

# 1 Funding your project

## How can I fund my project?

Projects can be funded through private funds, grants, foundations and sponsorship. Details about funding programs through government grants and foundations can be downloaded from the Internet. Thoroughly read the guidelines to ensure your project is a good fit for funding programs.

The same principle applies to sponsorships, that is, research the company you are planning to approach (check web sites, annual reports etcetera) to find out whether your project would suit their business.

## Grant Myths

There are some common misconceptions about grants.

### People in major cities are more likely to be funded

False. Be confident that if you have answered the criteria, are definitely eligible and have prepared the adequate support material your project will receive equal consideration. This applies to all funding programs.

### I'm creative, I won't be able to fill in an administration form like a funding application

False. It is a mind set that will hold you back and is easy to overcome. Approach the task creatively. If you are a self-employed business operator who creates artistic product for your income – then you can fill in a form. If you can't fill in a form due to a disability, then you will have your own network to support you in this task. If you have the luxury of a grant writer – you still need to be involved in the process to be sure they represent your project in the best light. Organisations like Arts Nexus can also provide you with advice to complete your application.

### Money creates more money

True. Once you get some, it seems easier to get more. This is because once you have demonstrated you can manage the funds, grant assessors and sponsors have more confidence in your professional ability. Keep applying.

## The grant application process

Every grant has its own set of criteria and objectives. The principles are the same and if you answer the selection criteria like you are applying for a job the funding committee can more easily consider your application. This way, you increase the likelihood of receiving funds. Pay attention to detail. An empty box (for example, missing your signature) can exempt you from being eligible. It's important to always check/download a current form from the relevant web site as funding application forms are updated regularly.

Support material may be in the form of examples of your work, reports on previous projects or letters of support as mentioned above.

Once the relevant grant body receives funding applications, they are considered by panels of industry experts or peer assessors. There are many criteria used for assessing applications, so, if unsuccessful keep trying – try, try, try and try again. Assessors will learn more about you and what you are trying to achieve each time you submit an application.

Be sure to;

- Research the grant agencies and categories that best suits your proposed project
- Check your eligibility
- Represent your work well with good quality images as support material
- Break your idea down into stages so it is manageable
- Plan what you will write so you communicate well. Spell check your application
- Develop a realistic budget
- Seek advice. Discuss your project. Others can offer valuable advice and perspectives that can help you develop your idea further. Ask a colleague, mentor or friend to read your application before you submit it
- Include a realistic timeline and budget. Be prepared to be accountable and manage your budget. Include time for the outcome report once your project is completed
- Comply with the grant guidelines – if in doubt contact the grant body's responsible project officer

## Eligibility and assessment criteria

Once your application is submitted it will be assessed against the criteria and you will be notified of the results.

## Your Idea

Allow yourself enough time in preparing your application for submission. Four to six weeks is a suggested minimum to be able to source all the required quotes, letters of support and confirmation letters. You will need to formulate your idea into a project description. As you develop your concept, it's a good idea to document your information in a journal so you can refer to it later.

## Project Description

One of the most critical parts of your application is the project description. Avoid art speak. Write your project description clearly so that it is easily understood by any member of the assessment panel. Try to give as much detail as you can. Include your aims, expectations, objectives and what you are trying to achieve. In your application, you will be asked to provide a succinct project summary and a more detailed description. Road test your idea with a non-arts person to ensure that it is clearly understood.



## Budget

**Artist fees** – refer to NAVA (National Association for Visual Artists [www.visualarts.net.au/nava/](http://www.visualarts.net.au/nava/)), MEAA (Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance [www.alliance.org.au/](http://www.alliance.org.au/)) and Australian Society of Authors for industry guidelines on fees.

**Expenses** – get accurate quotes. Ensure that you understand each of the budget categories.

**Income** – this includes any sponsorship or in kind support you may receive for the project, other project revenue or sales, and any of your own contribution or in kind support.

## Things to consider

Auspice – if you don't have an ABN (Australian Business Number for tax purposes) or are not an incorporated association, some funding agencies require you to have the project auspiced. This means an organisation will receive your grant on your behalf. Grant agencies need you to include auspice fees (usually 10/20% of project costs) to be included in your budget. Be confident that the auspice agency is well aware of their obligations and that they are accountable. Arts Nexus can disclose Auspice Agreement and guidelines.

Support letters – need to be relevant to the project, people or organisations that are actively supporting your project. For example, letters detailing the provision of venue or other support are excellent to include.

## Sponsorship and Foundations

Sponsorship is a partnership, a two way street – its about your needs and your sponsor's needs combined.

This in mind, think about what you can offer your sponsor. Sponsors tend to want increased exposure. They want to provide support or assistance to your cause, but expect some commercial benefit in return. It could be increased advertising, access to your membership or simply raising their profile in the community. Develop a proposal that outlines what is in it for your sponsor. Is their business relevant to yours? Why would they want to sponsor you? How would it benefit them? What will they gain? What do you want from your sponsor? Be specific about what you need their support for.

Start local – look to your immediate network for ideas on who could be a potential sponsor. You could approach businesses you already know and have an established relationship with. Research potential companies that could have an interest in your business, product or event.

It's a good idea to establish an agreement in writing so your sponsor understands what is required of them and what you will receive from them. Look after your sponsors. Once you have sponsorship money, the deal is not done. Failure to look after your sponsors can result in damaging the relationship and you could end up with no future support and find it difficult to get further sponsorship. Consider all aspects of the partnership and make sure your sponsor's needs are being met. Can you commit to your sponsor? Have you factored in what is involved in maintaining your sponsorship agreement?

Many foundations (for example Westpac, Ian Potter) have similar processes to grants such as eligibility, budgeting etc. AbaF (Australian Business Arts Foundation) offer free workshops for visual artists called 'Seeking sponsorship: How to approach businesses'. Topics covered include:

- using and preparing a business case
- identifying what you can offer business
- finding a potential partner
- developing a proposal and managing a relationship.

Check our links and resources for further information on sponsorship. Our Community have some great help sheets and resources on how to achieve effective sponsorship.

## Links and resources

- ABaF (Australian Business Arts Foundation) [www.abaf.org.au/](http://www.abaf.org.au/)
- ArtsYakka [www.artsyakka.com/](http://www.artsyakka.com/)
- ArtSupport Australia [www.australiacouncil.gov.au/philanthropy/artsupport\\_australia](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/philanthropy/artsupport_australia)
- Arts Queensland [www.arts.qld.gov.au/funding/](http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/funding/)
- Australia Council [www.australiacouncil.gov.au/](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/)
- Cairns Regional Council [www.cairns.qld.gov.au/content/root/index.html](http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/content/root/index.html)
- Gambling Community Benefit Fund [www.olgr.qld.gov.au/grants/gcbf/index.shtml](http://www.olgr.qld.gov.au/grants/gcbf/index.shtml)
- Our Community [www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/funding\\_main.jsp](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/funding_main.jsp)
- Philanthropy Australia [www.philanthropy.org.au](http://www.philanthropy.org.au)
- RADF [www.arts.qld.gov.au/funding/radf.html](http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/funding/radf.html) and [www.arts.qld.gov.au/funding/radf-rk/app.html](http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/funding/radf-rk/app.html)
- Reef Casino [www.olgr.qld.gov.au/grants/RHCCBF/index.shtml](http://www.olgr.qld.gov.au/grants/RHCCBF/index.shtml)
- Regional Arts Fund [www.arts.gov.au/arts/regional\\_arts\\_fund](http://www.arts.gov.au/arts/regional_arts_fund)

## Checklist

- Have you decided on your project idea?
- Have you got a clear outline of your idea?
- Are you eligible?
- Have you researched appropriate grants and foundations and their closing dates?
- Have you sought suitable sponsorship for your project?
- Have you got the right support around you to meet the application deadline?
- Have you sought advice?
- Is your budget realistic?

References [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)

Disclaimer: this information is correct at time of printing August 2009. Details are subject to change.



## Telephone Advisory Service

Got a creative idea? Looking for help to grow it? Arts Nexus can assist you to develop your creative ideas into real ventures, find funding, write grants and manage your project. Contact us today on 07 4051 4433 or [admin@artsnexus.com.au](mailto:admin@artsnexus.com.au)

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