

TIPS FOR WRITING A SUCCESSFUL GC24 GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT GRANT APPLICATION

A grant application is a story that illustrates the who, what, when, where, how and why of your organization. Make sure all the pieces are there to tell a complete and compelling story that reflects the reality of your organization. No organization is perfect. Be transparent in providing a complete picture of how things are going.

Requirements exist for a reason. Bravo receives 99% of its funding from 17 local governments through hotel/motel tax. Bravo must be a good steward of these public funds and gathers application information with this in mind.

Timelines and deadlines are critical. We recommend putting reminders into your calendar now so you have enough time to complete the application by the deadline. Out of fairness to all applicants, late applications cannot be accepted.

Start early. Completing grant applications takes time and typically requires information from a variety of sources. Solid applications rarely get started and completed the day they are due.

Meet with Bravo staff by September 15, 2023 to verify eligibility and discuss ways to strengthen your application. This is required for new applicants. Returning applicants are also encouraged to ask clarifying questions to ensure a strong application is submitted.

Ask for help. Really! We are here to support you. Give staff a call, send an email, or set up an in-person or online meeting so we can continue to build a strong relationship. Take advantage of opportunities to ask staff questions about operating grant application questions. Drop in on Zoom during Open Office Hours on [Tuesday, September 19 from 4pm-5pm](#) or [Monday, September 25 from Noon -1pm](#). To attend, click on one of the above dates and copy and paste into your calendar. Or, [email](#) to request a virtual meeting invite.

Gather the required documents and information. These details are found within the guidelines and again in the application, and preparation is key. Make sure documents are saved in the right file format and that financial information is up to date.

Follow directions and answer the question. Limit a response to the question that was posed. Include extra, relevant information in optional narratives throughout the application or at the end.

Be clear, specific, and compelling. Write simply and keep it to the point to persuade the reviewer that your organization is necessary, unique, sustainable and impactful. Word counts are in place to keep things manageable for the applicant and the reviewer.

Write with a reviewer in mind. Assume the reviewer knows little or nothing about your organization and that the only clues and evidence they have access to are found within the submitted application. Don't use jargon or acronyms unless you explain those unique terms.

Build in time to have someone read and review your application, preferably someone who does not have detailed knowledge of your organization. Seriously consider their feedback and make changes or adjustments as needed. If they flag something, chances are a reviewer will have similar questions or concerns.

Make sure your mission, programming, and budget align. Once your grant application has been drafted, review it as a whole to make sure all the parts and narratives support one another. For example, does your organization's programming align directly with its mission, vision, and values? Does the overall budget support the stated organizational goals and strategies?

Highlight your organization's strengths in addition to your needs. Create an application that demonstrates your organization is worthy of funding. Write from an asset-based perspective that shows your organization can provide solutions, address challenges, affect change, and impact the community. Help reviewers see how Bravo's investment helps your organization overcome barriers to do important work.

Use support materials to illustrate your organization's mission in action. We want to see carefully selected images or videos of vibrant programming and how your organization is interacting with the community. We know not everyone has access to professional photographers so compelling candid shots or videos are welcomed additions. The panel is reviewing highlighted programming and not the caliber of the photography. If you are proud of it, please share it!

Financial data demonstrates sound management. We want to see that you have enough cash and financial resources to offer consistent programming and meet obligations. If things have been bumpy or continue to be, explain why. Honest reflections about where things are and how your organization is reacting are valuable to reviewers.

Budgets should communicate realistic expenses and show that you can leverage other funds to support your mission. Bravo wants to make strong community investments so it's critical to show that funds are used appropriately and that plans are feasible and reasonably aspirational. Bravo expects organizations to pay artists, performers, designers, directors and other creatives when appropriate, and calling this out adds validity to the application.

DEAI Actions are not a trend. Statements ring hollow if there are no actions behind it. We want to know specifics on how your organization is prioritizing and actively working to advance Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion. Doing nothing is not an option.

Understanding your organization's actual and desired audiences is key. Very few organizations can be all things to all people. It is important to know who your organization is really serving and that you are clear on where expansion and wider inclusion can happen.

Optional Narratives are strongly encouraged. Remember a grant application tells the story of your organization. We include these sections because we know there is often more to say than word limits allow. This is an opportunity to tell more of your story so please consider how best to use these spaces. These can be very impactful for panelists.