



5 Tips for Success in Grants



Identify the best funding opportunities for your project or organization

➤ **Where to find funding opportunities:** Government and corporate grants are usually the easiest to find just by googling. It may be worth setting up Google alerts so you're notified when new opportunities arise or signing up to funder e-newsletters. If you have the budget, then tools like Imagine Canada's **Grant Connect** are helpful – it's a database of funding opportunities with eligibility information, deadlines, information on average gift sizes and giving history. You can also check the available funding opportunities from the **Ontario Government**.

➤ **Spend time on research:** Read all the fine print to make sure your organization and project are eligible. Sometimes it appears to be a great fit at first glance, but then there's a small detail hidden somewhere in the guidelines that means an application wouldn't even be considered.

➤ **A key detail is knowing the organization's average gift size,** and whether they will fund full projects, or only provide a certain percentage of the funding. This can help you decide whether an opportunity is worth pursuing or not, depending on your needs.

➤ **Don't be afraid to reach out to the funder** before starting your application if you have questions or need clarification. Not all funders allow this so you should always follow their instructions, but if there's an opportunity to receive advice and guidance, that's always well worth it as you'll usually also get a sense of whether your ask is competitive and interesting to the funder, and you can start to build a relationship.

Save time with templates (but always customize!)

➤ While it's important to make sure every application is customized to the funder, **you can save a lot of time by having templates saved.** Most funders will ask for the same basic information – organization background and mission, project information and outcomes, metrics for evaluation, budgets etc.



➤ When it comes time to customize these you can do so based on the questions you're asked. The level of detail you need to provide can vary widely – for government grants even the smallest details of the project delivery need to be included, whereas for some corporate asks for example, it may be more important to talk about alignment with their brand purpose and keep it short and sweet focusing more on the impact. You can usually get a sense of this from the application instructions but **do always consider your audience and what they're hoping to achieve by giving you this grant.**

➤ **If you anticipate needing additional documents like financial statements or letters of support**, it's worth getting those organized well in advance of the due date so you're not chasing them at the last minute.

➤ **Ask a colleague to read over your applications before submitting them.** Even better if they're less familiar with the project as it can help to remove any confusing jargon or insider knowledge that may not be clear to the funder.



Include stories and messages of impact

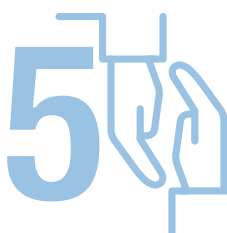
➤ The facts and figures and details of your project are very important, but it's also important to **remember that it's a person (or group of people) reading your application** and making a decision, and these decisions can be emotional ones.

➤ It's helpful to talk about the 'why' of your project, and not just the 'how'. What is the problem you're trying to solve, and why is it important?

➤ And if it's possible and appropriate, **include testimonials or personal, human stories.** Who are the people that would be positively impacted by this grant, and is there a way to feature their voices in the application?

Be prepared for impact reporting and evaluation – know the terms of the grant

➤ Before you apply, **make sure you know the expectations around evaluation and reporting**, and ensure these metrics are being collected from day one. The Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (CICMH) has resources that can help with this, but it's also important to note the different requirements of each funder and when reports are due.



Provide stewardship throughout the funding cycle

➤ And lastly, **make sure you engage your funders throughout the term of their funding.** This could mean thanking them publicly for their support if appropriate, site visits, or sharing updates and wins along the way. You don't need to bombard them with information, but you also don't need to wait for the final report to share updates. Particularly if you plan to renew the funding, it's important to build a relationship with the funder. The ultimate goal is to build long-term partnerships as it's much easier to keep and grow an existing funder, than to secure new ones.