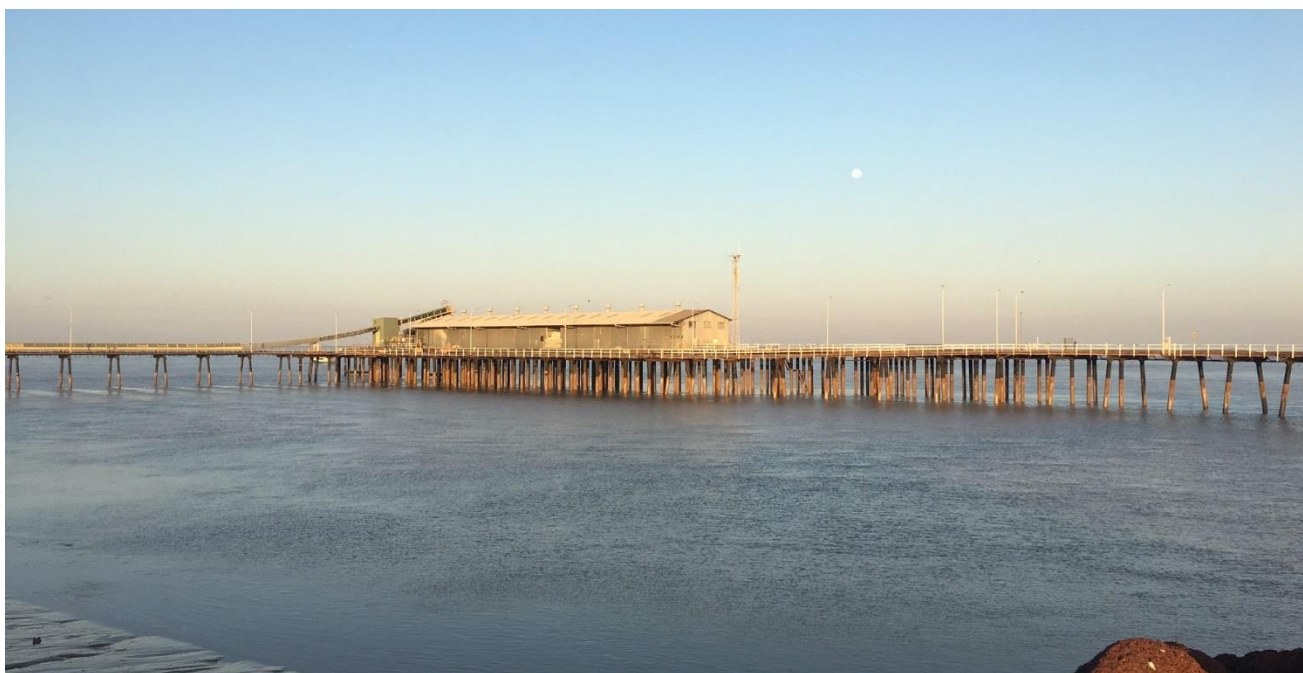# Grant Writing Guide

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA – KIMBERLEY

Creating a strong, confident and vibrant Kimberley.

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Disclaimer - The material published in this guide intended for general information only and is not legal advice or other professional advice. Thanks to RDA Central West and Our Community for use of materials provided in this guide.

About RDA Kimberley

Regional Development Australia Kimberley (RDAK) is part of a national network of 55 RDA committees made up of local leaders who work with all levels of government, business and community groups to support the development of their regions.

RDAK's small staff are led by a committee of local community leaders from right across the Kimberley region. Members are appointed by the Minister for Regional Development and represent varying industry sectors.

RDA Kimberley has an active and facilitative role in the Kimberley and a clear focus on growing a strong and confident regional economy that harness our competitive advantages, seize on economic opportunity and attract investment.

In the grants and funding space we are responsible for;

- Collaborating with relevant stakeholders to identify economic opportunities and leverage private and public sector investment to the regions.

- Connecting regional businesses, councils and industry sectors with international trade partners, financial markets and potential investors.

- Promoting and disseminating information on Australian Government policies and grant programs to state and local governments and industry, business and community sectors.

- Support community stakeholders to develop project proposals to access funding opportunities.

Contact us to discuss your project or funding requirements at admin@rdakimberley.com.au and follow us on Facebook for all the latest Kimberley Grants and Funding information www.facebook.com/rdakimberley

Grant writing is the practice of completing an application process for a *financial grant* provided by an institution such as a government department, corporation, foundation or trust.

For most organisations it's a necessary part of getting projects funded but often a daunting task. This guide aims to explain common terms, walk you through the process and provide clear steps to grant application success.

Ready to apply for funding?

Developing a quality application takes considerable time and resources - you need the right people with time, patience, attention to detail and the determination to see the process through to the end.

You will need skills (or access to people with them) for gathering research and data, preparing budgets, writing and submitting the application. Attention to detail is the key to drumming up financial support as only about a quarter of all grant applications are successful – so be sure to allocate appropriate resources and time to give your organisation the very best shot.

It's all in the planning

Planning is THE major component of any successful application for funding. If your project is not well planned, you're not ready to start writing the funding application.

The background work

Putting your project idea together, developing the concepts, collecting all the information takes time. However, it is usually the application with the best planning, research and attention to detail that wins.

- Develop an organisational statement which describes your structure, purpose, administrative and financial processes, clients, and products or services as this adds weight to your proposal.

- Understand where your project fits within your local community, your town, your region, the industry sector, the state and nation.

- Take time to properly develop a business plan and itemised budget for your project.

Identify the Need

- The first thing to be aware of is if your proposal is considered to be a part of your organisations core activity then your application is unlikely to be successful.

- To identify the need arrange community consultation - discuss possible issues with a range of stakeholders who may be involved and affected and whom may be able to contribute to its solution and develop the project plan.

- If there are multiple needs make sure you prioritise the projects in order of preference.

- Garner written community support from local business or council that are affected by the need to add bearing to the need for your project.

What's the Solution?

Once you have identified a need or problem, the next step is to identify the solution. Your plans should demonstrate the significance of the problem and explain how the project proposes to resolve the problem.

- Make sure that the project is realistic and achievable, and can be financially and logistically sustained in the future if needed. Most grants require you to demonstrate how you will financially manage the project after the initial funding stops.
- Be certain your organisation is capable of implementing the project or can access the skills needed.
- Your project must demonstrate positive long-term outcomes and benefits for the community; and overcome the need - this will help to give weight to the need for the project and its funding.
- Research to justify why your project should receive a grant over others – search peak bodies and associations and obtain statistics to support your application as well as quoting influential persons.
- Let the grant provider visualise your project, include photographs, diagrams and plans where attachments allow.

Who?

- Who will be the people who make up the project working group/or steering committee?
- Who is the project for and who are the beneficiaries?
- Who are the major stakeholders and what is their capacity to help with the project?
- Who will be responsible for the project?

What?

- What is the project and what will it contribute to your community?
- What will it do?
- What are the project's broad purposes
- What are the risks associated with the project?
- What could happen to prevent the project from coming to fruition?
- What will be the results at the end?
- What does the organisation need to do to make the results of the project last?

Where?

- Where will the project happen?
- When?
- When will the project start and be completed?
- When will the results be known?

Why?

- Why do you need this project? Is the project a want or a need?
- Is there community support?
- What is the problem trying to be overcome and what benefit is to be achieved?
- Why is this project important in the context of the area?

How?

- How will you implement this project?
- What skills do you need to implement it?
- How much will it cost?
- How much other funding is needed and where will it all come from?
- How much cash and in-kind resources are available?
- How will you know that the project has been successful?
- How will you measure that success?

Where's the money?

Grant funds for community development are usually provided by federal, state or local government; along with a number of corporate or philanthropic organisation. Most grant programs have been developed to address a particular issue, need or priority.

- Government funding comes from particular programs, with specific terms and conditions to ensure accountability for government.
- Some grants are ongoing with no closing date others are offered in 'rounds' with set opening and closing date for each round of funding and have defined life cycles; generally around two to three years and usually linked to a term of government.
- Most grant funding in Australia is competitive and your project will be assessed against many others for available grant funds.
- Make sure you find a grant which suits your organisational context - which reflects the planning outcomes and objectives of your project – otherwise you are unlikely to be successful in the application.
- Be proactive towards grants; be aware of what grants are available to your organisation and what their applicable timeframes are. This will allow you to prepare your project better and completing a grant application will be nowhere near as daunting as you thought.
- The most important part of any application is **READING THE GUIDELINES**, following them to the letter, and ensuring that you do actually meet the criteria for the grant.

Found the Right Grant?

This checklist will help determine if the grant fits your project - if you answer NO to any of the questions, do a bit more research and find a better suited grant.

1.   Is the grant compatible with our mission?

2.   Are there any geographic restrictions on grant recipients? Do we fit them?

3.   Do we fit the agency's funding priorities?

4.   Can we meet the agency's deadlines?

5.   Can we fulfil all of the agency's contractual requirements if successful?

6.   Is our organisation able to meet these obligations?

7.   Is there a funding limit for projects/organisations and can we comply?

8.   Is our project similar to other projects funded by the agency?

9.   Will we qualify?

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Many hands make light work

Most funding sources require you to show a 'mix' of funding for the project – this gives them confidence in your project.

- This can include both cash and 'in-kind' support. In-kind support is any contribution made that has a dollar value but is provided as goods or services instead of cash – like property, equipment, services and volunteer time. Funding providers will often request records for evidence of the valuation placed on in-kind contribution so make sure it's properly documented and verifiable.
- Leveraging your funding can be done by approaching range of fund sources to match dollar for with another source – commonly done between federal and state government programs.
- Leveraging and in-kind contributions spread the project risk which gives the funding agency security that you have both money and commitment to the project.

About the Grant Makers

Once you've got your project plan, budget and some possible funding sources identified you need to research the suitability of each grant and the grant maker's requirements.

- **Get to know the grant maker –** take time to view websites, business plans or reports on the funding body – the better you understand their position the better you can align your application with their purpose.
- **Read through the grant criteria thoroughly** - make sure you understand the grant program guidelines and all the questions on the application form.
- It's a good idea to **CONTACT the grant maker** and discuss your project plans and its suitability for their grant before applying. They can give you a clear indication of what is eligible and may also be able to provide you with feedback on your application prior to finally submitting it.
- Research previous successful grant recipients and read through a copy of their applications - often available on the grant maker's websites.

Questions for Grant Makers

- What has previously been funded – what are they looking for?
- Will your project fit and does it suit the guidelines?
- What is the selection/assessment process? Ask for a copy of the criteria!
- Will your organisation be eligible?
- Who is involved in the selection process? Think about any potential influences.
- If you are successful with your application, what are the contractual obligations you will need to agree to?

The Application

Each grant application differs and you need to follow the individual guidelines carefully– but most will include these key areas.

About your Organisation

Grant makers want to know an overview of your organisation to establish its credibility and qualifications for funding, and get a feel for how your programs have been developed to meet identified needs.

They may ask you to include short, relevant descriptions of the qualifications and experience that your organisation and key staff have in the area for which program funds are being sought. It's a good idea to have a short version around 25-50 words surmising the organisation and a longer version of 100-200 words.

Goals and Objectives

The project *goal* is the end result or desired outcome of the project - exactly what the project will achieve. The project *objectives* are specific, measurable statements of what needs to be accomplished to reach the project goal.

Rationale

Your project rationale should objectively address the specific situation, opportunity, problem, issue and need that the project aims to address. This is where you show that you've developed a clearly defined, creative, achievable and measurable strategy to address the issue/s previously described. Be as concrete as possible. Support all statements with researched evidence – use data not just hearsay.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the long-term results of your project and the benefits they provide. You will need to articulate and display these clearly and demonstrate how they will be measured. Include outcomes for project beneficiaries with measurement e.g. survey, number, quantitative data and a time frame when this measurement will be taken.

Methodology

Provide a succinct overview of the project implementation, how do you plan to do it and who is going to help you. Include a statement of problems and objectives, a clear description and explanation of the impact of the project and its activities and a time line of activities and budget.

Budget

Unfortunately many applications fall down in the budget section and it's often the deal breaker for funding bodies. A precise, fully costed budget is essential and shows you have carried out proper project planning, have good fiscal management and the ability to deliver the project.

- The project budget can vary from a simple one-page statement of income and expenses to a more complex set of budget papers including explanatory notes.

- Many grant makers allow not-for-profit organisations to claim the value of volunteer labour and other no-cost input as part of their contribution to the project, described as an "in-kind contribution." This in-kind contribution might include volunteer labour, administrative support, rent-free accommodation or donations/discounts of materials, or equipment. These contributions should be given a dollar value and included in your budget - ABS figures states volunteers are worth $41.72 per hour or their industry normal pay rate if they are delivering professional services voluntarily.

- Try to use local suppliers to supply goods and services for your project - grant providers like to see the funds supporting the community wherever possible.

- Obtain the appropriate number of quotations.

Budget hints

- Be honest, open and detailed with your budget
- Make sure income and expenditure balance
- Outline all costs that are to be met by the funding body and all other funding sources.
- Outline both administrative and program costs
- Do not include miscellaneous or contingency categories
- List all in-kind or donated services, including volunteers and indirect costs.
- Focus on the cost-benefit ratio and show how funds are maximised through the budget and how the grant will leverage other funding
- Check for consistency between the project description and budget line items

Sample Budget Template

INCOME Please include all income to be used for your project			$
Grant requested from Fund			
Cash contributed by your organisation			
Cash/grants from other sources (please list details)	Pending	Committed / Received	
Value of in-kind support from your group (other than volunteer contribution)			
Value of in-kind support from other areas (other than your organisation)			
Value of volunteer hours (@ $41.72 per hour)			
TOTAL				(a)
EXPENDITURE Please include all expenditure relating to your project			
Purchase of goods & services (please list details)			
Human resources costs (please list details)			
Value of in-kind support from your organisation (other than volunteer contribution)			
Value of in-kind support from other areas (other than your organisation)			
Value of volunteer hours (@ $41.72 per hour)			
TOTAL (a&b)				(b)

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Evaluation

Project evaluation provides information to improve the project as it develops and progresses NOT just at its completion.

Appoint a project evaluator and develop an evaluation plan - information collected and evaluated will determine if the project is proceeding as planned and meeting its goals and objectives on time. This gives opportunity to make changes if necessary and the data will be very useful when it comes time for acquittal.

DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION PLAN

Clarifying program objectives and goals

- What are the main things you want to accomplish
- How have you set out to accomplish them?

One way to do this is to make a table of program components and elements.

Developing evaluation questions

- Planning and implementation issues: How well was the program or initiative planned out, and how well was that plan put into practice?
- Assessing attainment of objectives: How well has the program or initiative met its stated objectives?
- Impact on participants: How much and what kind of a difference has the program or initiative made for its targets of change?
- Impact on the community: How much and what kind of a difference has the program or initiative made on the community as a whole?

Developing evaluation methods

- Monitoring and feedback system
- Member surveys about the initiative
- Interviews with key participants
- Community-level indicators of impact

Setting up a timeline for evaluation activities

- Evaluation should be undertaken right from the start until acquittal for all projects

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Let's put it together

Many applications can be written by your organisation however, limited time, staff and expertise may lead you to seek the assistance of an external professional. RDA Kimberley can assist by providing contact details of experienced local grant writers.

- The first rule of grant writing is "one person writing and many people reading." Make sure that your application is written in a consistent style by one person, not cobbled together.

- Then **proof read** the application over and over again – make sure at least person who is not closely associated with the project proofs the application.

- Don't assume the grant maker has any prior knowledge of your project, area, town, or your capacity to deliver it successfully.

- Address the questions; be concise, accurate and use short sentences followed by dot points to identify the key areas of your project.

- Stay within the given word limits – don't add any attachments that are not requested, however ensure all requested attachments are included.

- Read and answer all of the questions – don't leave blanks spaces, if it's not relevant at least fill in N/A (not applicable) to show you have read and acknowledge the question.

- Where possible use the language of the grant provider and the exact key words used in the guidelines.

- Most grant applications are now submitted online and the application forms are structured with specific word counts and attachment areas – make sure to adhere to the instructions.

Letters of Support

Letters of support should be used to prove your organisations credibility and evidence of support for the project.

- When asking for letters of support offer a succinct overview of the need and the project and a list of suggested statements to ensure the letter communicates what you intend it to.

- Local shires, industry associates and RDA Kimberley can assist with providing letters of support.

- Make sure to leave enough time to gather letters of support before the application submission date.

Summiting the Application

Make sure the application is submitted with plenty of time before the deadline.

- Many applications are now submitted online and glitches in the technology (usually due to system crashes from high volumes of last minute uploads!) can be very frustrating when faced with looming deadlines.
- Always follow up with the grant provider to ensure the submission has been received.
- It can take several months to be advised if you have been successful or otherwise.
- Do NOT begin any part of your project until you have confirmation of funding and signed contract. Very few funding bodies will retrospectively fund projects.
- If your application is not successful make sure to follow up with the grant maker to get any feedback how to approve for the next round or application.

It's not over yet - the Acquittal

If you are successful in gaining funding you will need to provide formal acquittal of funds to the grant maker after the project is completed as a condition of most contracts.

- This a written report accountable for the expenditure of a grant within a given timeframes.
- Most grants have an acquittal templates – make sure they are filled in correctly and on time.
- A solid, timely acquittal will stand you in good stead for the next round of funding applications should you wish to reapply.

CONTACT US

RDA Kimberley are here to help. Contact us admin@rdakimblery.com.au for assistance and direction on project planning and grant or fund applications.

Head to our website www.rdakimberley.com.au and follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/rdakimberley for more information and latest funding news.