

# Tips for the Application Process

## To Ace the Application Process:

- Begin by firming up your plan of study or research and identifying your specific financial needs;
- Conduct research to identify funders, matching your profile and their interests;
- Give yourself plenty of time;
- Follow funders' guidelines carefully;
- Submit applications early and to multiple sources; and
- Stay determined!

## Successful Application Checklist:

### Ask yourself:

- Did I complete the application in full?
- Did I proofread it?
- Did I attach everything they asked for?
- Did I make a copy for my files?
- Send a thank you letter if you receive funding.



## Further Tips:

Be sure you know each grantmaker's specific requirements. You wouldn't want to miss out on a grant for a simple technical mistake – like not sending enough copies.

Some funders prefer a phone call or letter of inquiry prior to receiving applications.

And, each grantmaker will probably want something a little different when it comes to the application itself, so be aware of this and follow their guidelines to the letter.

Finally, be aware of Deadlines! Applying for grants take time: usually somewhere between 6 to 12 months from the beginning of your research to the time to get the check.

Some organizations only meet once or twice a year to review applications. So you'll want to be aware of application deadlines and how those fit in with your funding needs. Educational grants tend to follow the academic cycle, with applications usually due approximately 6 mo. Before the term or semester begins.

So, you will want to take all of these factors into consideration when deciding which to apply to and when.

And remember! GIC has resources on proposal writing too!

## Pre-proposal Contact

**The key step in successful foundation grantseeking is pre-proposal contact with the funder. Pre-proposal contact, even just a telephone call, triples an applicant's chances for funding.**

- Call or email the prospective grantmaker. This is the crucial step grantseekers often avoid, but it is by far the most critical element of the funding search process. If you call the grantmaker or try to schedule an appointment to talk with them, let them know you will take only five to ten minutes of their time. Tell them in your email or phone call that you have "reviewed their application guidelines and annual report and you have a few specific questions you'd like to ask to determine if your project really fits their objectives."
- When you do get on the phone, make sure you keep your word about the length of the call by:
  - Keeping the discussion brief and focused
  - Have an "elevator speech"-like description of your program and organization ready
  - Setting a timer or watching the clock to be sure you take ONLY the requested amount of time
  - After a few minutes of discussion, you'll have a clear idea if you should pursue this grantmaker.

*Taken from ~GrantStation, Breaking Foundation Barriers*

## When You Hear Back

### **If the answer is *Yes*:**

- Write a thank-you letter.
- Be aware of the funder's expectations regarding use of the funds, reporting on the grant, and publicity.
- Keep the funder informed of the project's progress.
- Lay the groundwork for a renewal request or a request for support for another aspect of your program.

### **If the answer is *No*:**

- Find out why: be gracious, but don't hesitate to ask.
- Don't take it personally.
- Inquire about applying again for the project in the funder's next evaluation cycle.
- Inquire about the prospect of future funding for a different project.
- Seek out other prospects.