepare a good budget.** The budget is an opportunity to demonstrate that your proposed initiative is well-planned, well-conceived, cost-effective and feasible. Consider where funding will best be spent and how you can best leverage your funding. A well-developed budget will highlight how achievable your goal and objectives are and where the funding income will be applied. Include quotes where required and if requested, and list all sources of income, with matching income/expenditure totals. Ensure your budget is detailed and that everything outlined will be used in your project. We want to see the funds benefitting the community, wherever possible. Do your research in terms of how much things will cost rather than guess. Your request for funding should match the scale of the project. For more information, please refer to the section *Preparing a project budget* in this document.

**Talk to your partners early, rally community and legitimate support.** The more people who know and support your initiative the better. Connect with your community, beneficiaries, potential and existing partners and any other relevant stakeholders early. Ensure your goal aligns and fits with the goal of your partner organisation and the needs of the community and beneficiaries. The value of your application will increase significantly with the inclusion of community support, statistics and evidence, and with the right partnerships. Think about teaming up with established organisations who may support your application and who share the same values and mission.

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**Revise, proofread, revise again!** Your goal is to submit a grant application that clearly communicates your project or idea effectively and passionately. The proposal needs to be compelling. Write in specific terms rather than generalisations – especially regarding outcomes. Spelling or grammar errors, waffling answers or vague ideas could hinder your overall application. Get someone who doesn't know what your project is to read your application to ensure it is clear and easily understood. A fresh set of eyes will help you address areas you may have left out or that need clarification. Take on board their feedback and re-write again if necessary. Finally, avoid jargon or overuse of acronyms. Write your acronyms in full the first time you use them.

**Avoid potential complications with the online application process.** *SmartyGrants* allows you to compose your answers directly online and allows you to keep track of your word count. Make sure you **save your online application regularly** when you are completing your application online. You may also wish to compose your answers in a separate Word document then copy and paste your responses to the questions into the online application form.

**Sign off your application correctly.** Identify early on who in your organisation has authority to sign off your application. An appropriately authorised person is a person who has an authority to sign an agreement on behalf of the organisation.

**Please contact the HWQld Grants Team if you are unsure about anything – don't guess!**

## Top 10 grant writing pitfalls

1. **Guidelines are not carefully read** – increased risk of eligibility not being met or proposal not aligning with objectives of the scheme.
2. **Not using plain English** – message is unclear, too much jargon or too many acronyms are used.
3. **Lack of proofreading.**
4. **Application is prepared at the last minute** – responses to questions in the application form are incomplete or poorly formulated.
5. **Failure to clearly demonstrate** the importance and need of the proposed initiative or research idea.
6. **Proposed initiative is overly ambitious** – aims and objectives do not fit well within the timeframe and available budget, or has unfocused or limited aims, unclear goals and uncertain future directions.
7. **Failure to provide adequate level of detail** on the approach to collecting data, running the activities.
8. **Partnerships are weak** and applicant team is missing critical skills or expertise.
9. **Budget is incorrect** or not reflective of the proposed project.
10. **Attachments have not been provided.**

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### Preparing a project budget

**Read the guidelines carefully to make sure your costs are eligible for funding.**

**Write detailed descriptions of your expenses.** This is your opportunity to show us how well you know your project, your organisation, your sector and work processes. For example, salary costs should include the position title, the position classification (if applicable), the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and duration of the role (e.g. Project Officer, 0.8 FTE, 6 months).

**Carefully outline all items you request funding for separately.** Ensure that the number of line items of your budget match the scale of the project.

**Justify your budget items.** Consider why you are asking for these items and show us you've considered the best way to spend the funding.

**Outline all your income** and carefully consider all in-kind and cash contributions which will help boost the value for money argument offered by your project. Include things such as:

- **Volunteer hours:**
  - calculate volunteer general labour at \$25 per hour
  - calculate volunteer specialist labour at the professional's standard rate (e.g. graphic designer).
- **Donated goods:** calculate the fair market value of each item – what it would cost you to purchase it.
- **Donated services:** calculate the value of time donated by staff for the initiative (*above and beyond their regularly scheduled job*) by dividing their annual salary by 2,080 (the number of hours in a 52-week work year) to obtain the hourly rate, then multiplying by the number of hours of service.
- **Travel:** travel costs associated with the initiative (excluding travel to and from the office for normal work).
- **Cash contributions.**

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## How to prepare your grant application

### Useful definitions

**Applicant:** is the person applying for the grant. This is the person who will be listed in the funding agreement as the lead investigator. This will be the person who will be responsible for the reporting.

**Activities:** are what you will do to achieve the desired objectives and deliver the initiative.

**Assessment criteria:** is what your application will be considered against. Your application must meet all assessment criteria. Each assessment criterion will have a specific weighting which will vary depending on how well your application meets that criterion.

**Evaluation:** is the assessment of how successful the grant initiative was in achieving the initiative's goal, objectives, deliverables, anticipated outputs and outcomes.

**Expression of Interest (EOI):** the purpose of the EOI is to provide the funder with a broad outline of the proposed initiative for which funding is sought. It includes sufficient information to convince the funder that the proposal could be worth funding and also serves the purpose of checking for eligibility. Using an EOI grant application as part of a two-stage grant assessment process reduces the burden on both the applicant and the assessors.

**Funding agreement:** the funding agreement is the legal document the Applicant Organisation needs to sign in order to receive the funding. The funding agreement outlines the terms, conditions and obligations of funding, delivery of activities, accountability for both the funder and grantee and relevant partner organisations (if named in the agreement).

**Goal:** an achievable outcome that is generally broad and longer term than an objective. Objectives are shorter term and will define measurable actions to achieve the overall goal. A goal should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-framed.

**Grant round:** is a funding opportunity that has an opening and closing date, during which time applications can be submitted.

**Initiative:** the set of activities that make up the project/tasks/services.

**In-kind contribution:** refers to any non-financial support provided to a grant project. This could include but is not limited to office space, phone usage, voluntary labour, donated goods, donated services, etc.

**Letter of support:** this is the official letter from partner organisations that will confirm support of partnership on project, and any contributions (cash and/or in-kind) made by the partner organisation.

**Objectives:** are shorter term than goals and define measurable actions that will help work towards achieving the overall goal. Objectives should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-framed.

**Outcomes:** are the impact or changes your initiative is expected to make. Outcomes can happen soon after the activities occur or lead to others down the road (long-term outcomes). Several activities may work together to achieve one outcome, or one activity may lead to several outcomes.

**Outputs:** are the products, goods or services you expect to produce or deliver as part of your initiative, or the number of people you expect to benefit. They represent the concrete results of your activities.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** are the measures that tell you if you are on the way to achieving your objectives.

**Stakeholders:** are the people or community groups who have an interest in the initiative.

**Priority groups:** these are like a target group/beneficiaries. They are the people or community that your grant initiative aims to reach and engage with.

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