

## **Completing applications that get funded: Tips from a fellow grant writer**

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I have been the grants manager for Bridgewater Township since August 1985. Since that time, I have been involved with many grant programs. The following are a few things I have learned that increase the chances of submitting successful grant applications.

Among the most important aspects of filing grant applications is to pay close attention to the instructions included with the application. Among these instructions will be the eligible costs of the grant, the narrative requirements and the delivery and deadline instructions.

Grant applications are usually very specific as to what costs will be funded by the grant and what costs are ineligible for funding. If you are not sure as to whether something is eligible, call the granting agency and ask. Never assume that an item is eligible if it is not clearly stated in the instructions. A quick telephone call can save hours in completing an application for something that is not eligible.

Other details of the application are just as important if the instructions are not followed exactly. The narrative section is often the most time consuming and most difficult to complete. Again, pay close attention to make sure that every item required in the narrative is addressed. It helps if the narrative is formatted to match the instructions. Thus, if the instructions are numbered, then number your narrative in the same manner. If not, then provide your narrative in the same order that it is described in the instructions. This helps both the people reviewing the application and yourself in ensuring that all items have been answered.

Regarding filing requirements, try to deliver or mail the application as early as possible, but at least 24 hours before the due date. Most deadlines are strict. Applications submitted as little as an hour late can be deemed ineligible. Everyone has

unforeseeable circumstances at one time or another. Do not let car problems, a sudden illness or and injury preclude your agency from being eligible for a grant. Also, make sure that the correct number of applications, both originals and copies, are submitted. Often, multiple applications with original signatures are required. It sounds trivial but some programs will deny an applicant for not following these instructions.

Finally, before completing an application, it is useful to call the granting agency to discuss your proposed project. Doing so allows you to ask about past grants that have been awarded under that program, and what made some applications more successful than others. You can also ask for anything in particular that should be included or stressed in your application as it relates to your proposed project. Most granting officials are more than willing to provide their input, which often includes items not specifically mentioned in the instructions. This information will help you in writing a stronger application and make it more likely that your project is funded.