# Helpful Tips

*Simplifying the application process for the*
*Greater Sudbury Arts & Culture Grant Program*

## Overview of the process

- Review the eligibility requirements to be sure you can apply
- Find the right grant stream
- Read and understand  the application and guidelines
- Gather information and brainstorm
- Begin the writing process with a rough draft
- Ask for feedback on your draft
- Complete the *Budget Form* and the *Statistical Form* (if applicable)
- Compile support material that will improve your application
- Edit the final draft, looks for errors and omissions
- Submit by the deadline

Contact staff to get started.

In general, four months is the length of time it takes to process all the applications received, conduct the evaluations, approve all decisions and share the information with applicants.

## Before you start

> *1-Familiarize yourself with the Greater Sudbury Cultural Plan\*.*
> How do your activities help meet the goals laid out in the strategy?

> *2-Familiarize yourself with the Arts & Culture Grant Guidelines\*.*
> Do you fit the eligibility criteria for the grant stream to which you wish to apply?  How does your project stack up against the assessment criteria?

\*All applicants are encouraged to review these two documents before drafting an application.

## Just ask!

If you have any questions to ask before, during, or after the process, please contact:
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# Grant-writing tips

### 1. Start with a rough draft

A short version of your application in point form will help you answer key questions: What are you asking for, and why? Has any information been skipped or repeated? Are your thoughts in the right order? Does the flow enable the reader to understand fully? Have you understood every question on the *Application Form*?

### 2. Write in your own voice, clearly and directly

Your writing style doesn't need to be formal. Using clear language, shorter sentences and common terms will help ensure that you get your point across. Define specific terms or context that might be unique to your project.

### 3. Think quality, not quantity

Word count limits are indicated for each question. They are here to guide you in providing enough information for the evaluating committees to thoroughly assess each application with a similar amount of content. If you are concerned that you weren't able to get everything into your answer, this may be a hint that your answer could be more succinct using point form, or that support material may be another way to communicate the merits of your application.

### 4. Consider your goals

Your short and medium term activities should relate to the goals present in your overall vision, mission and long term direction. How will grant money be used to realize those goals? How will you know that your project is successful? Tactics that enable you to measure your project's success (quantitative and qualitative results) will be helpful not only in your *Post-Project (Year End) Report*, but also in your future planning.

### 5. Describe your project completely

A successful project description covers all the basics: the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How of your proposal. Start thinking about these questions early:

- Where and when will your project take place?
- Who is your audience?
- Is your project relevant to any particular community?
- Why did you choose your collaborators (if any)?
- How will all the participants work together from beginning to end?
- Why is your project important, and what does it intend to achieve?
- How does the project fit in with your previous work and long term direction?
- What is your approach?
- How will you complete the project if you are unable to secure all the funds in your budget?

### 6. Ask for feedback

Ask someone you know with good language skills to read through your application when you think it is finished. Do they have any questions about what you wrote? Is anything unclear? This will give you a better sense of how your application reads to others.

### 7. Check for errors

Although you won't be penalized for spelling and grammatical errors, they don't reflect well upon your application, so proof-reading is worth the time invested. This will also enable you to catch errors in consistency between the *Application Form*, the support materials and the financial and statistical information provided, since these pieces are all reviewed together. Reading it aloud might help too!

8. **Complete the** *Budget Form*

The *Budget Form* is to be completed through CADAC (Canadian Arts Data) for **Operating Grants** and through the Excel template for **Project Grants**. When we ask for a budget we want to know what your expenses are and how you plan to pay for them. Your budget must be complete and represent your whole project, including all expenses, even though some expenses may not be eligible for funding. There is no such thing as too much financial detail. Opt for more detail rather than less by using the notes sections. Are there significant fluctuations in your operating costs from one year to the next? How did you estimate your revenues? Are you putting your own money into the project? Note whether revenue sources are confirmed or pending. Is your budget realistic and balanced, showing growth/stability? Do not overestimate costs or revenues. How will you deal with surpluses or deficits?

9. **Complete the** *Statistical Form*

The *Statistical Form* is to be completed through CADAC for **Operating Grants** and through the Excel template for **Project Grants**. The same advice for budgets applies here. Make sure that there is consistency between the narrative part of your project and its success measures.

10. **Provide relevant support materials**

A picture is worth a thousand words – and so is a video, poster, program, web link, etc. so select the pieces that put your best foot forward, since this helps the evaluators assess the artistic/cultural merit of your application. Submit a maximum of three pieces of support material and no more, keeping in mind that if you submit hard copies they will not be returned to you. Select your support materials based on what recent initiatives you covered in the narrative of your application, for example if you wrote about a certain web marketing strategy, you could include your website analytics; or if you wrote about a new innovative event, you could include a video of the event.

# Resources

There are a number of resources that can assist you in preparing your application, with a sample of some local organizations below. Check out www.greatersudburyculture.ca as we develop a list of organizations, guilds and associations out there dedicated to supporting arts and culture in various ways. If you would like to contribute to this list, let us know.

**Ontario Arts Council**
Funding programs
www.arts.on.ca

**United Way**
Professional development and not-for-profit expertise
www.unitedwaysudbury.com

**Regional Business Centre**
Business planning services, market research & more
www.regionalbusiness.ca

**Nickel Basin Federal Corporation**
Community loans fund
www.nickelbasin.com

**Discover Sudbury**
Events calendar and promotional opportunities
www.discoversudbury.ca

**Work in Culture**
Business skills training for cultural workers
www.workinculture

**Arts Build Ontario**
Solutions for building, managing and financing arts facilities
www.artsbuildontario.ca

**Imagine Canada – Standards Program**
Accreditation for non profits that excel in 5 areas of operation
www.imaginecanada.ca