



An Australian Government Initiative



Regional  
Development  
*Australia*



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA: NORTHERN TERRITORY

# Grant Writing Guide

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# 1. Get grant ready!

Are you ready to secure grant funding for your project? Grant funding serves as a critical financial resource for individuals and organisation. However, being grant-ready isn't just about having a brilliant idea. Securing grant funding is a competitive process, requiring careful planning, a strategic approach, and effective communication.

**This guide has been prepared to provide helpful tips for your grant funding quest, helping you to avoid common grant-seeking pitfalls and giving you the best chance of receiving funding.**

## 2. Assess your readiness

When grant funding is available, it can be tempting to jump on the opportunity to apply prior to assessing your organisations readiness to start your project or even the need for the grant.

- **Be realistic about the work required and your organisation capacity:** A good application takes a lot of work. You need time, patience, detail and persistence.
- **Start Early:** Grants can be very time consuming. Not only will you need to give yourself ample time to prepare the application, but you'll also need to ensure that anyone providing materials, such as letters of support or quotes, is given sufficient time.
- **Skills check:** Research and data collection, writing, budgeting, and digital literacy are some skills you will need when writing your application. If you don't feel that you have skills in all these areas, seek help from others who have them.
- **Determine your need:** Scope your project based on your organisation or community need. Then assess whether or not you need grant funding at all. Is there another way your project can be funded? Can it be delivered in-house? And does your organisation have the capacity to support the project if you are successful in obtaining grant funding?
- **Timing:** If your successful in your grant application, does your organisation have the capacity to deliver the project? Are there co-dependencies or steps in your project that need to be completed before you will be ready to apply for funding.

## 3. Planning your proposal

To get grants, be clear about how your project will make a difference in the community. Focus on the good outcomes you expect, back up your claims with research, and explain how your project will keep helping people even after the grant is over. You can develop a detailed document that outlines all critical aspects of your project.

### 3.1 Define the need

Your proposal will need to show that, with grant funding, your organisation can realistically address (or contribute to addressing) a specific problem or issue within a defined community or area of interest, for example tackling rural depression, or promoting community cohesion.

To get started ask yourself these questions;

- What urgent need does our project aim to address?
- How does our project offer a distinctive solution to this pressing need?
- What positive impacts will our project deliver upon its successful completion?
- Why is funding required for this project? And how will funding be used?

## 3.2 Outcomes

Grant funders want to maximise the impact of their funding. They want to know in advance what specific outcomes each successfully funded project will produce. So, it's important to talk about outcomes, not just the steps you'll take.

- **Setting Clear Goals:** Make specific goals that you can measure, like how many local jobs will be created or what social changes you expect to see.
- **Be specific and realistic:** If you're successful in your project, you may need to prove that you have met your objectives, so be sure to be as accurate as possible when quantifying project outcomes.
- **Backing Up Your Claims:** Use facts and figures from trusted sources. Share examples of similar projects that worked well to show why yours will too. Use objective data and ensure every claim can be substantiated with evidence.
- **Thinking Long-Term:** Show how it will make lasting changes and explain how your project will keep benefiting the community even after the grant-funding period is complete.
- **Co-benefits:** Are there secondary benefits to your project? Identifying additional benefits will strengthen your application.

## 3.3 Budget

Every grant application will need a detailed budget that shows the project's costs accurately, including staff costs, materials, travel, and overhead costs.

Your budget should list all the income sources that will support the project. This includes cash, loans, grants, and in-kind donations. You must also indicate where grant funding will be used in the budget so there's no uncertainty.

You should also include relevant quotes for plant and equipment, contractors, prototyping, labour, travel, supplies and infrastructure. Any cost estimates should be based on quotations or at least clear, realistic, and not exaggerated calculations.

Funders will review the budget carefully. It's their job to review and compare many submissions then approve only the most thoroughly-planned and financially viable ones. They're looking for the stand-out, rock-solid applications that align to the program priorities. If the numbers don't stack up, it's unlikely the assessors will select your project for investment.



## 3.4 Support with evidence

You can strengthen your application by providing statistics, case studies, and testimonials that validate the significance and feasibility of your project. Funders will also want to see compelling evidence of community support when they chose successful applicants. Whether through endorsements, or letters of support, provide evidence that your project has backing from stakeholders who are directly impacted by the issue.

**Table 1: Types of Evidence to support your application.**

Types of Evidence	Description and links
<b>Letters of Support</b>	Letters of support serve as tangible evidence of community need and backing for your project. Engage key stakeholders or decision-makers to provide these letters. Ensure the letter demonstrates both support for the project and rationale for why your organisation is best suited to execute it.
<b>Regional Statistics and Economic Data</b>	Statistics and economic data can enhance funding applications by providing quantifiable evidence of projected outcomes for projects. The <a href="#">.id (Informed Decisions) Community and Economic Profiles</a> provide easily accessible demographic and economic data for NT Local Government areas. For assistance in leveraging these resources effectively, reach out to your <a href="#">RDANT Project Officers</a> .
<b>ABS Regional Data</b>	Australian Bureau of Statistic has a wealth of demographic and economic data and reports.
<b>Government Strategy Documents and Policies</b>	Reference relevant documents to illustrate alignment with Local, State, or Federal Government priorities, such as the Northern Territory Regional Economic Growth Plans, NT Tourism Industry Strategy, or Closing the Gap.
<b>Research Reports</b>	Cite reports relevant to your project area from respected organisations. Examples include reports from the Regional Australia Institute or reports from NT Government departments.
<b>Evidence of Community Consultation</b>	Document all community consultation activities to demonstrate widespread support. This can include surveys or meeting minutes.
<b>Images</b>	Incorporate visuals like photographs and maps to vividly illustrate project objectives or existing challenges, adding depth to your proposal.



### Economic output

The [.id \(Informed Decisions\) Economic Modelling tool](#) can help your organisation to measure the economic outcomes of your projects and events, providing powerful evidence of the economic impact of your project for a grant application. Reach out to Regional Development Northern Territory for assistance with this tool.

## 4. Submitting a well-crafted application

Making your grant application stand out means keeping things clear and to the point. Don't assume the funder knows anything about your project, community, or region. Stick to the word limits and explain technical terms simply.

These key points will help you to create a logical and easy to read application:

- Write in a consistent writing style and tone
- Use concise language, keep your paragraphs short and avoid casual language, abbreviations or jargon. Try to avoid using unclear, uncertain or emotional words (e.g. believe, hope, expect, may, could, might).
- Stick to the word limits
- Apply consistent formatting of headings and subheadings, bullet points and lists, and font style and size
- Include keywords from the guidelines and assessment criteria where appropriate.
- Write unique answers to all questions – although some questions may sound similar, the assessor will be seeking new information (check the guidelines for clarification).
- Include a short project title and description of aims and activities.
- Be bold and positive in stating what your project will achieve if your application is successful but avoid exaggerated claims – the assessor will look for realistic outcomes and all of the claims you make must be able to be substantiated.
- Demonstrate your project's likelihood of success, acknowledging risks to achieving its aims and how these will be managed.
- Tell a compelling story: while data is essential, storytelling adds depth to your argument. Share a case study that illustrates the challenges faced by the community, making a compelling case for your project's necessity.

### 4.1 Align with funder priorities

Tailor your proposal to align closely with the priorities and interests of the prospective funder, emphasising how your project addresses their objectives and contributes to their mission.

#### **Tips for Success:**

1. Research the grant funder's mission, goals, and past projects to tailor your proposal accordingly.
2. Review sample applications to grasp the desired length, tone, and structure.
3. Carefully analyse the grant application requirements, noting specific guidelines or restrictions.
4. Utilise online portals or Request for Proposal (RFP) documents provided by the funder to guide your proposal's structure and content.

### 4.2 Know Grant Guidelines Inside Out

You need to carefully read and understand the grant guidelines and eligibility criteria for each grant opportunity that you are interested in, and make sure that you meet all the requirements and expectations. You should also note down the grant deadline, the application process, the format and length of the grant proposal, the budget and financial requirements, the evaluation criteria, and the reporting and accountability obligations. If you're still unsure, look for Q&A documents, contact the funding program contact for help, or contact your RDANT Project Officers for support. You should also research the grant-makers' background, mission, values, priorities, and funding history, to understand what they are looking for and what they expect from the applicants.

## 5. Finding grants

You need to find out what grant opportunities are available for your organisation and your project, and which ones are the most relevant and suitable for your needs and goals. You can use various sources to search for grant opportunities, such as online databases, newsletters, websites, social media, networks, and referrals.

Follow these steps to navigate the grant-seeking process effectively:

- **Monitor upcoming grant opportunities:** Keep an eye out for grant opportunities so you know when you'll need to prepare your application. By doing some groundwork before the grant opens for applications, you'll be a step ahead. You can prepare early by signing up for newsletters like the RDANT and LGANT monthly e-news updates and following social media posts of agencies that fund your kind of project.
- **Know When You Need the Money:** Grants operate on specific timelines with set closing dates. It's essential to align your grant-seeking efforts with these timelines to maximise your chances of success. Knowing when you need the funds will help you prioritise and plan accordingly.
- **Don't apply for grants that don't fit your project or organisation** Research and choose grants that fit your project well. Grant applications are time consuming and resource intensive, so be sure you fit the eligibility criteria, guidelines, and deadlines before diving in to an application.
- **Grant search tools:** You can search grant opportunities on government websites such [GrantConnect](#), [Business.gov.au](#) and [GrantsNT](#).
- **Regional Development Australia Northern Territory website:** The RDANT website provides access to The Funding Centre grant search tool. This is a great starting point to look for grants.

### How We Can Help

**RDANT is dedicated to supporting you in securing grants and advancing your projects. Our support includes:**

- **Finding Grants:** We can assist in identifying grants that align with your specific needs and objectives.
- **Economic Modelling:** Using the .id economic impact tools to prepare Economic Impact Modelling reports to support your applications and / or business case.
- **Regional Statistics:** Providing access to regional statistics to inform your decision-making process and project planning.
- **Letters of Support:** Providing letters of support to strengthen the credibility and impact of your grant applications.
- **Reviewing Your Application:** Offering an external review and feedback on your grant applications.
- **Referral to Consultants:** Assisting in locating qualified consultants and experts to support the implementation and execution of your projects.