

The background of the slide is a spiral-bound notebook with a light-colored, textured cover and a dark brown border. The spiral binding is on the left side.

The Grantwriting Process

Some of the mechanics of preparing a good
grant application

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Who is the public funder?

- A public funder receives its monies from the government. Its priority is the public interest, usually according to its own political mandate. A public funder distributes our tax dollars and is ultimately accountable to the voters.
- Public funders are not corporate funders. They are in the business of grant-making to better society.

What is an arts council?

An Arts Council is what we call an arms-length agency of the government. It receives its funds from the government coffers, and its budgets are Acts of each level of government and approved or authorized by them.

Arts Councils are not interested in return for investment, but in helping artists grow and create challenging, interesting, engaging art that stimulate audiences.

Arts Councils

- ✓ The Toronto Arts Council (TAC) is a municipal agency that receives its funding from the city of Toronto, but makes its decisions independent of City Council.
- ✓ The Ontario Arts Council (OAC) is a provincial agency that receives its funding from the Ministry of Culture.
- ✓ The Canada Council for the Arts is a federal agency that receives its funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage.



Other public funding agencies

Other kinds of public funders are:

- ✓ Ontario Ministry of Culture
- ✓ The Department of Canadian Heritage
- ✓ City of Toronto's Culture Office

These are different from arts councils, with different mandates, but they have similar application processes.

Types of Grants

There are different types of grants:

- Project Grants:
- Operating Grants: annual & multi-year
- Annual Activity Grants (less common)

Generally, individual artists, collectives and organizations or companies are eligible to apply for grants.

You need to do your research before you start writing.

How do I get information?

- Be very clear about what your project is as you begin your research.
- Start with the funder's website to find the guidelines and the application.
- If you are a first-time applicant and don't know who to consult, contact the Information Officer as your first point of entry to the council. The OAC and Canada Council both have Information Officers available to help direct you to the appropriate granting program and staff.

Is my project eligible?

Once directed to the appropriate program, read the guidelines carefully and consider the following:

- ✓ Review the purpose of the program. Does your project make sense in this context?
- ✓ Is it *technically* eligible? Not all projects will be eligible for support. Read the eligibility requirements carefully to be sure that your idea falls clearly under the parameters of the program to which you want to apply.
- ✓ Find out the program deadlines early so you have time to prepare a good application. Consult these regularly to make sure there are no changes.

Should I meet the Program Officer?

Whenever possible, set up a meeting with the Program or Grants Officer in advance to review the program and its requirements, and ask for feedback about your idea.

Go prepared to this meeting:

- ✓ This makes the best use of everyone's time;
- ✓ It demonstrates that you're serious about your project;
- ✓ It shows that you have done your homework and so allows you to put your best foot forward in the eyes of the Officer who administers the program.

How much money do I apply for?

- Most project programs have maximum funding amounts. Look for this in the guidelines.
- One seldom receives the full amount requested due to high demand and limited resources (i.e. \$\$), so it's important to have a clear idea about the potential support available through the program, as you will have to show diversified income sources in your budget.



How long will it be before I hear the results?

This is important for your planning.

No funder will support a project retroactively, and most take a minimum of 3-4 months to assess an application.

Keep this in mind and plan your project far enough in advance to allow time for the review process to take place.

How do I write a grant?

Grantwriting is a skill, and like all skills, it takes practice. The more grant applications you write, the better you get at it.

Review all the requirements of the application so you are fully aware of all the **ingredients** you need to assemble and don't find yourself scrambling at the last minute.

What are “Assessment Criteria”?

- Before you begin to write, you need to review the CRITERIA according to which your application will be assessed. This is essential and should inform your writing. Every funder will clearly state these in the guidelines
- For example, at the OAC the criteria are:
 - ✓ ARTISTIC MERIT;
 - ✓ IMPACT;
 - ✓ VIABILITY.

How should I write?

- Write with the criteria in mind, as these are the items that the jurors score, and it is these scores that will determine whether or not you'll receive funding.**
- Write in your own voice -- directly, honestly and succinctly -- about the work you want to do, or the art you want to create, within the requested page limit.

The applications that jump out to the reader are the ones that are written with sincerity *rather than* those that are written with the intention of wow-ing the reader and/or include what they think the funder/jury wants to hear.

And use the font size that's requested, the proper margins, and be sure to leave some white space on the page...


How do I build a budget?

- You need to create a balanced and realistic budget, where revenues and expenses net out to 0.
- Start with your **Expenses**. How much will it cost to do your project? Include all expenses:
 - ✓ **Artistic**: artists' fees, per diem, travel, accommodation
 - ✓ **Production**: theatre rental, rehearsal space, equipment, technical staff, etc.
 - ✓ **Administrative**: fees, marketing & PR, office rent, supplies
- What **Revenues** can you reasonably anticipate?
 - ✓ **Earned**: box office sales, concessions/merchandise, workshop fees
 - ✓ **Raised**: private donations; proceeds from a fundraising event
 - ✓ **Government**: Grant request and other possible support.
 - ✓ **In-Kind**: e.g. printer donates program printing. *Is it eligible?*



Before I submit, I should...

- Proof the application carefully to ensure you have addressed all the criteria and checked for typos. If you are a first-time applicant, ask the officer if s/he will review a draft.
- Ensure that you've included all the pieces (e.g. resume, artistic statement, project description, budget, etc.) of information required with the application, in the requested number of copies.



What happens to my application after I've submitted it?

- The staff at the funding body will review your application to make sure you have included all the required information.
- They may or may not call you to send something that is missing. **In some organizations, incomplete applications are not considered and you have to resubmit at the next application deadline.**

Who reviews or assesses my application?

- The grants officer will read all the proposals. After s/he reads them, s/he will assemble a jury of your peers to assess them. Generally speaking, there cannot be any conflicts of interest at an assessment meeting, so the officer has to make sure s/he knows who has applied, and then selects the jury based on this knowledge.
- These assessors are sent the material to read in advance of the meeting, and then they convene for as many days as the volume of applications requires.

What is Peer Assessment?

- The jury discusses each application separately. Where applicable, it will review the support material, and then score the applications.
- On the last day of the jury, the scores are shared and the applications are ranked, based on the scores they have been given. At the end of the process, the budget for the program is made known to the jury, and projects are funded sequentially until the money runs out. Sometimes/often, grants are cut back from the requested amount to fund more projects.

If I receive a grant, what do I do?

- Usually, you will **receive your cheque** with your notification letter, so you can start your project right away.
- You will be required to **account for your grant** in a final report that will include a financial and narrative component. You must be sure to use the funds as you said you would, and to use them in full. No surpluses, please!
- You will also have to **acknowledge the funder** by placing their logo in whatever promotional materials you create. Invite the staff to your production.
- You must **submit a final report** in order to close your grant file and apply for future grants. This is very important for keeping you or your collective in good standing

Final notes:

- Ensure you know the submission deadline: can it be postmarked on the deadline or is it DUE on the deadline. Get it in **on time**.
- **Keep a copy** of *everything* you send for your records, in case you are called about something missing from the application.
- **Make sure your budget balances**, and that you keep all calculations for your budget, showing how you came to your figures.
- Where requested, **send the best support material you can, and in the proper format**. This can make or break a jury's assessment of your application.
- **Get feedback**: If you are declined a grant, ask if the officer can advise you how to strengthen your application in the future, and try again!

To summarize...

Write from the heart, get to the point, and put together realistic plans and budgets.

Keep track of the funds you were given and the various iterations of your budgets

Recognize the funding body with its logo, in print, on your website and in your e-distributions.

Send a complete and brief final report to close your grant file properly, so you are eligible to apply for other grants in the future.

Useful websites:

- www.canadacouncil.ca
- www.arts.on.ca (OAC)
- www.torontoartscouncil.org
- www.pch.gc.ca (Canadian Heritage)
- www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/arts (Foreign Affairs)
- www.toronto.ca/culture/
- www.trilliumfoundation.org