

How is a grant assessed?

How-to guide

This How-to guide is one of a series produced by the Office of Helen Haines MP, Independent Federal Member for Indi, to help constituents find and apply for grants.

The topics in this series are:

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The full series is available at <https://www.helenhaines.org/resources/grants>. On this website you'll also find six short videos to help you through the grant process.

How is a grant assessed? What is a grant maker looking for?

Grant funding is offered by governments (federal, state, and local), private corporations and philanthropic groups to help them fulfil their strategic policies, objectives and aims.

A grant maker is looking for evidence that your project contributes to the objectives of the funding. A grant maker wants to be convinced that your project will provide the desired outcomes and good value for money.

Key points

- **Guidelines** are issued by grant makers to help you understand what they are looking for, and to describe what projects or activities or types of organisations are eligible or ineligible for their particular grant program.
- Every grant maker has a **different purpose for each funding program**. It is useful to 'walk in their shoes' and understand why the funding program is important for them and what they want to achieve from the program. This information can be sourced by searching their website, reading the guidelines thoroughly, and contacting the grant maker to find out exactly what they are looking for, and whether your project is a likely fit.
- There is a difference in what different grant makers are looking for – and sometimes this is subtle. A **'cookie cutter' approach will not work**. Tailor your information to their needs.
- Generally, grant makers are usually **looking for projects** that:
 - Address an issue (a defined need)
 - Influence positive change
 - Have a clear outcome
 - Are tangible – they can see a direct link between the activities or project, your purpose and solving the problems/needs that you have identified.
- Grant makers are also looking for the **thinking and planning** that you have put into your project and whether your project or activities are:
 - Realistic
 - Well planned
 - Evidence-based
 - Affordable
 - Sustainable (that is, the project or its benefits will last beyond the life of the funding).

- **Grants are highly contested.** Your application must meet the eligibility criteria to be funded. Once it passes that first hurdle – eligibility, then it may be assessed against many other applications, so it needs to stand out.
- Your application needs to be **easy to read and understand**. Imagine if you were the grant maker sifting through hundreds of applications!
- Match your grant application with the **language** that is used by the grant maker. Consider your application through their eyes.
- Grant applications that arrive after **the deadline** (usually a specific time on a specific date) are not considered.
- **Be crystal clear** about who you are and what you do. This will help you find grants that match your needs, and enable the grant maker to see the ‘fit’ between their goals and your project.
- The grant maker will also be interested in your **experience as an organisation**, ability to deliver the project, and manage and acquit the grant.
- Most grant makers will not fund 100% of the project. Where co-contributions are required, grant makers will be looking to see **what you are contributing to the project** – either from your own funds, grants from other organisations or ‘in-kind’ contributions which could include donations of goods and services, or volunteer time and labour.

The grant maker will be thoroughly checking to ensure that;

- Your organisation satisfies the eligibility criteria.
- Any necessary additional eligibility criteria, e.g. MP nomination or planning approvals.
- The activities meet the selection criteria and are eligible activities.
- The expenditure is eligible. You can only spend grant funds on eligible activities.
- All the necessary documentation is supplied
- Required information is complete.

Sometimes grant makers will ask you to substantiate your costs, so it is important to have evidence of the costings.

When your project aligns with the aims and goals of the grant maker, you are more likely to be successful with funding.

Tips

- Do reach out to the grant maker. Contact information is provided in the grant guidelines and highlighted in the description of each grant on the Indi Funding Finder www.helenhaines.grantsguru.com.au
- Some grant makers conduct workshops to help you understand the purpose of their grant and what they are looking for. These are well worth attending.

For more information

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