

Regional Arts NSW 2003 Guide to Writing Grant Applications

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This guide has been compiled to assist not-for-profit community based organisations with submissions to the three grants programs that are administered by Regional Arts NSW for community cultural development projects: The Country Arts Support Program (CASP), The Regional Arts Fund (RAF) and the Regional Quick Turnaround Grants Program.

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CASP is a State Government initiative funded by the NSW Ministry for the Arts and administered by Regional Arts NSW



The Regional Arts Fund is a Commonwealth Government initiative supporting the arts in regional and remote Australia

Introduction

It is important to allow plenty of time for the amount of preparation and research involved when undertaking a grant application. The process of gathering this information should provide you with sufficient data that may be used in further funding applications. The information you are required to submit may vary from one program to another, however there are some basics that are common to most.

Always read the Guidelines thoroughly before commencing your application.

They will give an overview of eligibility and criteria, categories and amounts of funding available, support material and closing dates.

Always seek clarification if you are unclear about any question or request for information before you go ahead. The Funding & Research Officer at Regional Arts NSW and the Regional Arts Development Officers are available to discuss your ideas, queries and concerns.

General Planning and Research

Your organisation

Applicants will generally be asked to supply some sort of overview of your organisation ie. its background or history, aims and objectives, current or recent projects and its future directions. Preparing a grant application can be a useful exercise in terms of planning and shaping your organisation. For some, the process can help to clarify what you hope to accomplish as an organisation. This information will define who you are and what you do to the assessment panel.

You may be asked to elaborate on collaborations or partnerships with other organisations or groups within your community or region.

Project Planning

Ask these questions and make notes against each point:

- **What** is the project. Outline its aims & objectives.
- **Why** do you want to do this project. What do you want to achieve; what are the proposed outcomes of the project. How is it significant or meaningful to your community. Identify the ongoing benefits after the life of the project.
- **Where** will the project take place – the location/venue.
- **Who** are you targeting – both in terms of participants and audience.
- **How** will you manage the project? Talk about the logistics, management of funds, the resources needed – financial, human, materials etc.

Timeframe

Make a time line or project plan. Build in start and completion dates, funding deadlines. The more complex a project the more detail required. Projects that have already commenced or been completed are generally ineligible.

Research

This component will also take time and is crucial to your application. You'll need to investigate the following areas:

- Identify who you want to work with or bring into the project –artists, artworkers, consultants, facilitators or any other personnel involved – both paid and volunteer. You should check their availability and also their suitability in terms of what you want to achieve. It's important to ensure that they have the skills to realise your aims. Find out about their previous work and what they can bring to your project.

You will need to submit up-to-date CVs for artists involved in the project. A two page abridged CV will usually suffice.

- Where projects are based on community cultural development principles, it is strongly recommended that you discuss ideas and implications of these projects with the people in your community who are likely to be involved.
- In the case of projects that target or involve Indigenous communities, it is essential that consultation is undertaken and that you have their support. For any RANSW grants, it is necessary that evidence of the community's support be provided as part of your support material.
- Investigate other sources of support within your community ie. local government, community groups, local libraries, industry groups, P & Cs and so on. Forming partnerships with other organisations or groups in your town or region has the potential to lead to sustainable cultural development in regional areas, rather than just one-off events.

Request letters of support from those organisations involved or who will benefit from the project and include these with your application.

- It's important to plan how you will document the process and outcomes of the project. You'll need to consider this for inclusion in the budget but also in terms of reporting requirements.
- Always investigate funding options under grant programs. You may be able to apply to different funds for different components of your project. Subscribe to the Regional Arts NSW fortnightly e-bulletin – go to www.regionalartsnsw.com.au. Each bulletin announces upcoming grants and funding opportunities.

It is important to be aware that almost all grants programs are extremely competitive and that funds are limited. Your application will be one of many so don't be discouraged if you are not successful. Feedback can generally be sought from program managers.

- Allow time for preparation of your submission. Don't leave it till too late as additional material like CV's, financial statements, letters of support etc may be requested.

Budgets

Preparing Your Budget

When preparing a budget for a grant application always read the guidelines to establish what the particular grant program will allow.

Don't request more than the maximum amount available, as this may make your application ineligible and will indicate to the panel that you may not have read the Guidelines.

Don't expect grants to pay for your entire project. Additional contributions from other sources are generally expected. This can be in-kind support, contributions from your or other organisations, generated income like sales or fees, other grants or sponsorship and donations.

Dot point the areas of your application that will require a monetary value.

Do the expense side of the budget first:

Be realistic about what you ask for – don't underestimate the time and cost of the project. Likewise, don't inflate your costs as assessment committees look carefully at budgetary issues.

- Access the personnel time involved
- Approach the artist/consultant to verify their costs and availability
- Access if there is any travel, accommodation and living allowance involved
- Access the cost of any materials, venue and equipment hire
- Insurance
- Catering
- Documentation
- Incidentals

Now do the Income side

- How much can you apply for from this particular grant?
- Is there any in-kind support you can source?
- Are there any cash donations or sponsorship opportunities?
- What can your organisation afford to contribute to the project?
- Is there any other grant income for the project?

Budgets must always be balanced ie Income should equal Expenditure.

Writing the application

- Make sure you have the correct form.
- Be informative. Your application will be read by an assessment panel who may not be aware of the project or your organisation. Your application is the basis on which they make their decision. Focus on the content, planning and outcomes.
- Be concise. Assessment panels will often have to read and assess up to 50-60 or more applications.
- If an application form instructs you to use only the space provided, you should follow those instructions. Forms will indicate if you can attach additional pages.
- Fresh eyes. It's worthwhile giving a draft of your application to someone not involved in the project to read and for feedback. This can assist with proofing but also to check whether the application carries your ideas clearly.
- Always submit a legible application. You can download forms directly from the RANSW website on to your computer. If this is not possible, request a hard copy of the application form and use a typewriter. Hand written applications are acceptable – they should be in black ink.

Assessment and Rating Procedures

Regional Arts NSW grants are assessed by selection panels. This varies depending on the program.

- **CASP:** Where a Regional Arts Board exists, the CASP assessment panel should consist of a minimum of two Regional Arts Board members and one independent arts representative (eg. Gallery Director, CCD Officer, Cultural Planner, Community Artist etc). The Regional Arts Development Officer would usually facilitate the meeting.

Applications are assessed, rated against to a set of pre-determined questions relating to criteria and guidelines and then prioritised. They are then submitted to RANSW for data entry and processing. The State CASP Committee approves all grants based on the RAB recommendations, provided they are eligible and meet the guidelines.

For those regions without an RAB, a State CASP Assessment Panel is convened, consisting of a minimum of one Regional Arts Board member, one Regional Arts Development Officer and one independent arts representative (eg. Gallery Director, CCD Officer, Cultural Planner, Community Artist etc). The Funding & Research Officer facilitates this meeting and the Business & Finance Manager assists with budget assessment.

Final decisions are made and applicants advised accordingly.

- **Commonwealth Regional Arts Fund:** In accordance with DoCITA requirements, RAF applications are assessed by an independent panel (currently 8 including 6 regional members) who represent various sectors of the arts. Applications are

assessed and rated against a set of pre-determined questions relating to criteria and guidelines and then prioritised. The Panel makes final decisions and applicants are advised accordingly.

- **Quick Turnaround Grants (RAF):** Applications are assessed in-house by two senior Regional Arts NSW staff, including the Funding & Research Officer. They are rated against a set of pre-determined questions based on criteria and guidelines. Applications are generally processed within 3 business days and applicants advised accordingly.

Responsibility as a Grant Recipient

Insurance cover

Funding bodies sometimes ask for proof that your organisation has current and adequate insurance cover – public liability, personal accident where volunteers are involved, workers compensation when employing staff. Where an artist or professional person is engaged on a contract or fee basis, it is your duty of care to ensure that they have their own insurance that covers the specific activities of the project.

Artists Contracts

If you are contracting artists for a project, you will need to get their ABN, if they do not have an ABN, you can either withhold 48.5% tax or request them to fill in a Statement of Supply (this document must be kept for a period of 7 years). Statements of Supply are available through the Australian Taxation Office or Australia Post.

When engaging artists, artworkers or project personnel for a fee, it is advisable to have a contract. The Arts Law Centre of Australia has some standard contracts available for a small fee that can be adapted to suit your needs. Contact details for Arts Law are The Gunnery, 43-51 Cowper Wharf Road, Woolloomooloo NSW 2011 Tel. 02 9356 2566, Freecall 1800 221 457 Fax 02 9358 6475 Email artslaw@artslaw.com.au Website www.artslaw.asn.au/~artslaw.

Conditions of grant

Grants generally come with a range of Conditions attached. These will vary so if your application is successful, you should read these carefully. In accepting the grant, your organisation will be obligated in fulfilling these conditions.

- You will need to supply an invoice before your grant will be paid. If you are registered for **GST** you must supply a **Tax Invoice**, or you are **not registered for GST** you must supply an **Invoice**.
- RANSW requires that acknowledgements of the grant program be included in all publicity and promotional material and to include relevant logos of the program and/or funding body. Regional Arts NSW provides this information to all successful applicants.
- Usually, you'll also be asked to notify the funding body of *any* changes, postponement or cancellation of the project.

Reporting and acquittal requirements

This is an important part of the Conditions. Acquittal reports must be submitted within a specified time period after the project's completion and your organisation is accountable for this process.

- You may be sent Acquittal forms to complete, or a set of instructions on how to acquit the grant. CASP Acquittal forms are available on the RANSW website.
- Other information and documents will also help you acquit a grant. Keep copies of all publicity, media/ news clippings, programs, catalogues, invitations, photographs etc.
- Think about how you will measure and evaluate responses. If possible, gather statistics on audiences and participants.
- Keep good financial records to demonstrate how the funds were spent. You will need to supply a verified (ie Director or Treasurer's signature) Profit & Loss Statement or Audit Statement. The Grant should be separately identified (ie RANSW CASP Grant) in the income column.

Checklist

These points may be obvious to some, but it is easy to overlook the often simple and last minute things.

- Do not staple, bind or pin the application as it will be photocopied several times. Paper clips are best.
- Do not submit originals of important documents, always submit a photocopy.
- Make sure that the application is signed and dated by the correct person in your organisation.
- Ensure that all support material requested has been sourced and included in your application. Failure to do this may make your application ineligible.
- Check that you have the correct postal address for the funding body.
- If you are unsure of any requirement or detail relating to any aspect of the application, contact the Program Manager or your Regional Arts Development Officer.

Guidelines, forms + Contacts

All the Regional Arts NSW grants program guidelines, instructions and forms are on the website at www.regionalartsnsw.com.au under Grants. A full list of Regional Arts Development Officers contact details is also on the website under RA Network. For information about other sources of funding for arts and community cultural development projects subscribe to the Regional Arts NSW e-Bulletin from the website. All enquires about Regional Arts NSW grants should be directed to the Funding + Research Officer Tel 02 9247 8577 ext 8.