

Winning Grants Funding: The RDAYMN Checklist

For your grant application to stand out among hundreds of applications, it needs time, care and energy to make it outstanding.

You're applying for a grant.

You're on top of your project. You know all the ins and outs, the history and the future plan, you can expand all the dot points.

But you're probably too close to the project, and need some extra advice.

Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North (RDAYMN) has created **THE RDAYMN CHECKLIST** to use when you are applying for grants or are thinking of applying in the future.

The Process

RDAYMN Assistance

With offices in Port Pirie, Clare Valley and Kadina our staff are available to talk to you face to face or over the phone when you are ready to apply for a grant. We can assist you with the application process and offer useful insights. We can also connect you with the grant provider to discuss your project before applying if required. Appointments in advance are required. **Ph: 1300 742 414**

Time

Grant applications can take time, and usually have a quick application timeframe. Have you got enough time to apply and then rewrite before the deadline? It pays to have all the information for the application ready to submit and made clear to the grant providers.

Hire a Consultant

Some businesses who are "time poor" hire consultants to assist with their application. A negotiated fee will need to be paid to them for the assistance. RDAYMN can provide you with regional consultants contact details if requested.

Direction

Does this project merge into your Strategic Plan, or are you just grabbing at the money? How does it relate to your own business priorities?

Internal consultation

Have you checked out the project with everybody in the organisation who needs to be involved? Have you got full costings, full resource demands, universal signoff, consensus? Has it been approved by your Committee or Board?

Funder consultation

Have you checked the outline of your application with the grant provider? RDAYMN suggest a phone call to discuss your project/ideas if you are unsure you fit the funding criteria. This will save you a lot of work, and you will establish a valuable relationship with the grant provider.

Proofreading

Has the submission been read by a neutral party? If you arrange an appointment in advance, RDAYMN can assist with funding submission application tips.

Online Applications

Most grant applications now ask you to apply online. RDAYMN advises you **SAVE YOUR DOCUMENT** on a regular basis and suggest copying and pasting your answers into a WORD DOCUMENT to file in case an online session is TIMED OUT.

The Framework

Cover letter

Does the submission include a cover letter describing how your project will further the grant providers mission?

Executive summary

Does the submission include an executive summary that says clearly:

- Who is applying for the grant?
- Where the proposing organization is located?
- Who is being asked to fund the grant?
- Why the grant is needed?
- What the grant money will be used for?
- When the funding is requested?
- How much money is being requested?

Attachments

Does the format allow for attachments? Does it demand them? Have you checked off the attachments to the proposal against the list of attachments required? Are all the attachments clearly labelled?

Completeness

Does the proposal address every single item or criterion in the grant providers guidelines (even if only to say “Not applicable” or “See item 2.3”) in the order and under the headings in which they appear in the guidelines?

The Style

Language

Is the language specific, accurate, concise, and clear? Is it bureaucratese or personal? Does it contain any obviously recognizable professional jargon or any clichés?

Is the language tentative (“It will probably work and if possible we might...”) or positive (“We will...”)?

Go back over the text and remove the word “seems” whenever it appears.

Title

Is the project title a little boring (Jamestown Sporting Club) or does it make a positive statement (Jamestown Youth Sporting Program Community Sports Project)?

Grammar

Is the proposal written in the active voice (“We will collect data on...”) or in the less forceful passive voice (“Data will be collected on...”)?

Is the proposal written in the first person (“We will...”) or the less emphatic third person (“The project will...”)?

Simplicity

Is the proposal written mainly in short, simple, declarative subject-verb-object sentences?

Accuracy

Has the proposal been checked and rechecked for typos and misspellings? Don’t leave that to the spellchecker.

The Layout

Compliance

Does the submission follow to the letter the grant provider's specifications on margins, spacing, type size, word count, etc?

Presentation

Is the layout broken up by bullets, italics, headings, subheadings, boldface type, colour, borders, charts or pictures?

Blanks

Have all the blanks been filled in, even if it's with "Not applicable"?

Clarity

Are acronyms spelled out in full at first use (e.g. Deductible Gift Recipient [DGR]), and if there's any possibility of confusion, at every use?

The Budget

Numbers

Does the proposal contain a detailed budget? Do the budget numbers add up? Have you had this checked by someone else? Have you done your financial calculations accurately enough to know for certain whether your proposal involves a profit, break-even, or loss?

Other funding sources

Does the submission disclose any funding you've got for the project from other agencies?

Finance Approval

If you require finance from a bank or institution do you have a letter of approval from them outlining money can be borrowed/accessed.

The Organisation

Skills

Does the proposal include a section demonstrating that your organisation has the skills, knowledge and ability to make the project a success?

Own contribution

Does the budget contain a contribution (in money, in kind, or in volunteer time) from your own organisation to demonstrate your belief in and commitment to the project?

Commitment

Does the proposal outline how you really think the project will work and is vital to the region?

Fit

Does the proposal not only show that your organisation can deliver the project but show (without attacking other agencies) that your organisation is the body best fitted to deliver it?

Partnerships

Does the proposal demonstrate constructive partnerships with all other players with interests in the area?
Does the proposal contain letters of commitment from all the partners you've mentioned?

The Project

Evidence

Does the proposal set out the project in such a way as to demonstrate factually, with supporting data, the existence of a problem? Does it show why the problem is significant and a high priority?

Methods

Does the submission have a solutions section that sets out the project's methods clearly? Does the solutions section show why these methods were adopted and alternatives rejected?

Schedule

Does the submission include a project schedule? In graphic format? One that you will be able to keep to if you get the grant?

Case

Does the proposal make a clear and consistent argument for the project?

Objectives

Does the proposal specify project objectives that are (self-evidently) realistic, achievable, and measurable?

The Grant Provider

Name

Does the submission have the grant providers name right? e.g. SA FUND (incorrect) South Australian – Regional Access Fund (correct) Some departments deliver multiple grants, and require the correct name to project manage them.

Reporting

Does the proposal include a process for regular reporting to the grant provider? Does it contain monitoring guidelines?

Benefits

Does the proposal establish (and quantify) the benefits that will flow from the project to the beneficiaries and to the grant provider?

Database

Have you put the grant provider on your mailing list for mailouts and event invitations?

The Future

Sustainability

Does the submission show that the project can survive after the grant provider funding is withdrawn?

Replicability

Does the proposal show that the project is replicable? Widely applicable? Capable of national/international impact?

Adaptable

Does the proposal show that the project's success would be adaptable to a larger project?

Longevity

Does your submission show that you'll be around for the long term?

The Message

Uniqueness

Does the proposal show why this project is unique, innovative, and different from (and better than) existing programs, or does it sound like a thousand other proposals and a hundred other programs?

Comprehensibility

Does the proposal assume too much knowledge of the area? Too little?

Conclusion

Is there a conclusion summing up the problem, your solution, its anticipated impact, its cost, your request, and the projected benefits?

Energy

Does the whole proposal communicate your enthusiasm, your energy, and your commitment? Is it engaging to read, and explains the project clearly?



Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North hope this document will guide you towards a successful grant application.

Further resources to assist with funding (regional maps, regional statistics, business plans and financial templates) are available at www.yorkeandmidnorth.com.au

If you have any further queries please phone us to discuss **Ph: 1300 742 414**.

Office Locations:

PORT PIRIE

KADINA

CLARE VALLEY

"EVERY DOOR CONNECTS" – REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA YORKE AND MID NORTH