NCETA
National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction

FundAssist

Prepare Plan Write

A toolkit to help non-government alcohol and other drug organisations prepare, plan, and write funding applications

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FHMRI | Flinders University

Acknowledgement of Country

NCETA respectfully acknowledges the Kaurna people as the Traditional Owners of the land and waters on which our Centre is located. We pay our respects to Kaurna elders past, present and emerging.

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Australian Alcohol and Other Drugs Council (AADC) [formerly involved the Alcohol and Other Drugs Council of Australia (ADCA)] Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA)
http://www.atoda.org.au

Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Council (ATDC)
http://atdc.org.au/

Association of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies NT (AADANT)
http://www.aadant.org.au

Australian Government Department of Health
http://www.health.gov.au/

National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee (NIDAC)
(defunded in December 2014).

Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (NADA)
http://www.nada.org.au/

Queensland Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (QNADA)
http://www.qnada.org.au/

South Australian Network of Drug and Alcohol Services (SANDAS)
http://www.sandas.org.au/

Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA)
http://www.vaada.org.au/

Western Australia Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA)
http://www.wanada.org.au/

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Disclaimer

This resource has been designed as a guide to assist you to prepare, plan and write your funding and grant applications.

Please note: the use of this resource does not guarantee that you will necessarily be successful in your funding application. Success is dependent upon a range of factors including the funder's review processes, priorities and demands on available funds which are independent of this resource.

About FundAssist

FundAssist aims to help non-government alcohol and other drug (AOD) organisations prepare, plan, and write successful grant applications. The resource was originally commissioned by the Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (NADA) in 2013 on behalf of the AOD peak bodies and developed by the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA). It forms part of NCETA's work on workforce development. FundAssist was revised in 2024 (Second Edition).

We welcome your feedback on your experience using this resource and any suggestions for future improvements to nceta@flinders.edu.au.

About NCETA

NCETA is part of the Flinders Health and Medical Research Institute (FHMRI), Flinders University, South Australia. It is an internationally recognised alcohol and other drug (AOD) research translation centre that works as a catalyst for positive changes in the field. NCETA's areas of expertise include workforce development, inclusive of programs and resources tailored to the needs of both specialist and generalist AOD workers. The Centre focuses on supporting evidence-based change and specialises in change management processes, setting standards for the development of training curriculum content and delivery modes, building consensus models and making complex and disparate information readily accessible to workers and organisations. NCETA is a collaborative venture between Flinders University and the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

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Contents

Introduction

Introduction

Who is this resource for?

FundAssist has been designed to assist non-government alcohol and other drug (AOD) organisations develop quality funding applications.

Although FundAssist was written for non-government AOD organisations, the information, principles and tools are generic and could be used by any organisation and/or individual.

Aims

The FundAssist resource was produced to assist organisations and individuals:

- Develop ongoing strategies to reduce the burden associated with applying for funding
- Navigate the diverse funding options available and understand how funding bodies allocate funding
- Understand the essential components of a funding application and improve their grant writing skills
- Be well prepared for funding opportunities as they arise.

In particular, this resource provides guidance designed to assist organisations to:

- Identify and respond to the needs of their community: See Demonstrating needs.
- Define their organisational strategy and develop a database to map their current activities and resources: See About your organisation.
- Understand the criteria against which funding applications are assessed: See Grant evaluation criteria.
- Build a team for developing proposals and writing applications: See Grant development team.
- Develop and implement a long-term funding strategy and identify potential sources of funding: See Funding sources.
- Develop proposals which address an identified need, are evidence-based, and meet the funder's requirements: See Developing a proposal.
- Develop comprehensive and accurate budgets: See Your budget.
- Write clear, accurate, persuasive funding applications: See Writing the funding application.
- Submit compliant applications: See Submitting the application.
- Review unsuccessful applications and improve your application success rate: See After submission.

Four key steps

Most organisations rely on external sources of funding to establish and continue their services and programs. Organisations, therefore, need a comprehensive strategic grant development approach with dedicated resources that is continuously monitored.

Good funding proposals entail four steps:

1. Preparation: Careful planning and preparation
2. Identification: Identification of needs and strategies
3. Development: Development of relationships and solutions
4. Writing: Good technical writing skills.

Follow these steps to reduce the time and stress involved in writing funding applications.

Remember: An organisation's funding strategy should ideally start before funding rounds are announced and they should not end when the application is submitted.

How to use this resource

Each section of this resource contains activities which may be used by individuals or groups. If you choose to complete the activities, it is recommended that responses are saved to a central file that may be readily accessed when funding applications are completed. Creating a Funding Portfolio may be useful to store the information created.

The resource can be used in its entirety or users can choose to focus on the sections and/ or activities which are appropriate to their skill sets and needs without having to complete the preceding steps.

Each section of this resource is independent and self-contained (i.e., you do not need to complete a particular section before moving to the next). Some content therefore has been deliberately duplicated across sections.

FundAssist contains activities of varying degrees of difficulty to suit both novice and experienced grant writers. The activities provided may be completed individually or as a group. Some tips for working in groups are provided on the next page. Individual users and organisations can select information and activities best suited to their respective skill sets.

It is recommended that users create a shared funding portfolio (eg. an electronic folder) to store the information created. This facilitates teamwork and leaves a body of work that can be accessed by other workers in the future who might need the background of a successful funding application or are looking for resources to develop a new application.

Successful funding applications involve multiple steps that commence much earlier than the actual writing of the application.

Remember: No matter how much experience you have in writing grant applications always carefully plan each new application.

Section 1 Demonstrating needs

Section 1 Demonstrating needs

In this section, we discuss how to identify and demonstrate 'needs'. We use the term 'need', but you might refer to 'need' as a 'problem', 'issue' or 'gap' depending on your organisation and the community you serve.

All applications for funding assume an unmet need. As an organisation, you might primarily need funding to develop, provide, evaluate, continue or expand a service. It is important for you to understand the requirements of the funder too. Sometimes, funders or funding opportunities relate to general topics (e.g. 'preventive health' or 'AOD harms'). To stand out amongst those applications, you will need to convince the funder that your particular proposal addresses a significant need that they should also be particularly concerned about.

Other funding opportunities can be very specific, where funders have already identified a need that they are calling for proposals to address (e.g. alcohol use by older people living in residential care). These are often referred to as a 'request for tender' or 'request for proposal'. On these occasions, you should still demonstrate that you understand the depth of that need.

Regardless of the funding call being general or specific, your application must contain a clear and credible statement of the need or problem to be addressed.

You must establish that a problem exists and that it is not already being addressed before you present your proposed solution.

Do not assume that the funder knows the importance and urgency of the problem (unless they have specifically raised a targeted call to address a problem). If you do make this assumption, you may:

- Lose the opportunity to demonstrate your intimate knowledge and understanding of an issue
- Reduce the credibility of your organisation
- Undermine confidence in your proposed solution.

The importance of demonstrating needs

The needs of AOD organisations reflect their ability to effectively address the needs of the community they serve. Your 'community' might literally be a geographic community, but it could also be a group of people with something in common, such as people facing a particular challenge or workers in the AOD sector. This section outlines the types of information and methods you might use to demonstrate community need.

Demonstrating the needs of your 'community' is important to:

- Ensure your organisation provides quality services
- Clarify and maintain your organisation's position and relevance
- Build opportunities for collaboration
- Identify relevant sources of funding
- Write convincing funding applications.

Community needs change over time and they can change quite rapidly in response to broader socio-cultural trends and political or regulatory developments. Regular community needs assessments are an essential part of your organisation's:

- Strategic planning and review processes
- Continuous quality improvement and evaluation methods
- Sustainable funding strategies.

Some funders also undertake regular needs assessments and expect that all funding applications are aligned with the priorities that have been identified.

TIPS: Demonstrating community needs

- First describe the problem, not your solution
- The identified need is not the services to be provided
- Use evidence, not assumptions or undocumented assertions, when establishing community needs
- Use relevant statistics to support the problem and proposed solution, such as The National Alcohol and Drug Knowledgebase https://nadk.flinders.edu.au/

How to identify a need

There are many tools available to help identify community need (see Table 1.1). Some approaches may involve traditional research methods (e.g., literature reviews). If you want to check the literature but you don't have much research experience or access to journal subscriptions, you could check google scholar:

- Go to google scholar https://scholar.google.com.au/
- Do a search using keywords relevant to the issue/need/gap you want to address with your funding proposal
- Sort your results by date so that you can see the most recent research
- You will get a mix of individual studies and literature reviews
- If you add 'systematic review' to your search terms, you should find publications where the researchers have reviewed a body of evidence - multiple studies meeting particular criteria and summarized the key issues and limitations
- If no systematic reviews show, you can try adding just 'review' to see if you get other types of literature reviews, like rapid reviews or scoping reviews.

To learn about different types of evidence reviews, see https://support.covidence.org/help/types-of-review-explained

One way to find out what kind of AOD-related research has been undertaken, is ongoing or is planned in Australia is to go to the Connections newsletter website https://www.connections.edu.au/ and use the search function. This will give you a list of articles about news, opinion pieces, research, new projects and publication highlights from four of Australia's leading drug and alcohol research centres since April 2014.

At the time of writing this revised edition of FundAssist, there is no function on that website to order search results by year, so you will need to pay attention to the year in which the article was published, which is clearly displayed above each search results.

For most Non-Government Organisations (NGO) AOD organisations, the identification of needs will be based on your ability to establish, nurture and build relationships with your broader community. This might include relationships with other AOD organisations.

You will need to collect and be able to document or cite relevant information to:

- Demonstrate that a need exists in the community
- Highlight your organisation’s strategy, proposal or ability to address the need.

What information will you require?

Consider what information will best demonstrate the existence and nature of the need (ie. your evidence that the need exists as is significant). If possible, use more than one type of data – or data from more than one source. For example, you might be able to access national statistics on the prevalence of alcohol and/or other drug use which you could present alongside data from local hospital admissions.

Use reliable and transparent data collection methods to support your proposal. Ask yourself:

- How do these data demonstrate a problem, gap or need?
- How significant is the need? (ie why should the funder care?)
  - How many people are affected?
  - How badly are they affected?
- Is there a broader context which highlights the importance of the need?
  - Does the need impact a secondary group or service (eg. family members, the local community, hospital admissions)?
  - Is the need related to other important concerns (eg. homelessness, mental health, violence, workplace accidents)?

Make the link sufficiently clear so that anyone, even those unfamiliar with your proposal, can see the relationship between the problem identified and the solution proposed.

If you don’t have accurate or reliable data (you might be seeking funding to get that information), you may still be able to make an estimate of the number, scale or type of problem. For example, you might be able to extrapolate population sizes from prevalence percentages in your local areas. However, if this is the case, you must show that your estimation is reasonable/plausible and acknowledge any limitations to ensure that the grant reviewer or panel views your application and its content favourably. For example, based on national data showing that over one in four (26.8%) adults aged 18 years and over exceeded the national alcohol guidelines in 2022 (ABS, 2022), you could estimate the number of adults in Australia (using estimated resident population numbers) who might benefit from a new educational campaign about the harms of ‘risky’ drinking.

Describing need in your funding application

Your funding application should include a simple explanation of:

- The needs of the people you expect to benefit
- How you established their needs
- What you propose to do about it
- Why your proposal is best suited to deliver positive outcomes.

See Developing a proposal and Setting the scene for more information about using your needs assessment to develop your proposal.

Local / community needs

Table 1.1 local / community needs

Community needs assessments:

Purpose	• To document and assess community needs • To demonstrate that your proposal addresses a need
How	• Consider the methods presented below (eg. Interviews, reference groups, community forums, surveys, strategies and literature reviews)
Tips	• Forming an ongoing Community Advisory Group is an effective way to maintain effective relationships with your community • A letter or key quotations from council, consumers (with their consent) and other key community stakeholders can evidence community need
Activities	• See the Needs Assessment Worksheet in section 1.1
Examples	• Barry, Margaret M., et al. "A community needs assessment for rural mental health promotion." Health Education Research 15.3 (2000): 293-304. https://academic.oup.com/her/article/15/3/293/652912?login=false • Community Needs Assessment Toolkit, developed by the Community Centre and Neighbourhood House sector through a process of co-design that involved Community Centres SA, participating Community Centres, Local Councils and Flinders University https://learning.communitycentressa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Community-Needs-Analysis-Toolkit.pdf • The Community Toolbox: Assessing Community Needs and Resources- https://ctb.ku.edu/en/assessing-community-needs-and-resources European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) (2010), 'Prevention and Evaluation Resources Kit (PERK)' - especially Part 1: Needs Assessment https://www.euda.europa.eu/publications/perk_en • Smart, Jessica. "Needs assessment: Families and Children Expert Panel practice resource." (2019) Australian Institute of Family Studies - https://aifs.gov.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/1902_expp_needs_assessment_0_0.pdf

Key informant / key stakeholder interviews:

Purpose	• May be used to demonstrate that your proposal is addressing concerns held by respected community members • Demonstrates concern and potential support from respected community members
How	• Informant interviews are relatively easy to undertake and you control the type of information that is sought
Tips	• Key experts and stakeholders may be able to write a letter of support for your application
Activities	• Read the UCLA Centre for Health Policy Research paper 'Section 4: Key Informant Interviews' https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/sites/default/files/2023-08/tw_cba23.pdf • 'Getting the Lay of the Land On Health: Health: Health: A Guide for Using Interviews to Gather Information (Key Informant Interviews)' https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/sites/default/files/2023-08/final-document.pdf • Learn more about engaging Aboriginal Communities: https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/acecqa/files/NEL/engaging-with-aboriginal-communities1.pdf
Examples	• Health professionals • Leaders of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups • Leaders of local advocacy groups • Local members of parliament • Police • Principals of local schools • Other community organisations

Community / client / consumer advisory group:

Purpose	• Organising a community/ client /consumer /engagement /reference /advisory group who meet routinely may be used to demonstrate that you have built ongoing relationships with the local community and have been listening to and tracking their needs over time • Builds ongoing relationships with key stakeholders and end users of your services • Provides an opportunity for community to raise their needs with you • Builds trust and rapport with the local community • Maintains the relevance of your services • Increases the likelihood of community engagement with your service/project
How	• Organising a sustainable reference group requires a deal of thought. You should develop Terms of Reference that make the aims and organisation of the group clear, including confidentiality. You should also have a standing agenda item for people to declare any conflicts of interest • You should consider offering a reimbursement or honorarium to recognise the time and expertise of your reference group members. Check with your organisation if there is a standard amount. Also, check with group members if they wish to receive a payment, as they may need to seek advice about how payments could impact their taxable income, pension or benefits

Tips	• If you call for applications for your reference group, you could ask applicants to indicate if they have grant writing experience
Activities	• Learn about a 10-step framework which describes practical strategies for establishing a community reference group and terms of reference in Aboriginal health research: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35927687/ • Read the Health Issues Centre's 'Guide to engaging diverse consumers in organisational and governance structures' https://hic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/SCV-HIC-Guide-to-engaging-diverse-consumers-in-organisational-and-governance-structures-2022.-FINAL.pdf
Examples	• Invite members representing the community groups/end users you serve (your clients) and other relevant stakeholders • For example, if your work is about workforce development, you should invite workers, supervisors, managers, union representatives and WHS representatives

Community forums:

Purpose	• To demonstrate that there is an identified need in your local community • A record of community needs and support for our organisation
How	• Organising a community forum takes time and commitment: • Identify key community members • Schedule regular meetings (e.g., twice a year)
Tips	• Key community members can provide support for your proposal
Activities	• For more information go to the Community Toolbox website http://ctb.ku.edu/ en – especially 'Chapter 3. Assessing Community Needs and Resources' under the 'learn a skill' tab. • Read the Health Issues Centre 's Guide for inclusive community consultations' https://hic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/SCV-HIC-Guide-for-inclusive-community-consultations-2022.-FINAL.pdf
Examples	• Consult with your local community by holding a forum or focus groups with your organisation's targeted population group/s

Surveys and datasets

Purpose	• To demonstrate the extent of the problem or issue • National surveys report the prevalence and incidence of a problem • National datasets provide a description of the extent of a problem or an issue • You could run your own survey of your community or – if relevant – the members of your organisation
How	• Draw comparisons between population data and local data to demonstrate the significance of a problem in your community • An example: 10% of the Australian population aged 14 years and over have recently used cannabis, but in community 50% of people aged 14 years and over have recently used cannabis
Tips	• When developing a survey, try to use the same/similar questions used in validated surveys (if using similar questions, state adapted from xx

	author, xx year) • Participant confidentiality is paramount
Activities	• Obtain from local councils, police, schools, hospitals or other community organisations any relevant local statistics • Identify any State/Territory surveys relevant to your needs • Read these tips on creating your own survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/learn/survey-best-practices/
Examples	• Alcohol and Other Drugs National Workforce Survey 2019-2020 https://nceta.flinders.edu.au/workforce/alcohol-other-drugs-national-workforce-survey • Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set (AODTS NMDS) https://www.aihw.gov.au/about-our-data/our-data-collections/alcohol-other-drug-treatment-services • Australian Bureau of Statistics https://www.abs.gov.au/ Ecstasy and Related Drugs Reporting System (EDRS) https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/resource/australian-drug-trends-2023-key-findings-national-ecstasy-and-related-drugs-reporting • Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey https://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/hilda • Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS) https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/resource/australian-drug-trends-2023-key-findings-national-illicit-drug-reporting-system-idrs • National Alcohol and Drug Knowledgebase https://nadk.flinders.edu.au/ • National Illicit Drug Indicators Project (NIDIP) https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/project/national-illicit-drug-indicators-project-nidip • National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/mental-health/national-study-mental-health-and-wellbeing/latest-release

Government policies, plans and strategies

Purpose	• To demonstrate that your proposal aligns with the potential funders' broader program of work • Establishes the significance of an issue at a global, national, state or local level
How	• Identify the components of government policies and strategies that are directly • relevant to your organisation and proposal
Tips	• If applying for funding through a private body, consider the strategies and policies they have on their websites and ensure that your program goals align with theirs
Activities	• Identify relevant government- based policies and strategies • Identify the policy or strategy of a charitable trust from whom you would like to apply for funding
Examples	• Australia's Science and Research Priorities 2015 (22 review yet to be released) https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/australias-science-and-research-priorities-2015 • National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021–2031 https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-aboriginal-and-

	torres-strait-islander-health-plan-2021-2031?language=en • National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Drug Strategy 2014 – 2019 https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-drug-strategy-2014-2019?language=en • National Alcohol and Other Drug Workforce Development Strategy 2015–2018 (under review) https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-alcohol-and-other-drug-workforce-development-strategy-2015-2018?language=en • National Alcohol Strategy 2019–2028 https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-alcohol-strategy-2019-2028?language=en • National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/projects/childrens-strategy • National Drug Strategy 2017–2026 https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/national-drug-strategy • National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategi Action Plan 2018-2028 https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-fasd-strategic-action-plan-2018-2028?language=en • Mental Health Services Plan 2020-2025 https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/8520124e-0250-4393-819e-71bca0db4ad9/19032.2+MHSP-report-web-no+watermark.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-8520124e-0250-4393-819e-71bca0db4ad9-nwLp6cp • National Ice Action Strategy 2015 https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-ice-action-strategy-2015?language=en • National Lived Experience Workforce Guidelines. 2021, National Mental Health Commission. https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/lived-experience/lived-experience-workforces/peer-experience-workforce-guidelines • National Mental Health Research Strategy https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/projects/national-research-strategy • National Mental Health Workforce Strategy 2022–2032 https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-mental-health-workforce-strategy-2022-2032?language=en • National Preventive Health Strategy 2021–2030 https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-preventive-health-strategy-2021-2030?language=en • National Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Strategy (mental health) https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/projects/stigma-and-discrimination-reduction-strategy • National Tobacco Strategy 2023-2030 https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-tobacco-strategy-2023-2030

Literature reviews

Purpose	• To demonstrate 'how big' the problem or issue is in your local community, what works, what does not work and what further work has been recommended • A synthesis of the evidence on a specific research question or topic • Provides insights on what others have done to solve similar problems • Identifies factors you need to consider when designing and implementing your proposal

How	• Demonstrates to potential funders that you have a broad understanding of a topic and that you are aware of current practice and gaps in knowledge
Tips	• If you conduct a literature review it needs to be complete and current using up-to-date secondary and primary international, national and local data sources where possible • See other tips about searching the literature under 'how to identify a need'
Activities	• Learn about the different types of literature reviews at https://support.covidence.org/help/types-of-review-explained • Read Greenhalgh, T. (1997). How to read a paper: Papers that summarise other papers (systematic reviews and meta- analyses). BMJ, 315(7109), 672-675. https://www.bmj.com/content/315/7109/672
Examples	• Dowd, Laura A., et al. "A systematic review of opioid prevalence in Australian residential aged care facilities." Australasian Journal on Ageing 41.4 (2022): 501-512. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajag.13071 • Snijder, Mieke, et al. "An ecological model of drug and alcohol use and related harms among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians: a systematic review of the literature." Preventive medicine reports 21 (2021): 101277. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335520302357

Service information

Routine information:

Purpose	• Information your organisation routinely collects or current reporting and funding purposes • Demonstrate the key aspects of your service provision
How	• Identify and clearly state the key aspects of your service provision that are relevant to a particular funding application
Tips	• Information can also be used to highlight unique aspects of your organisation (e.g., specific activities, particular location, targeted issues)
Activities	• List the type of information that you currently collect for funding purposes
Examples	• Activities held for mothers with children • Number of needle and syringe program clients, new service clients, gender, age, marital status • Number of times a resource is downloaded • Number of visits to an information page

Assessments / evaluations:

Purpose	• Illustrates the success and achievements of previous initiatives • Demonstrates you know what works and what doesn't work
How	• Can be used to document evidence-based practice in service delivery,

	intervention tools, and access and equity in community interactions
Tips	• Use information that your organisation routinely collects as part of evaluations and quality improvement activities • Conducting longer-term follow ups are often viewed favorably by funders
Activities	• List the type of information that you currently collect for funding purposes
Examples	• Awards received in recognition of success Service evaluations • Client feedback • Process or impact evaluations • Quality assurance assessments

Case studies:

Purpose	• Demonstrate need and successful client outcomes • illustrate the challenges and successes of your clients/services
How	• Ask client/s' permission if not anonymous • With your clients' involvement, develop an analytical, realistic description of their problem/ situational need for services • Merge several common case studies into vignettes
Tips	• Clients' confidentiality and privacy must be maintained. Make sure no information is identifying or identifiable
Activities	• Identify your organisation's procedures and protocols for documenting and writing up case studies • Read these guidelines for writing case studies and vignettes https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/4._author_guidelines-vignettes_and_case_studies_pass_1.pdf
Examples	• Case studies • Success stories • Vignettes

Protocols and guidelines

Purpose	• To demonstrate that your proposal follows standard clinical and/or community practices
How	• Identify the components of protocols and guidelines that are directly relevant to your organisation and to your proposal
Tips	• Elsewhere in your proposal (e.g., under Risk Management) you can highlight how staff and volunteers adhere to these protocols and guidelines
Activities	• Identify relevant protocols and guidelines

Examples	• Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/alcohol • Australian STI Management Guidelines For Use In Primary Care https://ashm.org.au/resources/australian-sti-management-guidelines-for-use-in-primary-care/ • Clinical guidelines and procedures for the use of methadone in the maintenance treatment of opioid dependence https://adis.health.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/resource/file/National_guidelines_methadone.pdf • National Guidelines for Medication-Assisted Treatment of Opioid Dependence https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/national-guidelines-for-medication-assisted-treatment-of-opioid-dependence.pdf • NCETA AOD Screening and Withdrawal Tools Collection https://aodscreening.flinders.edu.au/ • Supporting smoking cessation: A guide for health professionals (RACGP) https://www.racgp.org.au/clinical-resources/clinical-guidelines/key-racgp-guidelines/view-all-racgp-guidelines/supporting-smoking-cessation • University of Wollongong - Screening and Assessment Tools Used for Aged Care Programs in various Australian states and territories http://ahsri.uow.edu.au/chsd/ screening/index.html

Section 1 Activities

Activity 1.1 Needs assessment worksheet

Complete the needs assessment questions and provide examples of information that demonstrate the problem or need.

List the information you require to develop an accurate assessment.

If you cannot answer the questions below, look at the References and resources for information about how to conduct a needs assessment.

Has your organisation conducted a needs assessment?

☐ YES ☐ NO

When was the last time you conducted a needs assessment?

What activities did you undertake when conducting your needs assessment?

What needs or problems were identified through the needs assessment?

What information demonstrates that there is a need or problem?

Is there any other information which could demonstrate with greater clarity that a need or problem exists?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, what further information should you collect?

Where will you get this information from? See Table 1.1 in Demonstrating needs if you require assistance.

If no system was in place to collect that information, what can you set up now to start collecting that information ready for a future funding application?

What might happen if the need or problem is not addressed in a timely manner? This will assist you determine urgency and significance. Think about outcomes in terms of numbers of people, type of consequences, other people who may be impacted and costs.

How do you know this?

What may happen if you implement your solution? (think about outcomes in terms of numbers of people as well as cost savings)

How do you know this?

Activity 1.2 Describe the identified need

Focus on the need/problem that your organisation wishes to address.

Develop a three- or four-sentence description that depicts the need/problem you will address.

Include **the problem**, **the people** who are affected and – if relevant, **the area** in which they live.

Try not to use technical language or jargon.

Show this to a colleague with relevant expertise (e.g., Board members or senior staff). Ask them to define the problem and provide feedback on the clarity of your description.

What is the problem or community need?

Describe the problem or community need here.

Activity 1.3 Promote the identified need

Organisations often have to also approach local community members to obtain support for their proposal.

Develop a short 100 word "speech" using two or three key pieces of evidence to obtain support for your organisation from funders and local community members. This is also known as an 'elevator pitch'.

You can structure your pitch around:

1. What we already know or what the problem is:
2. What we don't know or what we need to do:
3. What we propose to do to find out or to carry out the solution:
4. What the expected benefits will be:

Cut straight to the heart of the issue and quickly and effectively convey the thrust of your argument to convince funders and community members to support your proposal.

In your "speech", try to provide a sense of the urgency for your request. Assist the funder and community understand why the proposal is important now.

Write your “speech” here.

Examples:

Alcohol is the leading cause of death and disability among young people and inadvertently, parents play a key role in this burden. Adolescents are most likely to source alcohol from their parents, and parents assume they are teaching responsible drinking, but in fact, supply increases risky drinking, early initiation and harms. Through an innovative co-design approach, we will develop communication materials that can be delivered at scale to support parents and discourage alcohol provision.

Zero-alcohol beverages (<0.5% alcohol) resemble alcohol in appearance and taste, often using alcohol brands. These beverages evade regulations that reduce children’s exposure to alcohol products and promotions to protect them from alcohol-related harms. This project examines whether zero-alcohol products and promotions affect children’s perceptions of alcohol, and thus warrant regulation.

Activity 1.4 Community mapping tool

Step 1: Write a brief description of the problem in your community that you wish to address.

Step 1a: Who displays the problem?

Step 1b: Where and when does the problem occur?

Step 2: How is the problem affecting the community or individuals in the community?

Step 3: What is causing the problem?

Step 4: What has been done previously to deal with the problem and how successful was this?

Step 5: What resources/support do you currently have to do something about the problem?

Step 6: What can you do to address the problem?

Step 7: Does the general community see this issue as a problem?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Step 7a: If yes, what action is being taken?

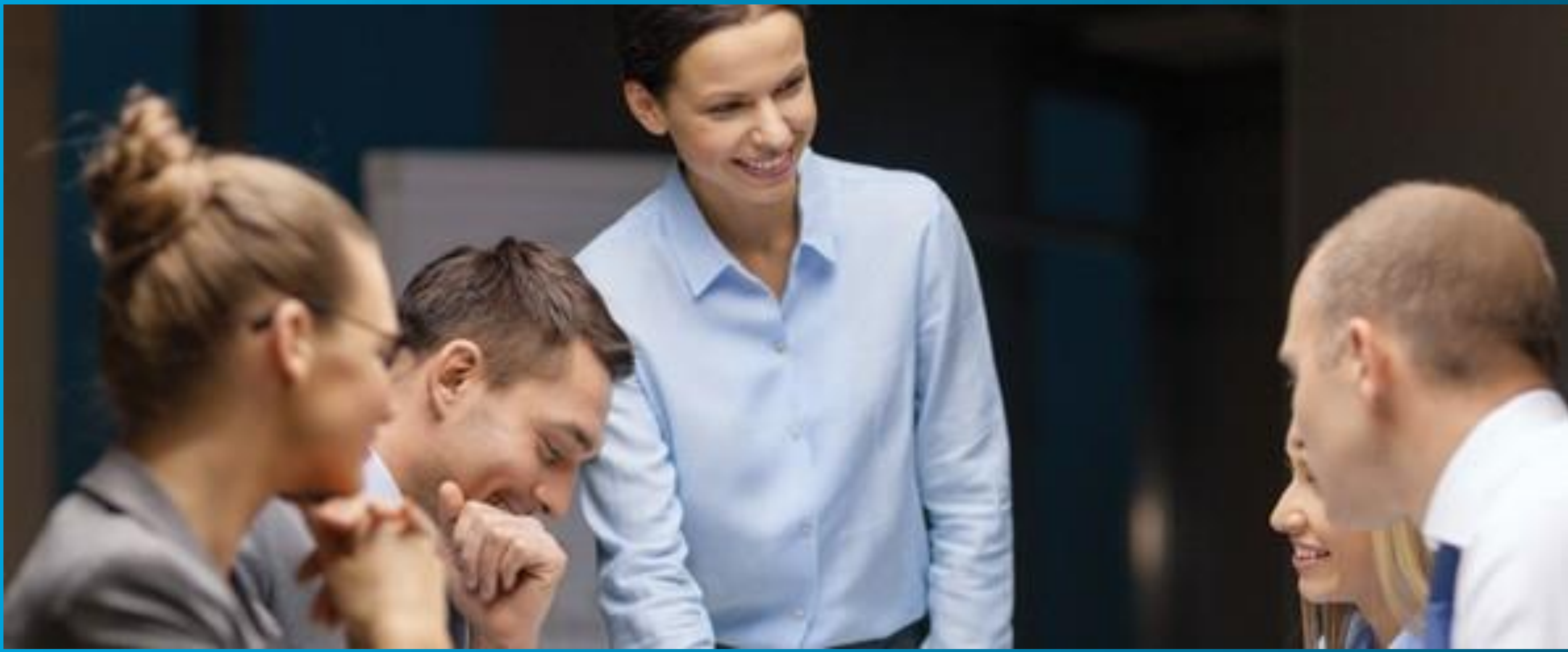
Step 7b: If no, what strategies can/are you implementing to move the community towards being ready to act.

This activity was adapted from the Western Australian Government Drug and Alcohol Office Community Mapping Tool accessed in 2014 (no longer available).

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022, *Alcohol consumption*, ABS, viewed 19 June 2024, https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/health-conditions-and-risks/alcohol-consumption/latest-release.

Section 2
About your organisation



Section 2 About your organisation

Most applications for funding will require you to describe your organisation. An appropriate description of your organisation is a fundamental part of your funding application. Do not overlook this.

Modify and tailor the description of your organisation to suit each funding application.

This section provides a step-by-step process for building and maintaining a portfolio of information about your organisation.

2.1 Who you are and what you are about provides guidance on how to map:

- Who your organisation is
- What your organisation does
- Why it matters
- Why your organisation's resources, programs and services should be funded.

2.2 Your vision, purpose, and strategy assists you develop your vision and purpose statements and strategic planning processes. It provides useful tips about reviewing and up-dating your vision, purpose and strategic plan.

2.3 Your organisation's track record will assist you to:

- Map key features of your organisation's current and previous programs
- Measure the outcomes of your programs and services
- Identify your organisation's achievements and benefits.

2.4 Your board and staff are vital to your organisation's success.

This section will assist you compile information about your organisation's governance structure and staff roles, responsibilities, and qualifications to:

- Ascertain gaps in and potential contributors to your funding strategy and activities
- Assure funders that your organisation has the required expertise and knowledge to provide quality services and successfully execute your proposal.

2.5 Organisational compliance will assist you to identify your organisation's legal and tax status, quality assurance processes, and provides information about where to obtain further information about core business requirements.

You may have already prepared some of this information. Nevertheless, it is important to continually revisit it, and make sure it is up-to-date, that it presents aspects that are particularly relevant to the grant topic and readily available when you start to prepare a grant application.

Section 2.1 Who you are and what you are about

Who you are

An important initial step in the fund seeking process is to:

- Define, map, and inform your staff, funders, community, and clients about your organisation's past, present, and future
- Identify, measure, and highlight your organisation's critical success factors
- Develop and cultivate relationships with community, funders, and clients to ensure your organisation's continued relevance and success.

These processes are not dependent upon advertised funding rounds. They are processes which should be undertaken and reviewed on a routine basis. This is important for taking advantage of funding opportunities that may arise unexpectedly.

The following sections provide suggestions about how to:

- Develop and maintain information about your organisation
- Organise and store information so it can be readily retrieved to develop the organisational capacity/environment section of your funding application.

What funders need to know

It is not enough for *you* to know about your organisation. You need to tell *others* (not only funders but staff, community members, policy makers and clients) about the who, what, where, how, and why of your organisation.

Details of the who, what, where, how, and why of your organisation should be used in all communications with potential funders, as well as when writing a funding application.

Even if your organisation has existed for some time, is recognised as leading a particular space, or has previously secured funding, you should assume that the people reading your application know nothing about you as reviewers can be brought in from different fields.

Potential funders will need to know:

- What your organisation does
- Why your organisation matters
- Who your organisation serves
- How its achievements and successes are measured
- Why your organisation's resources, programs and services should be funded
- Why your organisation is most likely to be successful if funded.

Never assume this key information is known, no matter how long you have had a relationship with the group or organisation from which you are seeking support or funding.

Why do funders need this information?

This information is needed to persuade funders that your organisation:

- Is reputable
- Is financially solvent and sustainable
- Has a strong organisational governance
- Delivers on its contractual obligations
- Has suitable data tracking methods.

Moreover, the description of your organisation should convince funders that your organisation:

- Has the knowledge, experience and capacity required to meet the community's needs
- Holds values and goals that are aligned with theirs
- Is uniquely placed to meet the funder's requirements
- Is capable of delivering the project as described, on time and within budget.

Do not only tell funders about what your organisation does or delivers – highlight the outcomes, impact and difference you have made.

Your Organisation's track record shows you how to develop this information and Demonstrating your organisation's strengths shows you how to use it in your funding application.

TIPS: Who you are and what you are about

- Before you start to write a funding application, make sure you can clearly and succinctly tell a funder about your organisation.
- Describing your organisation is a crucial part of your funding application. Organisations often overlook this part and undersell their importance to the community.
- Define, map, and publicise your organisation's past, present and future successes to assist you:
    - Obtain funding
    - Demonstrate community relevance
    - Demonstrate sustainability
    - Promote organisational strengths and uniqueness
    - Ensure planned development and quality services and programs
    - Address any organisational limitations.
- Always carefully read the funding application guidelines to make sure that you have addressed the funder's requirements and that you have appropriately described your organisation.

- It does not matter if you have a long-standing relationship or have submitted many funding applications. Never assume that funding bodies know about your organisation.

- As a general rule, when you tell a funder about your organisation, you will need to:

  - state who your organisation is, including
  - where it is, when it started or how long it has existed
  - what it does and for whom
  - highlight who comprises your organisation (eg. It might be relevant to point out the qualifications of your workforce)
  - describe how it delivers its existing programs/services.

Section 2.1 Activity

Activity 2.1.1 At first glance

How long has your organisation been in existence?

Are there any key points of evolution in your organisation's history (eg. name change or change of focus)?

What are your organisation's values?

What members of the community does your organisation serve?

What are its geographical boundaries?

What services or programs does your organisation provide?

What are your service's operating requirements (e.g., hours of operation, clients, fees charged, inclusion/exclusion criteria?

What makes your organisation unique? (eg. 24 hour drop in service, training scholarships, full peer workforce)

Describe what your organisation does in 100 words. Think about how you would explain who your organisation is and what it does in everyday language to an interested passer-by who has no specialist knowledge of your field/area of expertise. Then be sure to highlight the key aspects of your organisation that are relevant to the specific grant.

Now see if you can describe what your organisation does in one sentence. The following table provides prompts around a simple four part structure. It is general only. You might want to change the order, especially the last two columns to form the most elegant explanation of what your organisation does, why and for whom.

Name of your organisation	What you do	Why you do it	For what people
E.g. NCETA	Provides free resources	To strengthen	The AOD workforce
E.g. “We…”	…provide clean needles…	…to reduce the risk of blood borne viruses for…	…people who inject drugs.
E.g. “We…”	…advocate	…to reduce discrimination experienced by…	…AOD Peer workers in designated roles

Insert your organisation name here:	Write what you do:
	
	Examples:
	
	• Research
	• Provide training
	• Create policy
	• Provide medication
	• Provide counselling
	• Provide advice
	• Give financial assistance
		Write the aim of what you do:
		
		Examples:
		
		• To reduce use
		• To reduce harm
		• To prevent the spread of
		• To prevent the supply of
		• To enable/ empower
		  • To support
		  • To encourage
		  • To discourage
		  • To find a solution
			Describe your clients here:

TIPS: Checking for understanding

- Share your organisational summary with others involved in your organisation and see if they agree
- Share your organisational summary with someone who has never heard of your organisation and ask them to respond with their understanding of what it is that you do.

Section 2.2 Your vision, purpose, and strategy

Vision and purpose statements

Vision and purpose statements are not meaningless statements. They:

- Keep non-government organisations focused on the needs of their community
- Define organisational boundaries by clearly outlining the problem or need which it addresses
- Provide staff with clear direction about organisational values and goals and motivate them to achieve common outcomes
- Inform the development of the strategic plan and your organisational goals and plan
- Give funders a clear indication of the direction of your organisation (Braun, 2012).

Although purpose and vision statements are short, writing one is not a quick process. It takes time to identify an organisational purpose which is inclusive, inspirational, and appropriate. A best practice approach to this is to involve staff, board, clients of your services and the community in the development of your statement.

Vision statements

Vision statements inform staff, clients, funders, and the community about the values that your organisation represents. Your vision statement paints a picture of what your organisation wants to achieve. It takes a longer term view than your purpose statement and strategic plans (i.e., what does your organisation hope to achieve 20 years from now?).

Unlike purpose statements and strategic plans, vision statements are not measurable. They embody long-term foundational beliefs which:

- Inform staff about how things should be done
- Shape clients' understanding of why they should engage with your organisation
- Provide funders with an indication of whether your organisation's values align with theirs.

Purpose statements

An effective purpose statement must provide a clear description of:

- Where an organisation is headed
- What sets it apart from other entities
- The target need and client group.

A purpose statement should be short, memorable, unambiguous, and appropriate for a variety of organisational stakeholders including employees, clients, Board members and funders.

Purpose statements inform staff, clients, funders, and the community about:

- The reason your organisation was established (purpose)
- What your organisation wants to achieve (objectives).

Good purpose statements should keep your organisation focused and guide decision-making processes by:

- Providing a brief overview of your areas of concern
- Incorporating measurable outcomes.

A purpose statement is your organisation's touchstone. Use it as a tool to assist you decide between various courses of action. As you develop programs, apply for funding, and pursue your ideals, always ask:

"Will this assist us accomplish our purpose?"

When developing or reviewing your purpose statement, answer the six questions in Table 2.1. The first three are directly related to writing your purpose statement. Questions 4-6 are useful for periodically revising your purpose statement.

Table 2.1 Six Questions to Assist you to Develop and revise Your Purpose Statement

Question	Considerations
1. What do we do?	What services do you provide?
2. How do we do it?	This refers to technical elements of the organisation i.e., the types of programs and services that you provide to your clients and how those services and programs are delivered.
3. Who are our clients?	The answer to this question will help you focus your organisational efforts, define your clients' demographic characteristics (age, income etc.), and then define a geographic area where your organisation offers services.
4. Is this the best way of providing our services?	This question helps organisations to avoid becoming fixed, focused, or rigid about how they do things.
5. Is there anything else we could be doing to improve our outcomes and achieve our goals?	This question helps organisations evolve their service delivery models and/or activities.
6. Is everything we are doing really focused on achieving our goals?	This question helps you avoid or cease activities which are not achieving your goals.

Examples of purpose statements include:

- ‘To connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful’ (LinkedIn)
- ‘A just and sustainable world without the inequalities that keep people in poverty’ (Oxfam Australia)
- ‘To deliver valued services that reflect and contribute to Australian society, culture and identity’ (Australian Broadcasting Corporation)
- ‘To promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable, with measurable impact for people at country level’ (World Health Organisation)
- ‘We use data and advocacy to promote harm reduction and drug policy reform. We show how rights-based, evidence-informed responses to drugs contribute to healthier, safer societies, and why investing in harm reduction makes sense’ (Harm Reduction International)
- ‘To advance the capacity of health and human services organisations and workers to respond to alcohol and drug-related problems’ (National Centre for Training and Education on Addiction).

Strategic plans

Strategic plans are important to:

1. Strengthen your organisation, by:
    - Assessing productivity and the effectiveness of your grant development activities
    - Building Board, staff and volunteer understanding of your organisation’s relationship with its community
    - Targeting areas of stakeholder interest
    - Focusing effort within an organisation
    - Targeting grant development areas
    - Increasing the organisation’s visibility.
2. Inform potential funders about:
    - Your organisation
    - Your organisation’s goals and functions
    - What your organisation hopes to achieve over a specified period of time. This can range from three to five years.

Your strategic plan should:

1. Outline your organisation’s critical success factors. These are the areas which require a long-term focus to achieve your organisation’s purpose and vision
2. Detail your strategic approach to achieving your objectives
3. Define your relationship with the community by including details of intended target groups and collaborators
4. Clearly state specific and measurable short-term goals in terms of:
    - What you want to accomplish
    - When you want to accomplish it

- How you are going to do it
- Who is responsible for achieving these goals.

5. Identify:

   - Activities that lead to the implementation of your goals (also known as action items)
   - Who will manage and monitor the plan and how it is communicated and supported.

Developing your vision, purpose and strategy

Your organisation's vision, purpose, and strategy are influenced by the needs and problems you have identified in your community (see Demonstrating needs).

To develop your strategic plan, you need to identify your organisation's:

- Values and goals
- The activities, steps, and resources needed to achieve its goals
- What you will measure to determine success.

Organisations often undertake a Results Based Accountability (RBA) process which asks:

- What do we want to achieve?
- How much will we do?
- How well will we do it?
- Will anyone be better off?

Knowing what you want to achieve, what and how much you need to do to achieve it, and who will benefit from your actions is crucial when developing and/or reviewing your organisation's strategic plan. In general, strategic plans explain:

- Where you are now
- Where you are going
- How you intend to get there.

Strategic plans build on your organisation's strengths; address its weaknesses; capitalise on opportunities; and develop responses to threats (see Your organisation's track record for a SWOT analysis of your organisation's activities and resources).

Demonstrating that your organisation has a long-term plan reassures funders that their investment is sustainable, in safe hands, and will have ongoing benefits.

Reviewing your purpose and strategy

The planning process defines and continually reviews your organisation's relevance. It is imperative that you regularly revisit your purpose statement, strategic plans, and grant development strategies and involve as many stakeholders as possible.

As organisational priorities are influenced by community needs and problems, organisations may have to change direction as the external environment changes. Purpose statements and strategic plans may need to be adapted or even completely rewritten, over time.

Example of a changing political environment: The Australian context

The improved services initiative

In 2007, The Improved Services Initiative was implemented by the Australian Government to build service capacity, so that the alcohol and other drug sector could respond more effectively to alcohol and people with co-occurring mental health issues. The Initiative included a range of strategies that aimed to better qualify, train and professionally develop the workforce, build the capacity of the NGO sector, increase organisational responsibilities through the development and dissemination of resources, and enhance partnerships with related professionals through linkage activities. A number of alcohol and other drug agencies have subsequently incorporated a mental health focus in their [purpose] statements (WANADA, 2011).

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)

The first ACCHO was established for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Redfern in 1971. This was in response to experiences of racism in mainstream health services and an unmet need for culturally safe and accessible primary health care. A national umbrella organisation, the National Aboriginal and Islander Health Organisation, was first established in 1976 and became the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation in 1992.

Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)

AIVL was formed in the late 1980s/early 1990s in response to an identified need from the state/territory peer-based drug user organisations to have a national 'voice' for people who use illicit drugs, and in particular in relation to people who inject drugs.

At the time, the Federal Government was formulating Australia's first national response to HIV/AIDS and as drug users we were fighting for the establishment of Needle & Syringe Programs (NSPs) and advocating for the idea that drug users could effectively educate each other about HIV prevention and other issues and run their own organisations. This is the context in which AIVL as a national organisation representing people who use/have used illicit drugs came into existence.

AIVL became a formal incorporated, legal entity in 1992 which marked the development of both AIVL as the national body and a national network of organisations that over the ensuing decades has gone on to be highly regarded for our resilience in the face of extreme political and moral challenges, the quality of our work and, importantly, the strength of our stance and representation on issues for people who inject and use illicit drugs both within and outside of Australia. See https://aivl.org.au/

TIPS: Reflecting on other organisations and finding inspiration

- Step 1: Find three examples each of a vision, purpose and strategy from organisations who work in the same or similar sector as you
- Step 2: Highlight the sections you think are most compelling. What makes this organisation stand out as unique?
- Step 3: How is your organisation unique from other similar organisations and how can you reflect this in your strategic plan?

The planning process

An organisation that thinks and acts strategically is better positioned for effective grant development. The planning processes involved in developing your purpose statement, strategic plans, and grant development strategies enable:

- Diverse stakeholders to embrace your organisation's purpose, strategies, and objectives
- Staff, funders, clients and the wider community to be informed about:
  - Why your organisation matters
  - What your organisation does to obtain results and make a difference.

Involving relevant external and internal stakeholders in your organisation's planning activities is a good way to:

- Educate them about your organisation's purpose, goals, and successes
- Bring about organisational commitment and alignment
- Produce organisational learning and change.

When developing or reviewing your strategic plan, complete Activity 2.2.3 Developing and reviewing your strategic plan in 20 Questions.

TIPS: Your vision, purpose and strategy

- Creating or renewing your vision and purpose statement will take time. The process involved is just as important as the end result
- When creating your vision and purpose statements, involve the Board, staff and others who are connected to your organisation
- Stimulate ideas by looking at sample purpose statements
- If you are a large and/or diverse organisation you may want to consider developing targeted purpose statements to satisfy the needs of different clients
- Do not make your purpose statement lengthy and ambiguous. It must reflect your organisation's goals and the community's needs

- Vision and purpose statements guide your organisation. They do not lock it into a particular direction. As your organisation grows or the community's needs change, review your purpose and vision statements to ensure they still reflect your organisation's goals

- However, do not review your vision and purpose statements too often or too radically as they contain foundational aspirations, not ever-changing items based on the flavour of the moment

- Your purpose statement must be measurable. Funders are committed to your values; not your organisation. Reinforce your vision by measuring how well you achieve your purpose. See **Your organisation's track record** for ways to measure your services and/or programs

- Be realistic. Try not to use unmeasurable objectives or unachievable goals such as "eliminating drug use" in your purpose statement and strategic plan

- Develop a communication plan for informing staff, clients, funders, and the community about your organisational history, values, purposes, plans, and achievements. Items which may assist you to record your organisational history are annual reports and previous reports to funding bodies

- How long your organisation has been in existence is not as important as your organisational values and outcomes

- Do not use jargon and/or formal language that only professionals in your particular field will understand

- Use the active voice, not passive voice

- Do not focus on the organisation; focus on the people it serves.

References and resources

- Braun, S. (2012). Effectiveness of Mission Statement in Organizations - A Review.Journal of Management & Organization,18(4). Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-management-and-organization/article/abs/effectiveness-of-mission-statements-in-organizations-a-review/DB54DF7C451F1488BA8BEEF06A721E54

- The Community Toolbox Website, 'Developing Strategic and Action Plans', https://ctb.ku.edu/en/developing-strategic-and-action-plans

- The Mission Statements Website contains examples of mission statements- https://www.missionstatements.com

- The My Strategic Plan Website provides examples of strategic plans - http://mystrategicplan.com/samples/

- Network of Alcohol and Drug Agencies (NADA). Planning Framework and User Guidebook: Outcome Based Planning and Reporting Framework User Guidebook for Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Residential Rehabilitation Services, https://nada.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/planningframeworkuserguidebookopfaboriginal.pdf

- The Results-Based Accountability™ Guide, http://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27896/documents/By_Division/DCHP/RFP/RBAGuide.pdf

- The Results Based Accountability Implementation Guide Website provides information and resources to assist organisations adopt the Results Based Accountability Framework when planning, making decisions, and measuring performance of goals - http://raguide.org/

- The Strategic Planning for Dummies Cheat Sheet may be downloaded from the For Dummies Website http://www. dummies.com/how-to/content/strategic- planning-kit-for-dummies-cheat-sheet. html

- Western Australian Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (2011). Review of the Impact of the AOD Improved Services Initiative in Western Australia. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (unavailable online).

YouTube videos

- Mark Friedman. (2009). Video Introduction to Results Based Accountability https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtBC89F3Xi4

- Mark Friedmen. (2009). Mark Friedman Explains how Results Accountability is Different from any other Framework https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdaLRAQFjHg

- Results Based Accountability (2016) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9QD-I5Z15Y

Section 2.2 Activities

Activity 2.2.1 Exploring your organisation's vision and purpose

Does your organisation have a vision and/or purpose statement?

YES NO

If no, develop a vision and purpose statement with your team (see Activity below).
If yes, write your organisation's vision and/or purpose statement here.

Does your vision and/or purpose statement say what your organisation believes in and why your organisation exists?

YES NO

Ask the questions below to review your organisation's vision and purpose statements to assess their relevance.

Is the problem we set out to solve still a problem?

YES NO

Does your organisation's vision and purpose statements reflect the community's needs? Look at Demonstrating needs to inform your answer.

YES NO

Are your vision and purpose statements and strategic plans still relevant?

YES NO

If no, briefly outline the reasons why.

If yes, briefly outline how your vision and purpose statement reflect your community's needs.

Does your purpose statement reflect the priorities of potential funding partners?

YES NO

Consider potential partners identified in Funding sources and Building relationships.

Activity 2.2.2 A succinct purpose statement

Create a unique purpose statement for your organisation which clearly defines your organisation's purpose by answering the questions below.

What do you do?

How do you do it?

What community members do you serve?

Where are you going?

What community need does your organisation provide for?

What can you do for clients that will enrich their lives and contribute to their success?

If you could measure only one thing, what would it be?

Use a verb, target population, and a measurable outcome to develop a succinct purpose statement.

How many words can you remove from your draft purpose statement without losing the message of your core purpose?

Activity 2.2.3 Developing and reviewing your strategic plan in 20 questions

Involve staff, Board Members, and management in developing a strategic plan for your organisation. If your organisation already has a strategic plan, review it using the checklist below. Does your organisation have a strategic plan?

If yes, review your strategic plan. If no, develop a strategic plan. Answer the questions below when developing and/or reviewing your strategic plan.

1. Who needs/uses our services?
2. What do they value?
3. What has been the outcome of our work?
4. What is our unique contribution to the community - why does this matter and to whom?
5. What is happening in the world outside our organisation? What are the implications for the work that we do and might do, and how we do it?
6. What needs are being met, and who is meeting these needs?
7. What needs are not being met?
8. Do we have the capability to respond to any of these needs?
9. How do we cooperate and collaborate with other organisations?
10. Could we build alliances and collaborate to meet the community's and/or our organisational needs?
11. What do we want to achieve? What is our vision for the future?
12. Will we change who we are? If so, how?
13. What will we need to do to achieve our vision and outcomes?
14. Who will be our collaborators?
15. How will we move from where we are today? What are our strategies?
16. What services and programs will we offer? What organisational development is required?

17. Who will do what and in what time frames?

18. How will we recognise when we have achieved it?

19. How will we measure success?

20. How much will all this cost, and how will we finance our endeavours?

21. How will we ensure that we are accountable?

Section 2.3 Your organisation's track record

Funders want to support organisations that:

- Have sustainable programs and resources
- Provide quality services and measurable outcomes
- Have appropriate and transparent financial arrangements.

They want to know:

- What existing or previous programs and services you have provided
- The need/s that they addressed
- Whether the programs and services were successful and made a difference.

Map your programs and services

Funding bodies need to be told about the services and programs provided by your organisation so they can:

- Ascertain whether such programs and services are driven by community need and demand
- Determine how much experience you have in delivering programs and services of the type for which you are seeking funds.

Table 2.2 provides an overview of organisational and service features you may wish to record.

Table 2.2 Organisational and service features

Feature	Example
What is/was provided?	Education, counselling, advocacy
Who funded it?	Education Department; Health Department
How long was the program/service provided for?	12 months
When was the service provided?	Monday from 2 pm to 6 pm
To whom was it provided?	Young people, drug users, families
Where was it provided?	Toorak Gardens, Victoria; Bundaberg, Queensland
What was the mode of delivery?	One-off events, mixed mode, telephone

How well does your organisation perform?

“However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results”. Winston Churchill

When delivering programs or services, you should measure:

- What you are doing
- How well you are doing it
- The outcomes of your programs and services.

Implementing systems and processes to regularly collect and analyse this information is important to:

- Inform the design, delivery, and maintenance of quality services
- Provide information to clients, the community, and funders about the benefits your organisation provides
- Increase transparency and accountability in your reporting requirements to funders.

Critical success factors (aka key result areas)

Define your organisation’s critical success factors before you measure what you do, how well you do it, and the outcomes of your services and programs. Your organisation’s critical successes are the:

- “Aspects of organisational performance that determine ongoing health, vitality and well being” (Niedritis, Niedrite, & Kozmina 2011)
- Essential areas of activity that must be performed well for your organisation to achieve its purpose, objectives and goals.

Your organisation’s critical success factors should operate over four domains (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Critical success factor domains

Domain	Description	Example
Industry	Factors determined by industry-specific matters. Organisations need to adhere to so they may remain competitive.	Provide quality services. Employ staff with at least a minimum qualification.
Environmental	Factors resulting from macro-environmental influences on an organization.	Effectively collaborate with other organisations.
Strategic	Factors determined by your Board as strategic in positioning the organisation.	Consult regularly with the local community and other stakeholders.
Temporal	Factors resulting from the organisation’s internal forces.	Consistently review and evaluate performance to drive improvement.

Knowing your organisation's critical success factors will assist you to identify:

- The performance measures needed to achieve your organisation's goals
- Which stakeholders should be approached for feedback on your organisation
- The tools and processes required to evaluate your organisation's activities, services, and programs.

To determine your critical success factors, consider your organisation's strategic goals (see Your vision, purpose, and strategy) and ask:

"What area of business or activity is essential to achieve this goal?"

Why is it important to identify your organisation's critical success factors?

Identifying your organisation's critical success factors is important to:

- Streamline your organisation's reporting requirements
- Assist everyone involved in your organisation understand what is expected of them
- Link your daily activities to the organisation's strategy
- Highlight your organisation's unique abilities and distinctive qualities
- Conduct evaluations and identify areas of achievement and improvement.

Tell funders about your organisation's critical success factors and how you have achieved them. If you know what your goals are and have measured how well you have achieved them, then it should be easy to tell funders about the sustainable competitive advantage you offer compared to your competitors.

Measuring your critical success factors

To obtain funding, many funding bodies require organisations to:

- Undertake accreditation and continuous quality improvement processes (or be working towards these)
- Demonstrate their key results indicators (e.g. how many people use your service)
- Identify their key performance indicators.

Your approach and the way you document your key results will depend on the nature of the project and its objectives. Results can be recorded as either processes, outcomes or a combination of both.

Whichever way you record your results, you will need to describe how your evaluation information will be collected and how the data will be analysed.

Obtain information from a variety of sources when measuring your services and/or programs. Diverse information is required to inform different stakeholders.

To inform the design and delivery of effective, appropriate, and efficient services, organisations need to document and – where possible, measure:

- What they are delivering (process evaluation) and what they are achieving (outcome evaluation) to determine how they may improve
- Client views about the strengths and weaknesses of the services they receive.

The programs and services provided by your organisation should be routinely evaluated to record whether your organisation is achieving its objectives and how well it is achieving them (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4 Ways to assess progress

Type of results	Description	Who do you ask?
Process	What has been done? How it has been done? Who has been involved or reached? Quality of activities Examples of process results include: • Tracking inputs (e.g., funding levels, number of staff) • Throughputs (e.g., bed occupancy rates, length of stay) • Outputs (e.g., number of community contacts).	• Staff • Volunteers • Board members
Impact	Document changes (i.e., what was the situation previously and what is it like now?) How has it changed in the short- and medium-term? This could be documented in two ways: • Qualitative: A record of participant expectations, experiences and outcomes • Quantitative: Details of a range of program elements (e.g., number of people whose substance use was reduced, number of people engaged in treatment) Examples of impact results include comparing changes before and after a project started (e.g., bed occupancy rates at the beginning and end of the project period).	• Clients • Participants • Community

Client outcome measures

Measuring client health outcomes in AOD organisations is important to ensure the services and programs provided are relevant, accessible, effective and efficient. A client health outcome is:

- A change in a client's health or wellbeing status between two points in time
- Measured to assess change or improvement as a result of the services received.

A range of relevant and reliable instruments are available. For further guidance, see:

- The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (2009) Measuring the outcomes of community organisations https://www.aracy.org.au/publications-resources/command/download_file/id/111/filename/Measuring_the_outcomes_of_community_organisations.pdf
- Teesson, M., Clement, N., Copeland, J., Conroy, A., & Reid, A. (2000). The measurement of outcome in alcohol and other drug treatment: A review of available instruments. National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), University of New South Wales. https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/resource/measurement-outcome-alcohol-and-other-drug-treatment-review-available-instruments

When completing your database of previous programs and services, record how the outcomes were measured. Client's health outcomes can inform which aspects of your programs or services are effective, efficient, or appropriate regardless of the episodic nature in which many people with alcohol and drug problems engage with services and/or the manner in which their wellbeing, functioning and quality of life may fluctuate over time.

Your benefits and impact

Funding bodies need to be persuaded that your organisation should receive their funding. They see their support as an investment and prefer to invest in organisations that can value-add to the funding they provide. Tell funders about the:

- Benefits of working with your organisation
- Long-term impacts your organisation has had on the community.

The benefits and impact of alcohol and other drug non-government organisations

Alcohol and other drug agencies are human-change agents. They exist to either bring about some change in the way someone behaves or their circumstances, attitude, health, competence and capacity. Like all community organisations, AOD agencies contribute to community wellbeing in four broad ways.

AOD agencies:

1. Provide services to clients
2. Influence and promote change on economic, social, cultural and environmental issues (e.g. providing education programs, contributing to research, and increasing understanding of effective approaches)
3. Connect individuals to community networks

4. Invest in skills, knowledge and physical, social, cultural and environmental assets for the benefit of future generations.

Benefits provided by AOD agencies derive from the services and outcomes provided to:

- Clients
- Community
- Staff
- Funders and partners.

Explaining these benefits in a funding application requires:

- Knowledge about the field
- Insight into your identified client base
- Creativity and imagination
- Good writing skills.

Some may think that the benefits of their organisation are the same as the outcomes; however, there are distinct differences.

An outcome is a result which affects real world behaviours/circumstances and may lead to one or more benefits. **Benefits** are measurable improvements resulting from, and enabled by, the outcomes.

Your organisation's success stories

Success stories are powerful tools which help:

- Promote your organisation's progress and achievements
- Inform the community and funders about individual client outcomes and the benefits of your organisation
- Staff and volunteers celebrate achievements
- Engage the community, other organisations, and funders.

When preparing your success stories, consider the following:

- What is a success story?
- What is the developmental stage of the program?
- What type of format is most appropriate for the story and audience?
- How will the story be collected?

Success stories may be used to:

- Respond to public inquiries about your organisation
- Educate decision-makers
- Demonstrate that funds are well spent
- Make the target population aware of your organisation
- Show progress when planned outcomes will not be realised until well into the future
- Assist your organisation get necessary resources.
- Document both intended and unintended results
- Provide information that can be used to publicise early achievements.

Creating success stories

Don't collect success stories haphazardly or at the last minute. Instead:

- Develop a plan to systematically collect and create success stories that highlight your organisation's achievements. The plan should
- include assigning data collection, story development, and communication strategy responsibilities
- Assign success story collection duties to specific staff
- Determine the story formats, themes and targeted audience. Categories could include:
- Testimonials (e.g., individual client life changes)
- Organisational and/or partner achievements (e.g., coalitions, advisory groups, committees)
- Promising practices and lessons learned (e.g., programs that are showing progress but are not yet "proven"; ideas that other programs similar to yours might learn from or ideas that might suggest future action)
- Infrastructure development (e.g. improved data collection systems).

Explore your organisational strengths

Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted' (attributed to Albert Einstein)

Organisations that strive to create an advantage will continue to be competitive over time. The process of exploring the strengths within your organisation is similar to other organisational analyses. It requires working with internal and external stakeholders to identify what works well. By exploring what works well, the leadership and management teams can focus energy on catalysing those areas of success and applying "what works" to areas that need a boost.

Processes can include:

- One-on-one interviews with members of the executive and management team
- Gathering feedback from individual employees through focus group discussions, interviews, and anonymous surveys
- Identifying employee talents
- Collecting information and feedback on organisational processes, communications, and collaborations
- Evaluating the organisation's website, social media accounts and promotional activities
- Obtaining feedback from clients, the local community, funders, and other partners
- Measuring client engagement (site visits, engagements, downloads)
- Analysing inputs and outputs.

Exploring strengths can also provide an opportunity to document and reflect on weaknesses, opportunities and threats. See Activity 3.2.2. to structure a SWOT analysis for your organisation.

Promoting your organisational benefits

Great ways to create and promote funding opportunities for your organisation include participating in community events, contacting local businesses and councils, and developing success stories for the local media as well as featuring them on your organisation's website. When promoting your organisation:

- Identify, profile and understand who will be receiving your message
- Practice your message and delivery and obtain feedback from someone representing the target audience before publicising.

Referees

A referee is someone who can vouch for your organisation and its capacity to successfully conduct the project. When choosing a referee, consider:

- Agencies with whom your organisation regularly works, consults or collaborates
- The objectives of your proposal
- The target audience of your proposal.

TIPS: Your organisation's track record

- Develop a list that highlights your organisation's critical success factors and its ability to achieve them.
- Promote your **organisation's success stories** on your organisation's website, in the local media, social media, in community presentations, and when networking with local businesses and/or other organisations.
- Keep it simple: organisations should only have between 5 and 8 critical success factors.

References and resources

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- Parmenter, D. (2011). Finding Your Organization's Critical Success Factors: The Missing Link in Performance Management outlines the 12 step process involved in finding your organisation's critical success factors. https://davidparmenter.com/files/finding-your-organisations-critical-success-factors-nov-09.pdf

- Productivity Commission. (2010). Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector, Chapter 3. Available from the Australian Government Productivity Commission https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/not-for-profit/report

- The SANE Media Centre has developed a range of comprehensive factsheets which may assist your organisation when working with the media, especially regarding mental health issues https://www.sane.org/media-centre/working-with-the-media

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Section 2.3 Activities

Activity 2.3.1 Map your organisation's programs, services, and activities

Complete an organisational track record. Construct a database/table listing previous and current activities, services, and programs. Describe each entry's features, objectives and outcomes, duration, location, and:

- The resources involved
- Who the target population was and how many were involved
- Why the activities/program were provided
- Who the funder was
- Whether any partners were involved.

Where possible, provide both qualitative and quantitative information to highlight the outcomes and benefits of previous activities.

Project	Funder	Partners	Duration	Target population	Activities & features	Objectives	Outputs & outcomes
.							
.							
.							

Activity 2.3.2 Measuring success

Critical success factors or key result areas

What are your organisation's critical success factors?

Does your organisation measure its critical success factors?

☐ YES ☐ NO

How does your organisation measure its critical success factors?

What are the results? Present supporting documentation.

Quality assurance and accreditation

What mechanisms do you use to know if the programs and services you provide are effective and appropriate?

What indications of success can you provide? List both quantitative and qualitative measures of outputs and outcomes.

Activity 2.3.3 Develop your success stories

Previous work, staff development, collaborative efforts, community awards and recognition are important components of your organisation's overall uniqueness Your Organisations Success Stories You need to develop:

- A method of recording your organisation's success stories
- Promoting your organisation's success stories to your funders, partners, and the community.

To develop success stories, read the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Impact and Value: Telling your Program's Story - http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/library/pdf/success_story_workbook.pdf - and follow the instructions. Consider the questions below to formulate the success stories for your audience's perspective.

Who is the primary audience(s) for your success story?

What is important to them?

What do they care about?

What type of outcomes will be meaningful to them?

How will they use your success story?

Once you have developed some success stories, develop a communication strategy to highlight them to key stakeholders (see Activity 2.3.4 in Your organisation's success).

Activity 2.3.4 Develop a communication strategy

A communication strategy (also called a promotional plan) maps out how to promote your organisation's success and values. This is critical to:

- Enhance connection with the community
- Attract staff and Board members
- Increase your funding base.

Your community connectedness

Prior to developing your promotional plan, assess your organisation's community connectedness. Answer each of the questions below, noting the 'evidence' for your answer (i.e. 'how do we know'?) and/or assigning tasks where relevant (i.e. 'what [more] can we do'?).

How well is the work that we do known in the wider community?

Have we established effective partnerships and referral pathways?

How effectively are we reaching those who could benefit from our services?

Do we need to attract staff?

Do we need to attract appropriate Board members?

Are we accountable to our community, funders, clients, and staff?

Are all funders aware of us and what we do?

Could we enhance or better communicate our profile?

How will your organisation increase its community profile?

To increase your sources of funding, organisations should develop a plan to promote your organisation.

Does your organisation have a communication strategy/promotional plan?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, write the activities your organisation undertakes to increase its community profile. If no, read the Civicus toolkit, Promoting Your Organisation, available from http://www.civicus.org/new/media/Promoting%20your%20organisation.doc and complete the table on the next page.

Activity 2.3.4 Develop a communication strategy/promotional plan continued

Who do we need to communicate with?	Why do we want to communicate with them?	What do we want to communicate with them about?	How will we communicate?	When/how often? How will we distribute?	What will it cost?	Who is responsible?	How will we monitor and evaluate success

Activity 2.3.5 Conduct a SWOT analysis

Conduct a SWOT analysis to identify the strategic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats which may impact your organisation. Strategic strengths and weaknesses are internal factors, whereas strategic opportunities and threats relate to external factors.

Use your SWOT analysis to identify:

- The positive, unique qualities and successful experiences of your organisation and people. This information may be used to inform the Demonstrating your organisation's strengths section of your application

- The areas that could be further developed by taking advantage of external opportunities (e.g., funding/ collaboration) or internal development

    - The external changes which may impact your organisation's purpose, vision, and strategy and influence the ideas you develop in Section 6: Developing a proposal. COVID-19 is probably the best example of an unforeseen external threat that challenged the non-government AOD sector, and led to many positive changes such as increased acceptance of flexible delivery alongside a greater understanding of the importance of direct social contact.

Answer the questions in the figure below to consider your organisation's strategic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Internal	**Strategic strengths** What are your strengths? What do you do better than others? What unique capabilities and resources do you possess? What do others perceive as your strengths? How can you build on your strengths even more?	**Strategic weaknesses** What are your weaknesses? What do your competitors do better than you? How can you address your weaknesses - now or in the medium and longer term? What do others perceive as your weaknesses?
External	**Strategic opportunities** What trends or opportunities may positively impact you? What trends or opportunities can you seize hold of? What opportunities are available to you?	**Threats** What trends or conditions may negatively impact you if you are not prepared? What are your strategies to minimize the impact of threats? Do you have solid financial support? How prepared is your organisation for a future pandemic?

Section 2.4 Organisational governance

A range of people develop, manage and deliver your organisation's services and programs. It may be difficult to immediately recognise all those who contribute to the work of your organisation. It is important to map:

- The roles, functions, and expertise of each person involved in your organisation
- The skills, ability, and willingness of each person to contribute to your funding strategy and activities, including the identification of needs, suggestion/road-testing of ideas and application writing
- Your organisation's decision-making and risk management procedures.

The information acquired from your mapping will assist you to:

- Develop the organisational capacity section of your funding application (see Demonstrating your organisation’s strengths)
- Enable team members to participate in the development of the organisation's funding strategy and applications
- Workers feel heard included and connected to the work of the organisation
- Assure funders that your organisation has appropriate decision-making processes in place and is able to manage any organisational and/or program/ service risks.

Enabling all members of your organisation to contribute to decision-making processes, participate in developing the organisation's funding strategy, and improve their capacity to develop funding applications will contribute to your organisation's sustainability (see Grant development team).

The material below will assist you to:

- Map the qualifications, skills, organisational knowledge, and commitment to organisational growth of all those who contribute to your organisation
- Develop short biographies for your Board members and staff
- Define staff roles and responsibilities necessary to deliver your proposal.

What is good governance

Governance is about good decisions being made by the right person/people and the systems and/or processes involved when making and implementing decisions.

Strong governance in the non-government AOD sector is a requirement for organisations where funding is provided by government.

Effective governance:

- Provides leadership and direction to the organisation
- Ensures proper processes and structures are in place so the organisation can operate effectively, efficiently and safely
- Positively impacts the success of organisational funding strategies.

As the governance structures which underpin your organisation impact the sustainability of your organisation, you will need to demonstrate to funders that your organisation:

- Has appropriate governance structures
- Is a sound and reliable entity.

If required in your funding application, you should be ready to provide funders with a copy of your organisational structure and approach to governance. This will demonstrate that your organisation has defined staff roles and responsibilities, and appropriate financial, ethical, and business practices.

Remember: There is no ideal way of conceptualising governance and no "one best way" to structure a Board of Directors.

For more information about governance models for your organisation see:

- The 'Governance Models for Australian Not-For-Profit Organisations – Overview' (2016) document lists acts, regulators, governance rules and governance models for Australian not-for-profits. https://www.uwa.edu.au/schools/-/media/Not-for-profits-UWA/Regulation-and-Governance/2016-CAANZ-Small-NFP-Governance-Models-Stocktake.pdf
- Synergy Associates. (2001). Models of Governance: What is Right for Your organisation http://www.synergyassociates.ca/documents/Governance%20Models%20-%20What%27s%20Right%20for%20Your%20Organization.pdf

Why is good governance important?

Good governance is important because it:

- Enhances community and funders' confidence in your organisation
- Increases staff confidence in contributing to organisational decision-making
- Allocates responsibility and increases transparency in decision-making processes
- Leads to better decisions by ensuring decisions are supported by quality data and reflects the broad interests of the community and stakeholders
- Assists non-government organisations to meet their legislative responsibilities
- Provides an ethical basis for decision-making where Board members ask "what is the right thing to do?" when making decisions.

There are many things that a non-government organisation must have in place to demonstrate good governance. For indicators of good governance see Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Indicators of good governance

Characteristic	Indicator
Accountable	An obligation to report, explain and be answerable for the consequences of decisions.
Transparent	Decision-making processes are clear and easily understood. This includes information about how and why decisions are made, what information and advice is considered, the level of consultation, and which legislative requirements are followed.
Legal	Decisions are consistent with relevant legislation or common law. See Organisational compliance for more information.
Responsive	Decisions are made in a timely and appropriate manner taking into account the needs and expectations of community, clients, funders, and staff.
Equitable, inclusive, and participatory	Community well-being is enhanced when community members are considered and provided with opportunities to participate in the decision-making process. It is important to remember that under some legislation and funding requirements, there will be an obligation to consult with the local community and clients as part of a quality assurance process.
Effective and efficient	Decisions are implemented and follow processes which make the best use of the available people, resources and time to ensure the best possible results.
Leadership and vision-building	All staff members know and reflect the organisation's values. Team members are involved in building the organisation's reputation in the community.
Ethical codes and practices	All staff members engage with consumers and the community in an ethical manner.
Board structure and operations	Board roles and functions are clearly documented and meetings are held regularly. Structure and functions must comply with all relevant legislation.
Organisational plans and	A comprehensive set of policies related to the management of the service and the operation of the Board have been developed.

Characteristic	Indicator
operational policies	Policies are clear, concise, easy to understand and comply with all relevant legislation. Policies and procedures are available to all staff.
Risk assessment and management	A comprehensive list of risk assessment and mitigation policies and procedures have been developed and are regularly monitored and reported on.
Managing employees and monitoring performance	Policies and procedures have been developed to assist managers and staff to be more accountable and comfortable about their decisions. Policies and procedures can also assist when providing constructive feedback to staff and ensuring that better decisions are made in the future.
Compliance measures	A governance compliance report should form part of the manager's report to every Board meeting. A compliance report is a tool that assists the Board to ensure that its governance responsibilities are being met. It is important for the Board to have checklists and a calendar to assist with monitoring compliance.
Creating and delegating authority	When making important decisions, it's essential to have the right person making them. Establish clear lines of authority to guide your employees to recognise the decisions that they can and cannot make on their own.

Indigenous corporate governance

You can read more about Indigenous corporate governance from the 'Corporate Governance' webpage of The Australian Government Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations https://www.oric.gov.au/run-corporation/corporate-governance

The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute (AIGI) is an internationally acknowledged centre for governance knowledge and excellence that delivers training and resources to meet the self-determined governance needs of Indigenous Australians https://aigi.org.au/

AIGI developed the Indigenous Governance Toolkit as an online resource to assist Indigenous organisations, communities, nations and individuals build, strengthen and evaluate their governance. The Indigenous Governance toolkit is available from: https://aigi.org.au/toolkit-sections

TIPS - Indigenous governance awards

The Indigenous Governance Awards share the success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations from around Australia.

The awards are held every two years and are proudly presented in partnership by Reconciliation Australia, the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, and the BHP Foundation. Find out more at: https://www.reconciliation.org.au/our-work/indigenous-governance/indigenous-governance-awards/

Measuring governance

Equally important to establishing a system of governance is measuring how well your governance structure operates. For more information about how to measure your organisation's governance structure, see:

- Brown, W.A. (2002). Inclusive governance practices in nonprofit organizations and implications for practice. Nonprofit Management and Leadership, 12(4), 369-385. Downloaded from http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ nml.12404/abstract
- Gill, M., Flynn, R.J., & Reissing, E. (2005). The governance self-assessment checklist: An instrument for assessing board effectiveness. Nonprofit Management and Leadership, 15(3), 271-294. Downloaded from http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/nml.69/abstract

Team roles in securing funding

Everyone involved in your organisation has a role to play in securing funding. Although their roles may be different, each person must be equipped with the information and resources necessary to successfully execute their function.

Board members

Board members are important advocates and supporters of your organisation. Recruit Board members who:

- Are experts in their field
- Will take on a leadership role
- Will promote your organisational strengths to the community, potential collaborators, and funders.

Involve Board members in:

- Developing your funding strategy
- Undertaking promotional activities
- Creating your proposal
- Reviewing your funding application.

Effective and efficient Board members are leaders who:

- Spearhead your organisation's grant development strategy
- Are knowledgeable, adaptable, and continuously learn
- Promote the values and vision of the organisation rather than their independent belief systems
- Generate community goodwill and inspire staff to achieve organisational goals
- Foster organisational development and build staff capacity to contribute to grant development activities
- Facilitate the ongoing process of developing, sustaining, and renewing relationships with staff, community, clients, and funders.

Leadership is a critical component of effective infrastructure. To inform funding bodies about the capacity of the Board, map:

- The composition and role of the Board in organisational affairs and the governance process
- The qualifications and skills of Board members
- The way in which the Board conducts its affairs
- How the Board discharges its accountabilities to stakeholders.

Management

The management team is responsible for:

- Implementing the strategic frameworks and policy directions created by the Board
- Managing the operational functions of the organisation
- Implementing the grant development strategy by:
    - Rewarding critical thinking
    - Encouraging dialogue and shared decision-making
    - Ensuring individual and team learning
    - Building adaptive capacity
    - Accepting uncertainty and complexity
    - Encouraging staff to meet their funding activities performance indicators (see Grant development team).

Staff members

Staff should be involved in developing and implementing the organisation's funding strategy (see Grant development team).

They should:

- Know their organisation's vision and purpose statements
- Understand the future directions of their organisation
- Participate in organisational planning activities
- Collaborate with other organisations
- Contribute to writing funding applications.

Involving staff may assist in:

- Building organisational capacity
- Utilising personal skill sets which may be undervalued
- Connecting individual goals with organisational goals
- Generating innovative ideas and directions.

Consumer / client representatives

Consumer/client representatives and volunteers can be critically important to non-profit organisations. They often have diverse skill sets which may extend the reach, capacity, and capability of your organisation. Enabling and empowering client representatives and volunteers to participate in your organisation's funding strategy can assist you to develop a broad funding base. Consumer representatives must be appropriately renumerated and reimbursed for their contribution and expenses, and as acknowledgement of their lived expertise.

Partners and collaborators

Take a comprehensive look at the way your organisation operates to identify potential collaborations, individual or organisational supporters, and funding opportunities.

Partnering with other non-government organisations and local businesses may be useful to:

- Secure scarce monetary resources
- Enhance quality and reduce cost
- Achieve a greater impact across the community.

Record

- Your organisation's track record of collaboration
- How the work complemented each partner’s role
- What outcomes and benefits were achieved.

It can be helpful to collect testimonials from partners and collaborators routinely or at the conclusion of a project, to form part of your record.

In funding applications, include the above details as well as a memorandum of understanding (MOU), letter of support or intent if you are collaborating with another organisation (see Identifying opportunities for collaboration and Building relationships).

References and resources

- The Australian Charities and Not-for- profit Commission (ACNC) Website, Governance Standards - https://www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/manage-your-charity/governance-hub/governance-standards

- The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission website, ‘Governance for Good: A Guide For Responsible People’ https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/guides/governance-for-good-acncs-guide-for-responsible-people

- The Australian Government Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) Website http://www.oric.gov.au/

- The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research Website has many resources and reports about Indigenous Community Governance https://caepr.cass.anu.edu.au/indigenous-governance/publication

- Council of Social Service of NSW. (2011). Information Sheet 1. Good Governance. NCOSS Management Support Unit (MSU): NSW. https://www.ncoss.org.au/sector-hub/sector-resources/information-sheet-good-governance/

- FairWork Commission, Chapter 1: What is good governance? https://www.fwc.gov.au/registered-organisations/regulatory-education/education-resources/good-governance-guide/chapter-1

- Howse, G. (2011). Legally Invisible. How Australian Laws Impede Stewardship and Governance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. The Lowitja Institute https://www.lowitja.org.au/resource/legally-invisible/

- The Indigenous Governance Institute Website - http://www.aigi.com.au/

- The Indigenous Governance Toolkit, https://aigi.org.au/toolkit

- Justice Connect factsheet on Memoranda of Understanding, https://content.nfplaw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Memoranda-of-Understanding.pdf

- Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies (NADA). (2011). Governance Toolkit: A resource to help improve governance knowledge and practice. NADA: NSW. https://nada.org.au/resources/governance-toolkit/

- Spooner, C., & Dadich, A. (2008). Non-government organisations in the alcohol and other drugs sector issues and options for sustainability. Australian National Council on Drugs: ACT, https://apo.org.au/node/14820

Visual presentations

- Balderrama, D. (2011). Good NGO Governance Slideshow Presentation https://www.slideshare.net/fnfmanila/ngo-governance-by-mr-balderrama
- Brown Dog Consulting. (2010). What is governance? https://www.browndogconsulting.com/what-is-governance/
- Indigenous Governance, ReconciliationAus, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRRod3cueRk

Section 2.4 Activities

Activity 2.4.1 Develop a staff skills audit

Conduct a skills audit to:

- Ascertain both generic/soft and specialist skills your team may possess
- Highlight the skills required and analyse your organisation's gaps and development needs
- Match staff to their areas of development and expertise
- Determine which skills and areas your organisation must invest in to reach its funding targets
- Enhance your team's ability to work together and draw on each other's strengths.

How to conduct a skills audit

Have all employees (including Board members) and volunteers complete an individual skills audit. To obtain a comprehensive overview of the available skill base, include 'soft' skills as well as 'hard' skills in your audit.

Soft skills are those skills which are:

- Not reliant upon a set method of acting or doing. How effective you are at a soft skill will change depending on your emotional state, external circumstances, and the people with whom you are interacting
- Transferable to many career and job situations because they are dependent on your ability to adapt and interpersonal effectiveness
- Never fully mastered because new situations and people will test your competency and push you to learn more.

Soft skills are also known as 'employability skills'. They include communication, motivation, adaptability, critical thinking, work ethic, time management, self-management, networking, learning, problem solving, technology, leadership, reliability, teamwork, problem-solving, and emotional control.

Collate and keep the information in a readily accessible location. Allocate a staff member to maintain the information.

Obtain individuals' permission to share the information.

A skills audit

Personal details	
Name	
Email	
What qualifications do you have? **List any academic qualifications and courses you have undertaken (e.g., First Aid, Bachelor of Nursing)**	
Current role **What is your job title?**	
Years in this or similar fields	
Provide a brief description of your work	

Instructions for completing the skills audit

When completing these tables, consider how well you can do the skill.

- "Really Well" means that you are very proficient, and have an advanced level of knowledge or skills
- "Well" means that you are more than just proficient, but you could still learn more about the skill
- "I Can Do This" means you are proficient and have a basic level of knowledge or skills
- "More Practice" means that you are not quite proficient, and need to learn more about this skill or knowledge
- "No Knowledge or Experience" means that you have never learned or had opportunity to practice this skill before.

If you can complete a skill "Really Well" or "Well", please indicate whether you are willing to teach others or be involved in the grant development team. If you have a basic knowledge of a skill, need more practice, or wish to learn a new skill, please indicate whether you are interested in learning the skill.

The following template has been provided for you as a starter. Please adapt to suit your organisation's needs. Examples of some other categories you may want to include are:

- Business development skills
  - I am comfortable establishing new relationships
  - I understand the organisation's vision, purpose, and strategy
  - I have project management skills
  - I can present at community events
  - I have cold-called potential funders
  - I am interested in finding more funding opportunities
  - I can develop a range of promotional products
- Research skills
  - I am able to find information in print and electronic resources
  - I am knowledgeable about the alcohol and other drug priorities in Australia
  - I am knowledgeable about the alcohol and other drug priorities in my region
  - I know how to reference both primary and secondary sources of information
  - I have some statistical analysis skills
- Client insight skills
  - I know how to conduct a quality assurance survey
  - I know how to assess whether the services we provide are effective and appropriate
- Evaluating activities and services
  - I have experience in conducting evaluations
  - I know how to design evaluation plans
  - I know how to write a budget for a funding proposal
  - I know about the GST rules and can explain them to others
- Budgeting
  - I know how to reconcile a project budget
  - I can write a budget justification
  - I know how to estimate costs
  - I can contact organsations to obtain quotes
  - I can use excel or another budgeting tool
- Writing and editing
  - I have good written communication skills
  - I can write a range of materials adapting them for different audiences
  - I can write success stories.

For examples of other skills you may want to include in your skills audit, see:

- Museums and Galleries of NSW, Volunteer Succession Planning skills audit template, downloadable from https://mgnsw.org.au/sector/resources/online-resources/volunteers/skills-audit/
- Australian Library and Information Association, Community Engagement Specialisation Skills Audit, https://www.alia.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/ALIA-Docs/Member-Docs/CPD27_Skills_Audit_Public_Library_Community_Engagement%20.pdf

Activity 2.4.1 Develop a skills profile continued

An example of a skills audit

Communication skills	Really well	Well	I can do this	More practice	No knowledge	I want to use this	I can teach this	I want to learn this
I have good verbal communication skills								
I am able to communicate in a professional manner, including being able to present my ideas in a clear and concise manner								
I am able to communicate with a variety of clients								
I am able to negotiate beneficial outcomes								
I have effective conflict resolution skills								

Activity 2.4.2 Develop short biographies

To save time in writing funding applications, develop a “staff member skills template”. The information can be adapted to fit the requirements of specific tender applications.

In practice this means providing short biographies on each of the proposed team members.

This record can be used to assure the funder that the proposed project staff are competent and have the capacity to successfully undertake the project. It also demonstrates that the duties of the proposed staff are clearly defined in general and/or in relation to the project.

Name and current position	Qualifications	Brief description of skill sets and experience within the field	Highlight previous success and achievements

Section 2.5 Organisational compliance

All eligibility criteria and compulsory compliance requirements set by funders must be adhered to in your application.

Carefully read the funder's guidelines to ensure that your application is compliant. Organisations may have to demonstrate that they:

- Are a legal entity
- Have adequate insurance
- Comply with statutory requirements
- Are either an accredited organisation or working towards accreditation.

You should know:

- If your organisation is a statutory, incorporated, or unincorporated body
- Your organisation's Australian Business Number (ABN), Australian Registered Body Number (ARBN), or Australian Company Number (ACN)
- The types and limits of your organisation's insurance
- Whether your organisation has any current or pending legal matters which need to be disclosed
- Who your accrediting body is and when your current accreditations is due to expire.

Collate and store up-to-date copies of this information (i.e. certificates of insurance, audited financial reports/statements, ABN numbers) in an accessible location.

Funders will usually require you to submit copies of these documents with your application.

Store key organisational information in a hard copy and/or electronic folder.

Legal entity

A legal entity may enter into legally recognised agreements or contracts, obligations, debts, and be accountable for illegal activities. Different types of legal entities include associations, corporations, partnerships, proprietorships, trusts, or individuals. Each type of legal entity is governed by different legislation and/or common law principles and has its own limitations and benefits. For more information about relevant legal entities, see:

- Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, ‘Legal Structure’ https://www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/start-charity/you-start-charity/legal-structure
- Australian Taxation Office, ‘Legal structures for not-for-profits’ https://www.ato.gov.au/businesses-and-organisations/not-for-profit-organisations/getting-started/in-detail/registration/legal-structures-for-not-for-profits

Incorporated bodies

Incorporated bodies are corporations or associations recognised as legal entities. Once a community group starts to accumulate assets and wealth, they should consider becoming incorporated. Non-government organisations may be listed as either corporations or associations depending on their:

- Size
- Income
- Scope of work.

Corporations are governed by Commonwealth legislation.

Associations are governed by state and territory legislation. They tend to be smaller than corporations. See the table below for further information and contacts.

Indigenous corporation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations can apply to be registered as a separate legal entity with the Office for the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC). under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 (CATSI Act). They are only suitable as an NFP legal structure if they have rules to prevent surpluses or profits being distributed to members. For more information, see https://www.oric.gov.au/

Benefits of Incorporation

There are many benefits to being an incorporated body. Registering as a corporation or association is beneficial for non-government alcohol and other drug organisations as it:

- Limits financial and legal liabilities for individuals
- Increases funding opportunities as many private and public funding bodies require applicants to be incorporated
- Simplifies financial arrangements and increases transparency
- Clarifies and fixes the purposes (or objects) for which the organisation was formed
- Provides organisations with a clear regulatory framework for how they should operate
- Ensures the organisation is publicly accountable, compliant and transparent in its operations
- May provide tax advantages.

For more information about incorporation and how to incorporate, see:

- The Our Community website Help Sheet, https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=733
- Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Registering not-for-profit or charitable organisations, https://asic.gov.au/for-business/registering-a-company/steps-to-register-a-company/registering-not-for-profit-or-charitable-organisations/
- Justice Connect, What does incorporation mean, and should you incorporate? https://www.nfplaw.org.au/free-resources/getting-started/incorporation

If you want to learn more about incorporation in your jurisdiction, contact the relevant department listed in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6 Contact list of Federal, State, and Territory offices

Jurisdiction	Department
ACT	Access Canberra - www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au
NSW	Office of Fair Trading - https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/associations-and-co-operatives/associations
NT	Consumer and Business Affairs - https://justice.nt.gov.au/
QLD	Office of Fair Trading - http://www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au
SA	Consumer and Business Services - https://www.cbs.sa.gov.au/
TAS	Office of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading - http://www.consumer.tas. gov.au
VIC	Consumer Affairs Victoria - http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/
WA	Consumer and Employment Protection - http://www.docep.wa.gov.au/
National	Australian Securities & Investment Commission (ASIC) - http://www.asic.gov.au

For more information about what incorporation in each State/territory involves, search for ‘incorporation’ plus your state, in the search feature of https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/

Unincorporated bodies

An unincorporated association is an organisation which has no separate legal identity from that of its members. It is simply a group of people who associate for a particular purpose and have verbally agreed to carry out certain functions. It may operate according to a constitution or rules.

An unincorporated association cannot sue or be sued. Its assets must be held by trustees on its behalf, contracts must be made for the association by the committee members, and the liability of the members (especially the committee members entering into those contracts) is generally personal and not limited to the assets of the association.

Should your association remain unincorporated?

It is appropriate to be an unincorporated association where:

- Your assets are relatively small
- You are a local branch of a charity, and a standard constitution exists for branches
- You have a membership
- The management committee is elected or appointed to hold office by members for a fixed period of time
- You are undertaking a one-off, short-term project that does not require much funding
- Your associations objects are carried out wholly or partly by, or through, the members (i.e., where the members undertake office or voluntary work on behalf of the organisation).

For more information about unincorporated bodies, see the Our Community website Help Sheet, https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=2101

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Services

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO) are incorporated bodies controlled by, and accountable to, Aboriginal people in those areas in which they operate. ACCHOs are governed by a Board of Directors. They operate in the metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas of all States and Territories in Australia.

An Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS) is an incorporated Aboriginal organisation initiated by a local Aboriginal community and based in that community. The Service is governed by an Aboriginal body elected by the local Aboriginal community.

Table 2.7 provides links to national, state and territory bodies representing Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Services. To find an ACCHO or Affiliate near you, check out the interactive map at: https://www.naccho.org.au/naccho-map/

For more information about incorporating an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and/or Service, visit the The Australian Government Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) Website - http://www.oric.gov.au/

Table 2.7 Bodies representing Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Services

Jurisdiction	Organisation name
ACT	Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services (WNAHCS) https://winnunga.org.au/
NSW	Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council (AH&MRC) of New South Wales https://www.ahmrc.org.au/
NT	Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory Incorporated (AMSANT) https://www.amsant.org.au/
QLD	Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC) https://www.qaihc.com.au/
SA	Aboriginal Health Council of SA Incorporated (ACHSA) https://ahcsa.org.au/
TAS	Tasmania Aboriginal Centre Incorporated (TAC) https://tacinc.com.au/
VIC	Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation Incorporated (VACCHO) https://www.vaccho.org.au/
WA	Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia Incorporated (AHCWA) https://www.ahcwa.org.au/
National	National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) https://www.naccho.org.au/

Organisational insurance

Certificates of insurance

Make sure that your organisation has a current Certificate of Insurance verifying the existence of your insurance cover. Ensure that the Certificate:

- Lists the effective date of the policy
- The type of insurance cover purchased
- The types and dollar amount of applicable liability.

Some forms of insurance are required by law.

- Workers' compensation insurance is compulsory if you have employees
- Third party personal injury insurance is compulsory if you own a motor vehicle. This is often part of your vehicle registration fee
- Public liability insurance covers you for third party death or injury, and is compulsory for certain types of companies.

Talk to a licensed insurance broker, business advisor or insurers for advice.

Tax registration

Australian Business Number (ABN) details

At the time of updating this report (August 2024), not-for-profit organisations must register for GST if their turnover is $150,000 or more. They must include 10% GST on most or all sales and can claim a GST credit for goods and services. If your organisation has a lower GST turnover, registering is optional.

For more information about ABNs see the Australian Taxation Office Webpages:

GST registration for not-for-profits, https://www.ato.gov.au/businesses-and-organisations/not-for-profit-organisations/getting-started/in-detail/registration/abn-registration-for-not-for-profits

If you have an ABN ensure:

- Your details are correct and up-to-date
- The number is easily accessible when you are completing a funding application.

For more information about GST, see the Australian Taxation Office Webpage, GST registration for not-for-profits, https://www.ato.gov.au/businesses-and-organisations/not-for-profit-organisations/your-organisation/gst-for-not-for-profits/gst-registration-for-not-for-profits

Australian company number

Under the Corporations Act 2001, every company in Australia is issued with a unique, nine-digit number, an Australian Company Number (ACN), which must be shown on a range of documents. The purpose of the ACN is to ensure adequate identification of companies when transacting business. New companies are issued with numbers by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) upon registration. For more information, see Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Australian Company Numbers, https://asic.gov.au/for-business/registering-a-company/steps-to-register-a-company/australian-company-numbers/

Australian Registered Body Number (ARBN)

The ARBN is a nine-digit number allocated by ASIC when a body is registered with them other than as a company (e.g., foreign companies).

If a registrable Australian body wishes to carry on business in one or more states or territories other than its home jurisdiction, it must be registered under Part 5B.2 of the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth). Associations registered under state laws may be a registrable Australian body. If you are conducting business interstate, contact ASIC for further information.

For more information, see Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Registrable Australian Bodies, https://asic.gov.au/for-business/registering-a-company/steps-to-register-a-company/registrable-australian-bodies/

Charity

Institutions or funds can be established for a charitable purpose. Charitable purposes are those that the law regards as charitable, namely:

- Advancing health
- Advancing education
- Advancing social or public welfare
- Promoting or protecting human rights
- Other similar purposes "beneficial to the public" (Charities Act 2013 (Cth)).

For more information on registering, see Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Registering not-for-profit or charitable organisations https://asic.gov.au/for-business/registering-a-company/steps-to-register-a-company/registering-not-for-profit-or-charitable-organisations/

Types of charities include:

- Health promotion charity
- Hospitals and other healthcare providers
- Medical research institutes
- Self-help groups.

For more information on types of charities, including fact sheets, see Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits, Types of Charities https://www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/start-charity/you-start-charity/types-charities

Reporting statements

Financial reports

Your financial reporting obligations are dependent on the size and scope of your organisation and whether it is registered as an association or corporation. The reporting and auditing obligations for associations are contained in the publication:

CPA Australia, 2020, Companies Limited by Guarantee & Incorporated Associations Reporting And Audit-Review Obligations https://www.cpaaustralia.com.au/-/media/project/cpa/corporate/documents/tools-and-resources/audit-assurance/incorporated-associations.pdf?rev=69d58acab8214c289b96c5cb1d81370b

An audited financial statement can demonstrate that your organisation has good financial management skills and systems in place.

Annual reports

Annual reports are a useful way of providing additional information about your agency/ organisation. Usually, annual reports include details of activities completed during the year, details of Board members and staff, and report on impact and outcomes in relation to your program of work.

Only include documents such as Audited Financial Statements and/or Annual Reports if required by the funding body.

Quality assurance

Providing quality care to clients should be one of the critical success factors identified as integral to your organisation's success (see Your organisation's track record).

As discussed in Section 2.3, your organisation should have processes in place to measure your service quality and document successes, especially in relation to:

- What you do
- How well you do it
- Who benefits, in what way and how much.

Quality assurance processes can also involve an independent evaluation from an external agency of whether your organisation:

- Complies with agreed service standards
- Provides services that are relevant, accessible, and equitable for clients.

Quality assurance generally involves:

- Identifying and monitoring appropriate service standards (international, national, regional and local) including clinical safety and standards
- Monitoring and inspecting premises
- Implementing a process for client feedback and complaints management
- Advocating for those using the service.

The main objective of these activities is to assess whether the client's experience indicated that you provided a quality service. Information obtained from these processes may be used to:

- Develop your proposal (see Developing a proposal)
- Inform the statement of needs section (see Setting the scene)
- Demonstrate your organisational strengths and the benefits you bring to the community (see Demonstrating your organisation's strengths).

For the National Health and Medical Research Council's background on the Ethical Considerations in Quality Assurance and Evaluation Activities, see file:///C:/Users/Thom1743/AppData/Local/Downloads/ethical-considerations-in-quality-assurance-and-evaluation-activites.pdf

References and resources

- The Australian Government Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) Website -http://www.oric.gov.au/
- Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) - http://www.asic. gov.au/
- Australian Taxation Office Website https://www.ato.gov.au/businesses-and-organisations
- CPA Australia, 2020, Companies Limited by Guarantee & Incorporated Associations Reporting And Audit-Review Obligations, https://www.cpaaustralia.com.au/-/media/project/cpa/corporate/documents/tools-and-resources/audit-assurance/incorporated-associations.pdf?rev=69d58acab8214c289b96c5cb1d81370b
- JusticeConnect, 'What does incorporation mean, and should you incorporate?' https://www.nfplaw.org.au/free-resources/getting-started/incorporation
- Our Community Website, 'Compliance for not-for-profit organisations' https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=757

Quality standards, frameworks, and guidelines

- Crane, P., Buckley, J. and Francis, C. (2012). A Framework for Youth Alcohol and Other Drug Practice. Youth Alcohol and Drug Good Practice Guide. Brisbane: Dovetail, file:///C:/Users/Thom1743/AppData/Local/Downloads/1512352219_A%20Framework%20for%20Youth%20Alcohol%20and%20Other%20Drug%20Practice.pdf
- Fry, C (2007). Making Values and Ethics Explicit: A New Code of Ethics for the Australian Alcohol and Other Drugs Field. Canberra: Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia, https://www.youthaodtoolbox.org.au/sites/default/files/documents_global/ADCA%20code%20of%20ethics.pdf
- Haber PS, Riordan BC (2021). Guidelines for the Treatment of Alcohol Problems (4th edition). Sydney: Specialty of Addiction Medicine, Faculty of Medicine and Health, The University of Sydney, https://alcoholtreatmentguidelines.com.au/pdf/guidelines-for-the-treatment-of-alcohol-problems.pdf

- Marel C, Siedlecka E, Fisher A, Gournay K, Deady M, Baker A, Kay-Lambkin F, Teesson M, Baillie A, Mills KL. (2022). Guidelines on the management of co-occurring alcohol and other drug and mental health conditions in alcohol and other drug treatment settings (3rd edition). Sydney, Australia: Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use, The University of Sydney, https://comorbidityguidelines.org.au/pdf/comorbidity-guideline.pdf
- National Framework for Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Treatment 2019–29, https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-framework-for-alcohol-tobacco-and-other-drug-treatment-2019-29?language=en
- Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA) (2019). The Alcohol and other Drug and Human Services Standard, WANADA: Perth, Western Australia. National Quality Framework for Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services (2019) https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-quality-framework-for-drug-and-alcohol-treatment-services?language=en

Other standards which may be of interest are:

- Australian Safety and Quality Framework for Health Care (2010), https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/sites/default/files/migrated/Australian-SandQ-Framework1.pdf
- A National Quality Framework to support quality services for people experiencing homelessness (2012), https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/housing-support/publications-articles/homelessness-general/a-national-quality-framework-to-support-quality-services-for-people-experiencing-homelessness?HTML
- NSQHS Standards User guide for health services providing care for people with mental health issues (2010) https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/publications-and-resources/resource-library/nsqhs-standards-user-guide-health-services-providing-care-people-mental-health-issues

Section 2.5 Activity

Activity 2.5.1 Organisational status and common documents

Prior preparation will make the process of writing funding applications a little less onerous. You should:

- Know whether your organisation is incorporated
- Your statutory reporting obligations
- Construct a portfolio of funding-related documents that will be required for most applications.

The portfolio is likely to contain the following standard building blocks for any funding application:

- A brief description of your organisation (see Who you are and what you are about)
- An indication of capacity, including organisational equipment and resources available, and experience and track record of staff and organisation (see Your organisation's track record and Your board, staff and volunteers)
- Certificates of Insurance, ABN, Annual Reports
- Accreditation and other forms of recognition and merit.

Organisational status

Is your organisation an incorporated body?
☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, what type and what is its governing legislation? If no, write down the reasons why and the benefits of not being incorporated.

Does your organisation have an ABN, ACN, and/or an ARBN?
☐ YES ☐ NO

Record it here.

Reporting obligations

If your organisation is an incorporated association, read the 'Incorporated associations: Reporting and Auditing Obligations' report and make a list of the current activities your organisation undertakes to comply with your statutory obligations.

What activities does your organisation currently undertake to fulfil its reporting obligations? Note when they were last done:

Do you have policies, procedures, and processes in place to provide transparent and accountable financial statements to the funder?
☐ YES ☐ NO

If no, what policies, procedures, and processes should you develop?

Common organisational documents

Have you made a file containing copies of required documents, so you have them ready when you write a proposal or if they are requested?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Are all the necessary documents/details up to date?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Is this file readily accessible (both electronically and hard copy back-up) to everyone involved in writing a proposal?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Where is the file located?

Section 3
Funding evaluation criteria

Section 3 Funding evaluation criteria

Many funding bodies specify the criteria against which an application will be judged and the relative weighting against each criteria.

You should directly address these criteria as clearly as you can and ideally under subheadings provided.

If the funder has not identified the evaluation criteria in the funding guidelines, contact the nominated officer to ascertain the evaluation criteria. Do not be reluctant to do this. You may contact funders to seek such information. They will let you know what they are allowed to tell you and in what form this information can be provided to you and other potential applicants.

How are funding applications evaluated?

In addition to any specific criteria outlined in the funding guidelines, funding bodies generally use the following to assess funding applications:

- Is the organisation eligible to apply?
- Is the application clear and concise?
- Does it:
  - Address the urgency or scale of the identified problem? › Respond to the identified problem or need?
  - Propose an appropriate solution?
- Does it clearly demonstrate your organisation's capacity to successfully undertake the proposed work including:
  - Experience and skills of key personnel?
  - Proposed project costs?
  - Previous track record?

Table 3.1 details criteria that funding bodies may use to assess funding applications. It is not an exhaustive list, and you are advised to carefully examine any evaluation criteria supplied by the funder when developing your proposal and application.

Table 3.1 Funding evaluation criteria checklist

Evaluation criteria	Issues you need to address
Is your application, clear, concise and easy to read?	Information is logical, clear, concise, accurate and grammatically correct. The application clearly explains the: • Problem or issue to be addressed. • The work to be undertaken • Time frame • Anticipated results/key performance indicators including how the results will be evaluated. The application is presented in a confident, interesting and engaging manner that follows a logical narrative.

Evaluation criteria	Issues you need to address
Does your application meet the funder's requirements?	The application aligns with the funder's goals and priorities. The application responds directly to the identified problem. The concept and program plan are clearly explained, evidence-based, match the funder's values and objectives, and benefit the community. The proposed methodology: • Is the one most likely to answer the issue/problem. • Is evidence-based and/or has scientific, theoretical or technical merit. • Has been used successfully in a similar or analogous context. • Is novel and innovative (e.g. your application of a tried, tested and trusted approach to a new topic, new geographical location, different substance or different group of people). • Complements similar programs/services.
Is your organisation's capacity to conduct the proposed work clearly outlined?	Describe your organisation's capacity to provide the necessary infrastructure including your existing resources. Describe the expertise, capability and commitment of the staff to deliver the services to achieve the desired outcomes. Outline the qualifications of the team/organisation/ individuals who will conduct the project. Highlight your strategies for identifying, minimising and responding to potential problem areas and associated risks.
Is your organisation's track record clearly explained?	Highlight your track record in delivering effective, efficient, and appropriate services in a timely manner and within budget. Demonstrate your experience in collaborating with complementary services to enhance program and/or service effectiveness.
	Demonstrate the quality and impact of your previous work.
Are the project costs appropriate, accurate and justified?	Include an accurate, reasonable and cost-effective budget in your application. Itemise individual costs.
	Provide clear justifications for major staff and equipment costs. Some grants only cover certain costs. Check the grant guidelines to make sure that you are only claiming for costs that are covered by the grant. Some grants will only cover a set amount of on-costs for salaries (e.g. superannuation contributions, pay-roll tax). Check the grant guidelines or ask for clarification if you are seeking funding for salaries. Check if your organisation charges any levies and if they apply to the grant or tender that you are applying for. See Section 7, 'Your budget' for further information.

It is not enough to identify a wish-list of desirable goals or to just describe a problem. The proposal must contain appropriate and relevant information about the proposed activity and must address all of the funder’s requirements.

Section 3 Activity

Activity 3.1 Have you met the funding evaluation criteria?

Use the Common Funding application Evaluation Criteria Checklist below to assess previous and current funding applications. Identify the areas which need improvement and the areas in which you performed well.

Have you ever received feedback on a funding application?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, write it here. Include positive and negative feedback.

How can you use feedback from past applications to strengthen your next application? Write your ideas in the space below:

Discuss strategies to improve your funding applications with your grant development team (see Grant development team).

If you are developing a proposal for a current funding round, check the funding application guidelines to find out how applications will be evaluated.

Common grant application evaluation criteria	YES	NO
Is your application, clear, concise and easy to read?		
Is information presented in a logical manner, accurate, and grammatically correct?		
Is your application presented in a confident, interesting, enthusiastic and original manner?		
The identified need		
Does your application:		
• Outline the urgency or scale of the identified problem?		
• Identify what will happen if the problem is not addressed?		
• Reasonably estimate what will happen if the problem is addressed?		
• Propose an appropriate solution which responds directly to the identified problem?		

Common grant application evaluation criteria	YES	NO
Your proposed plan		
Does your proposal meet all the funder's specifications?		
Do the objectives of your proposal align with the funder's goals nd priorities? (i.e. would the funder be excited to announce that they have selected your organisation to fund?)		
Does your proposal address the funder's questions?		
Does your proposal clearly explain:		
• What work/activities you will do?		
• How those activities will individually and collectively address the problem/issue, and the project aims?		
• When the work/activities will be completed?		
• The methodology/approach/concept and the underpinning evidence-base?		
• How you will engage/collaborate with key end users/clients/stakeholders?		
• The resources you will need to undertake the activities and work		
• What the anticipated results/key performance indicators and potential benefits will be?		
• How you will measure the results?		
• How you will disseminate the results to key stakeholders and end-users?		
Does your proposed plan have scientific, theoretical or technical merit?		
Is your proposal novel and innovative (but founded on a strong evidence-base)?		
Does your proposal complement similar programs/services?		
Organisational expertise		
Is your organisation's capacity to conduct the proposed work clearly outlined? Have you		
• Described your organisation's demonstrated or expected capacity to provide the necessary infrastructure including your existing resources?		

Common grant application evaluation criteria	YES	NO
• Outlined the expertise, qualifications, roles of key personnel and time allocated to the team involved in delivering your proposal?		
• Highlighted strategies to identify, minimise and resolve potential problem areas and associated risks?		
Is your organisation's track record clearly explained? Have you:		
Budget		
Have you included an accurate, reasonable and cost-effective budget?		
Are the estimated costs appropriate, proportionate and justified?		
Have you itemised individual costs?		
Have you provided clear justifications for staff allocations and their roles, equipment, and travel costs?		
Have you indicated whether the budget is GST inclusive or exclusive?		
Have you indicated if salaries include on-costs (where salary is an expense covered by the grant)?		
Have you provided a reasonable and justified estimate for in-kind costs?		

Section 4
Your grant development team

Section 4 Grant development team

Writing a funding application is extremely resource intensive. It can take weeks or months, so you should overestimate the time it will take and start as early as possible. By prioritising grant writing, you will more chance of success.

Smaller organisations may require more time in writing funding proposals due to:

- Insufficient data collection and reporting systems in smaller organisations
- Lack of staff involvement and experience in funding strategies and activities, and application writing.

Complete the activities in About your organisation in Section 2 to start a database that will assist you to write future funding applications more efficiently.

To write stronger funding applications with greater ease, involve a team in the process. A team can:

- Share the workload and reduce burden
- Enhance your organisation's profile
- Take advantage of team member strengths (e.g. one person might excel as writing budgets, another at writing the project pitch and someone else at proof reading)
- Pool experience and build further capacity in identifying and achieving organisational objectives
- Increase your organisation's ability to write and submit quality funding applications
- Keep you motivated and accountable
- Guard against the risks of staff members taking leave or leaving your organisation.

Prioritising fund development activities

Grant development activities are not always highly valued or prioritised in non-government organisations. Front-line staff infrequently view organisational development as a core activity and focus on more immediate issues (Hopkins & Hyde, 2002).

The challenge for leaders in non-government organisations is to ensure that all staff members:

- Recognise the importance of attracting external funding and how competitive grants can be
- Understand the importance of continuously fostering the organisation's relationships with funding bodies, local businesses and government, and other community groups
- Are involved in identifying, developing, writing and reviewing funding proposals.

To increase the prominence of grant development activities in your organisation:

- Schedule a meeting/s with your Board, staff, and volunteers to develop a funding strategy

Include ‘funding opportunities’ as a standing agenda item to relevant meetings

- Establish a clear reporting role by allocating responsibility for overseeing the grant development strategy to one person
- Subscribe to relevant grant databases
- Incorporate grant development activities into employees’ position descriptions and key performance indicators
- Review and evaluate your success in implementing your grant development strategy.

The grant development team should be involved in developing funding applications as well as identifying potential new funders and grant opportunities.

What skills are needed in the grant development team?

Successful grant development teams should:

- Be proficient in gathering and analysing information about:
  - Your community’s need/s
  - Solutions that meet the community’s need
  - The funder’s objectives
- Make decisions about viable funding and collaboration prospects
- Have strong communication, collaboration and time management skills
- Be flexible and creative in their responses to new information and changing priorities, and be able to identify viable alternatives as necessary
- Stay calm under pressure
- Keep objectives and goals firmly in sight
- Be able to write well (i.e. express ideas simply, clearly and in a logical order)
- Involve peers, people with lived-living experience, a client reference committee or similar in the development of the proposal.

What does a good grant development team look like?

A good team is made up of individuals with diverse personalities, skills, and knowledge who are committed to achieving uniform goals.

Grant development teams should involve people who:

- Possess leadership, teamwork and negotiation skills
- Exhibit goodwill
- Can recognise, appreciate and work with different personalities and working styles
- Have the necessary skills, or are interested in broadening their skill sets.

Include people on your team who are:

- **Creators:** Generate new ideas, concepts, and solutions
- **Advancers:** See great ideas, solutions, or approaches and new ways to promote them
- **Facilitators:** Manage other members, monitor proposal development, and work task distribution
- **Refiners:** Challenge, analyse, and use a methodical process to detect and resolve process issues
- **Executors:** Develop orderly processes and execute detail once funding is received.

Recognise that the types of team members listed above may have more of less involvement depending on the stage of development of the funding application. For example, creators and advancers might be more relevant if you are brainstorming an idea to meet the requirements of a funding opportunity. However, facilitators might be needed to keep the team committed to an idea when finalizing the funding application (unless new information comes to light that means that the proposal needs to be re-defined, which may occur in relation to unexpected developments to policy, legislation, substance use trends, treatment or the funding or de-funding of services).

When you establish your team:

- Identify and allocate key proposal development and writing tasks:
  - Tasks should be clearly defined and allocated according to the abilities, personal characteristics and availability of the team members
  - Allocate tasks based upon team members' natural attributes and skills to avoid burnout and/or stress
  - Keep a record of which tasks have been allocated to which team member, together with the completion dates they agreed to
- Assign a key person to coordinate the development of the funding application
- Create a timeline working back from the submission date, incorporating ample time to gain feedback on drafts and review the final submission
- Schedule regular meetings to review and discuss progress on the funding application
- Assign overall responsibility to one person to submit the funding application.

Remember: If team members are not clear about who is responsible for what, there is a high probability that some tasks won't get done.

Engaging external writers

External paid writers can help reduce the time you spend writing funding applications. Consider using an external writer to:

- Write your funding proposal
- Assist your grant development team
- Review your grant proposal.

If you use an external writer make sure that:

- They clearly understand your organisation's structure, functions, and funding strategy
- You brief them about your proposal
- They understand and address all the funder's requirements
- You retain control and ownership of the grant proposal
- You carefully proof-read their work before submitting the application
- You can afford them.

TIPS: Grant development team

- Leave personal needs and egos at the door of each group meeting. It's not a matter of individuals being "right", but getting it right for the success of the grant
- Group success requires people to act responsibly, recognise and appreciate the strengths of each team member, and be themselves
- Improve your data collation and assign tasks to staff and volunteers to reduce the time and stress involved in writing funding applications
- If you or other team members are experiencing difficulty in writing a particular section, approach a colleague for support and advice.

References and resources

- Bauer, D.G. (2011). The "how to" grants manual successful grant seeking techniques for obtaining public and private grants. Rowman & Littlefield in partnership with the American Council on Education https://books.google.com.au/books/about/The_How_To_Grants_Manual.html?id=QxeI8dn05dAC&redir_esc=y
- Hopkins, K. M., & Hyde, C. (2002). The Human Service Managerial Dilemma: New Expectations, Chronic Challenges and Old Solutions. Administration in Social Work, 26(3), 1-15, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J147v26n03_01

- You can search for professional grant writers online (fee for service).

YouTube videos

- Blessing White. (2012). The ‘X’ model of employee engagement: Maximum Satisfaction meets Maximum https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bd-j3OGQDTI
- Jill Sonke, Zen of Grant Writing (2018) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ce3tJtKlQSc

Section 4 Activity

Activity 4.1 Build your grant development team

Mix and match team skills

Review the skills audit developed in Develop a skills audit in Section 2. Write a list of skills (e.g. researching, writing, promotional activities) needed to implement your funding strategy. Match staff who indicated they could complete the skill “Really Well”, “Well”, and “I Can Do This” in Activity 2.4.1 to the tasks in this list.

Look for opportunities to develop other staff skill sets. If staff do not have the skills necessary but wish to learn, consider pairing them with a more experienced staff member where possible.

If no one indicated that they could complete the skill “Really Well” or “Well” in Activity 2.4.1, organise a small team to learn the skill and complete the task. This will take the burden off one member completing the task and enhance team building.

Allocate tasks to your different grant team members.

Set targets to ensure staff members remain committed to achieving and incorporating the grant activities as part of routine tasks.

Adapt the Proposal Development Team table on the next page to develop your grant teams.

What role do you take in a team?

When organising the grant development team, it may be interesting and useful for staff to take the team role test to find out what role they play in the team (43 questions over approximately 40 min). The test is available from http://testyourself.psychtests.com/testid/3113.

Proposal development team plan

Skillset	Task	Staff member/s responsible	Expectation	Due date
Management	Oversight of the whole team – delegating tasks and due dates			
Concept Development	Reviewing and adapting the needs analysis to reflect the funder's priorities and objectives			
	Ascertaining core activities to be undertaken in the program plan			
Research	Gathering and collating evidence to support the needs statement			
	Finding evidence to support the proposed program plan			
Collaborating	Identifying and contacting key supporters			
	Identifying and negotiating with potential collaborators			
Administrative	Collating key documents to demonstrate organisational track record			

Skillset	Task	Staff member/s responsible	Expectation	Due date
	Gaining necessary letters of support/compliance and any related signatures			
	Submitting the final application			
Writing	Writing the context statement			
	Writing the project/program plan			
	Writing the capacity statements			
	Writing the executive summary and/or cover letter			
Financial	Completing and checking the budget			
	Writing budget justifications			
Legal	Completing a contract compliance table			
	Writing a risk management plan			

Section 5
Funding sources and strategies

Section 5 Funding sources and strategies

There are many types of funding bodies and several funding models. Funding sources include:

- Government funding (eg. local council/shire, state or federal funding)
- Foundation support (e.g. general funds or project support)
- Corporations and businesses (e.g. both financial support and/or in-kind contributions)
- Philanthropic trusts and foundations (e.g. funding to pilot innovative services/programs)
- Individual donors (e.g. both financial support and/or in-kind contributions).

Some organisations may also raise funds themselves through activities like fundraising drives, merchandise sales, fee-based services and donation-based crowdfunding (e.g. GoFundMe or GiveNow). Although this resource does not address fundraising, the strategies outlined in the sections below may be relevant.

5.1 Developing a funding strategy informs you about the benefits of taking a formal, structured approach to securing funding and maintaining a core suite of relevant and up-to-date documents. When developing your funding strategy, aim to secure a diverse pool of funding support.

5.2 Building relationships helps organisations see the ongoing value in continually building and nurturing relationships with external stakeholders.

Funding organisations will also employ several funding models (i.e. tenders, procurements, targeted calls and grants). It is important that you understand how the funding models differ and how this may affect your organisation's proposal, reporting requirements, and contractual obligations.

Table 5.1 describes the different types of funding models and Table 5.2 provides examples of key differences between the models.

Table 5.1 Different types of funding models

Funding models	Description
Tenders	Outcomes are predefined by the funder. Funders are purchasing a service or product at a specified price. Funding is provided pursuant to meeting designated milestones. Often there is a short time frame between the request for tender and the closing date. There are several distinct types of requests that are commonly used. These include Request for Proposal (RFP), Request for Quotation (RFQ), Request for Information (RFI), and Request for Tender (RFT). RFP is used to solicit detailed proposals from vendors, while an RFQ is used to request quotes for specific products or services. An RFI is used to gather information for potential vendors, and an RFT is used to solicit formal bids with detailed tender documents and tender details.
Procurement	Governments arrange for public services to be delivered by external suppliers. Also known as contracting or service agreements. Australian governments are placing greater emphasis on procuring services, including alcohol and other drug services. Funders determine the service needed, the standard required, and the price payable. Organisations should assess what the funder is asking for and whether it can be achieved by their organisation. The contract will outline the: • Full specification of the services to be provided • Requirements relating to how the services are to be provided.
Grants	Grants usually provide one-off support to organisations for a specific purpose over a specified period of time. They are awarded to fund project-based research, pilot initiatives, or community development activities. Grants are generally provided subject to conditions that state how the grant must be used (e.g., the provision of alcohol and other drug counselling). If the funding is not used for the specified purpose within the designated time frame, the funds may have to be returned. Some grants require matched funding or partners who provide in-kind support. For both grants and tenders, there is an obligation to achieve what was described in your proposal and there may be a requirement to provide progress/annual reports. Grants may be broad in scope (e.g. funds can be used for health promotion) or they may be targeted (e.g. funds must be used to promote cancer risks). Grant recipients are not able to make a profit from a grant.

Table 5.2 Examples of key differences between the models

Key differences between funding models
Compared to procurement processes, organisations may have greater flexibility in identifying and undertaking activities in tender and grant arrangements. Different tax rules may apply to tenders, procurements and grants. In some instances, grants may not be subject to GST. Claimable losses: • If a grant agreement is broken, only the grant money may need to be repaid. This may vary across funding sources. • In a tender or procurement arrangement, if a service agreement is broken, the provider may be required to compensate the funder for any loss caused. This may be higher than just repayment of invoices received. Please refer to the specific conditions and contracts for clarity

See Contract compliance and After submission for more information about how to vary contract clauses and negotiate with funding bodies.

Funding sources and resources

There are some online grant and funding databases that you can search or subscribe to. Some require paid subscriptions but offer a free trial period.

Table 5.3 Grant and funding databases

Name	Link	Notes
Grant Connect	https://help.grants.gov.au/	Forecast and current Australian Government grant opportunities
The Community Grants Hub	https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/	
The grants hub	https://www.thegrantshub.com.au/	Paid subscription
The Funding Centre (Smarty Grants, EasyGrants Newsletter)	https://www.fundingcentre.com.au/	Paid subscription
GrantGuru	https://www.grantguru.com/au	Paid subscription
Tenderlink	https://www.tenderlink.com/	
The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) website	https://www.naccho.org.au/news-events/sector-grants/	Curated list of grant opportunities available for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

Section 5.1 Developing a funding strategy

Developing and implementing a funding strategy is crucial to the sustainability of your organisation. A funding strategy will assist you to build the capacity of your services and be sustainable.

A funding strategy is also an integral part of your core functions. It should be linked to your vision, purpose, and strategic goals (See Section 2.2). Funding strategies should cover a three to five year period. They are 'living' documents that should be continuously evaluated and revised against your targets and efforts.

A funding strategy identifies:

- Your funding needs
- Potential sources of income or support
- How relationships with current funders will be nurtured and maintained
- Team roles in grant development
- How the strategy will be implemented, monitored, and evaluated
- How the outcomes will be reported.

For more information about developing a team to formulate a funding strategy see Funding development team.

Your funding strategy

A grant development strategy is similar to a business plan. When developing a funding strategy, you need to:

- Assess **all** funding opportunities
- Consider the type of funding needed (e.g., project support, general funds, salary, in-kind contributions)
- Identify the type of organisation or funding arrangement which will meet your needs
- Plan long-, medium-, and short-term goals to maximise opportunities
- Recognise and promote your organisation's assets and strengths.

Keep your funding strategy short. The basic information required in every funding strategy is:

- What funding is needed – how much, for what types of activities, when?
- Where will funds come from?
- What activities are needed to raise funds, when do they need to happen and who will undertake them?

Service duplication

Funding bodies want to minimise duplication. To avoid duplicating services, conduct an environmental scan of:

- Similar services in your area
- Services in other areas which may be suitable for your community and client group
- New research and modes of working to ensure the services you are offering reflect best practice.

Consider how your activities:

- Complement, but do not duplicate, the work of others
- May be improved by incorporating new ideas and service delivery options.

Review and evaluate

Your funding strategy needs to have the flexibility to react to new opportunities or to limit activities that are not practical or profitable. It should be:

- Monitored and evaluated throughout the year (at least once per quarter)
- Reviewed on a yearly basis.

At the end of each year, review what you said you would do and compare it to what was done. Hold an evaluation session so everyone can contribute. Ask yourself:

If we are not hitting our targets, what can we do to improve the situation?

Warning: You must adhere to certain laws when making an appeal for public funds. The rules are different in each state and territory. See ‘ A guide to the Australian Consumer Law For fundraising and other activities of charities, not-for-profits and fundraisers’ 2017) https://consumer.gov.au/sites/consumer/files/2017/12/guide_acl_fundraising-1.pdf

Why develop a funding strategy?

A funding strategy assists organisations to:

- Focus, prioritise and plan their objectives
- Incorporate funding activities as part of routine activities
- Identify additional assistance required from Board members, volunteers, or external stakeholders
- Plan the team involved in developing proposals and writing applications
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses that team members bring to the grant development process
- Increase their chances of writing successful funding applications.

An Ask Letter

An Ask Letter is an unsolicited letter written to a funding body to request their support.

When writing an Ask Letter, it is important to:

- Keep your letter formal and to the point
- Communicate how the funding body's contribution will help the identified problem
- Personalise the letter – find out the name of the person you need to approach
- Conclude by thanking the funding body for their time and consideration.

The letter should contain three simple paragraphs:

- Introduce yourself and your organisation's mission
- Outline your request to the funding body and indicate what they will get in return
- Thank the funding body for their time and invite them to contact you with any questions.
- A good Ask Letter may be used again. However, always adapt it to reflect each specific funding body and their priorities and values.

Why do alcohol and drug organisations need to apply for funding?

Funds are distributed through competitive grant, tender, and procurement arrangements because funders:

- Are accountable to stakeholders
- Must demonstrate the work funded was worthwhile
- Have limited financial resources
- Receive more applications for assistance than they can fund
- Assess which bids offer best value and community benefit
- Are required to be transparent in their decision-making
- Establish criteria upon which to base – and justify - their decisions.

Government bodies, in particular, must:

- Follow formal public procurement, tendering, and grant rules when distributing public funds
- Act on an objective, fair and transparent basis.

References and resources

- American Journal Experts (2024), The Ultimate Grant Writing Guide (and How to Find and Apply for Grants) https://www.aje.com/arc/ultimate-grant-writing-guide/
- Business.gov.au Crowdfunding (2024) https://business.gov.au/finance/funding/crowdfunding#:~:text=Crowdfunding%20is%20a%20way%20to,a%20campaign)%20on%20the%20website
- Commonwealth of Australia, (2017) A guide to the Australian Consumer Law For fundraising and other activities of charities, not-for-profits and fundraisers https://consumer.gov.au/sites/consumer/files/2017/12/guide_acl_fundraising-1.pdf
- Martini, A., Marlina, U., Dwyer, J., Lavoie, J., O'Donnell, K. & Sullivan, P. (2011). Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service Funding: Report to the Sector. The Lowitja Institute, https://www.lowitja.org.au/resource/Aboriginal-Community-Controlled-Health-Service-Funding/
- The Nonprofit Hub Website: Anatomy of An Ask Letter (infographic) . Downloaded from https://nonprofithub.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Anatomy-of-an-Ask.png
- Our Community Website, Establishing a fundraising strategy https://www.communitydirectors.com.au/help-sheets/establishing-a-fundraising-strategy
- Segal, Amir. "Ross B., Segal C.,(2021) Making the Ask: The Artful Science of High-Value Fundraising. Practical Inspiration Publishing." (2022): 848-848. The Funding Centre (Our Community Website), 'How to build great relationships with funders' https://explore.fundingcentre.com.au/help-sheets/funder-relationships

YouTube videos

- Chartered Institute of Fundraising, (2021) Fundraising Essentials - Developing a Fundraising Strategy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHikFrtSaQw
- How to be a better fundraiser | Kara Logan Berlin | TEDxSantaClaraUniversity TEDx Talks (2019) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUvoBzjZv7E

Section 5.1 Activities

Activity 5.1.1 List current and potential funding sources

Current funding sources

Make a list of organisations from whom you currently obtain funding. If you completed the mapping activity in Your organisation's track record, copy your current sources of funding into this list.

Record the type of funding received and your forecast for continued funding (High, Med, Low).

Current funder	Type of funding	Likelihood of continuance (High, Med, Low).
.		

Potential funding sources

Consider your organisation's vision, purpose, and strategy (see Your vision, purpose, and strategy) and identify your most relevant funding databases and funding organisations.

Make a list of organisations that you will contact to discuss future opportunities. Assess your relationship with the funder by answering the questions below.

Do you know the organisation well enough to ask for funding?
☐ YES ☐ NO

Regardless of how well you think you know an organisation, it is beneficial to develop a brief profile of them to foster your institution's knowledge and create a corporate memory. Complete Activity 5.2.2.

Does this organisation know you well enough to consider providing you with funding?
☐ YES ☐ NO

If the funding source is not aware of your organisation, develop a plan to build your relationship with them (see Building relationships for more information and complete Activity 5.3.2).

Do I need to do any further research?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, go back and look at previous sections of this resource.

What are the funder's attitudes, values and beliefs about my community's need, the proposed solution, and my organisation's expertise and proven ability to deliver?

What does the funder expect and need from my application?

Read through the information listed on potential funders' websites. Contact a nominated representative if you wish to obtain a more in-depth understanding.

Write down what you know about each funder's values and objectives and identify shared goals.

Answer the questions below to ascertain whether the funding source is a good fit for your organisation's objectives.

1. How would seeking funding from this organisation meet your organisation's needs and fulfil your aspirations?

2. How does this organisation's priorities compare to your organisation's objectives?

3. What do you still need to find out about this funder?

4. What information should you collate prior to contacting the agency (try and anticipate questions they will ask or information they might request)?

5. When will you contact each agency on your list?

6. Who is responsible for contacting agencies and reporting back to your funding team?

If the funder's objectives match your organisation's objectives, ensure you contact a nominated representative to discuss your ideas (see Building relationships and complete Activity 5.2.2).

Activity 5.1.3 Should you develop a funding strategy?

If you answer yes to any questions below, it is time to develop and implement a funding strategy.

1. Do you tend to submit applications in an ad hoc and reactive manner?

   YES NO

2. Do you have limited resources both in time and money?

   YES NO

3. Do you sometimes miss important funding opportunities to develop your organisation?

   YES NO

4. Do you operate in an increasingly competitive environment?

   YES NO

5. Is there a potential funder that is largely unaware that you exist?

   YES NO

6. Do you need to raise funds?

   YES NO

7. Do you feel that applying for funding is a waste of time and you should get on with real work?

   YES NO

8. Are there other non-government organisations doing similar work and getting more sustainable funding than you?

   YES NO

Activity 5.1.4 Your funding plan

All organisations' resources, needs and strengths are different, and not all funding opportunities will work for everyone. The following process is designed to support you to work through your organisation's funding options and create a plan of what you want to achieve over the next 12 months.

Step 1: Establish funding targets

What do you hope to obtain?

Step 2: Research past fundraising activities

What activities have you undertaken previously?

What has worked?

Why?

What has not worked?

Why not?

Step 3: Identify who will fund what

From the list of current and potential funding sources you developed previously, write down what activities you will be asking each funding source to provide support for.

If you did not previously develop a list of current and potential funding sources, construct a list now and determine what activities you will be asking each funder to provide money for.

What kind (e.g. cash, in-kind), and how much funding do you need?

Which funding bodies might potentially support your work?

Are there any other kinds of funding or finance options which you could investigate?

Is there a natural partnership between your organisation's and a local or national business' objectives? Who would be proud to announce that they have funded or partnered with you?

Step 4: Develop a case to support each prospective funding activity

Why do you think the activity will/will not be successful?

Step 5: Decide on and describe the methods you plan to use to raise funds

Remember the golden rule: Diversity is the key to a good funding strategy.

Set an estimated target for each grant development activity. Write your targets here.

How many staff and work hours will you devote to completing fundraising activities?

How will you implement each grant development activity (who, when, what resources are required)?

Step 6: Allocate responsibilities to Board members and staff so that everyone knows what they need to do, and by when

Who will complete the grant development activities? Refer to the staff matrix developed in Grant development Team.

Do any of the staff involved in the grant development activities need training or support?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Have you fully utilised your Board and volunteers?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If you answered no, go back and review your grant development strategy to ensure greater involvement of Board members and volunteers.

Step 7: Who will authorise your strategy?

It is important to obtain organisational and staff support for your strategy. Send your draft funding strategy to the Board or CEO for their comment and endorsement. Incorporate comments and suggestions into the final document.

Write down who authorised your strategy and when it was signed.

Step 8: Develop a funding calendar

Once you have set your funding activity targets, identified the skill sets required, available opportunities, and allocated team roles, develop a funding calendar with closing dates for publicly advertised funding rounds and potential funding sources.

Many funding bodies call for applications on a periodic basis. If the funding source does not have a cyclical call for applications, record deadlines for staff activities and when you want to have the completed application submitted. Remember, “Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity” (attributed to Roman philosopher Seneca).

Activity 5.1.5 Raising your visibility

What opportunities do you have to promote your organisation to funders?

How can you improve your profile in the community?

How can you improve your online profile (social media) and attract the attention of potential funders?

Section 5.2 Building relationships

To successfully implement the funding strategy you created in Developing a funding strategy, you will need to build professional relationships with your community, funders, and other organisations.

Successful professional relationships require:

- A shared understanding of goals and objectives
- Acknowledging and valuing differences in diverse organisations, partnerships and individuals
- Mutual respect and trust
- Transparency and accountability
- Sharing information and resources in an efficient manner.

Relationship building is critical to any effective organisation. The key to a successful relationship is negotiation and communication. To build relationships:

- Understand what your organisation does and identify other organisations with similar visions, purposes, and interests
- Attend networking opportunities
- Interact routinely – not just when you want something! Pay attention to what's going on in the funders' organisation. You can send congratulations messages or just like and follow the social media updates of people with whom you want to build relationships
- Whilst it's important to succinctly communicate who you are to potential funders, it's equally (if not more) important to listen to what they have to say
- Work out what each organisation is prepared/able to commit to the relationship.

Always keep a lookout for opportunities to establish new relationships and nurture current partnerships.

Building relationships with your community/consumers

Building a successful relationship with your community requires you to:

- Know who your community is and who they respect and trust
- Establish clear communication lines with key representatives, stakeholders and gatekeepers
- Involve local community members on your Board of Management
- Involve end-users in your Board, client engagement / reference groups
- Employ peers or people with relevant lived/living experience in your organisation (staff, board, advisory committee)
- Maintain regular contact with local council and government.

See Demonstrating needs and About your organisation for more information about how to build relationships with your community.

Building relationships with funding bodies

You must get to know your funder before you develop your proposal and prepare your funding application.

Build a proactive and responsive relationship with the funder. Contact them to:

- Clarify their expectations and desired outcomes
- Check whether you can append or provide additional information at a later date (e.g., information which is not requested but will assist you to sell your organisation or concept to the funder)
- Improve your understanding of the assessment process
- Obtain insight into other programs they have previously funded and/or looked upon favourably
- Promote the unique aspects of your organisation
- Invite them to come and see what you do.

Funding bodies generally:

- Have specific goals they want to achieve
- Want you to demonstrate how you can assist them to achieve their goals.

Your relationship with the funder does not stop once you receive your funding. You should also work to maintain relationships with your existing funding partners. Keep them engaged and committed to your organisation by:

- Demonstrating mutual respect and trust
- Sharing information and resources
- Promoting your organisation's successes
- Responding to their needs
- Keeping them updated about your funded activity
- Acknowledging their support and contribution (see below).

Partnering with other organisations

Consider partnering with other organisations (see Identifying opportunities for collaboration) to develop a funding application:

- Make general inquiries (e.g. through annual reports, websites) about the other organisation
- Identify potential common areas of interest (e.g. similar purpose statements)
- Make initial contact and arrange a face-to-face meeting with a key person
- Relationships are reciprocal - learning about them and what they could also gain from a partnership
- After the meeting, send a thank you email and encourage further contact.

If you decide to partner, make sure:

- Both organisations clearly understand their respective roles - not only in relation to the preparation of the application BUT also subsequent roles if the application is successful
- There is agreement on the lead organisation, who will hold the contract and funds.
- You develop a formal agreement (e.g. Memorandum of Understanding) to avoid potential confusion and/or conflict including:
    - A statement about what each organisation brings to the partnership
    - A clear indication of respective roles and functions
    - A statement about what you expect to get out of the partnership
    - Clear communication lines with nominated key contact people
    - How the funding will be allocated if the application is successful
- You are comfortable with the partnership arrangement and communicate concerns early
- Contingencies are in place if things go wrong.

Acknowledge your funder and partners

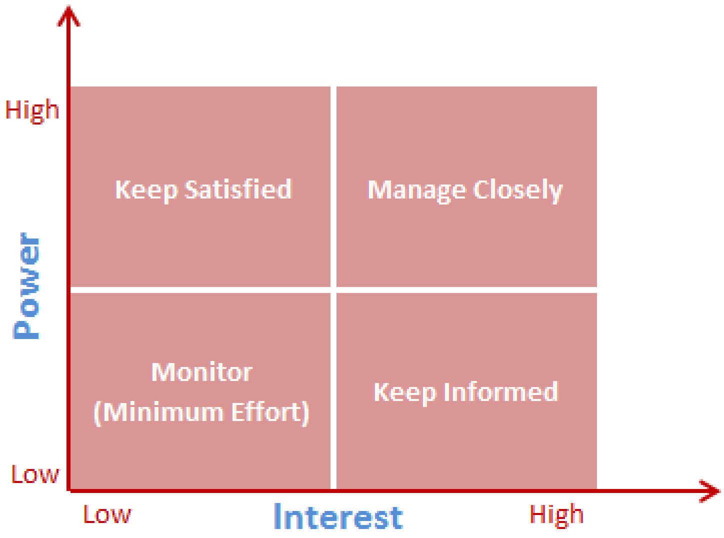
Ensure you appropriately acknowledge anyone who has assisted or contributed to your organisation.

Acknowledgement can be expressed:

- During an event
- In your newsletters or annual reports
- On your website
- In promotional materials
- In a personal letter from your CEO or Chair.

Communicate with stakeholders

Stakeholder communication is an important part of building relationships. You should have a strategy for communicating with your stakeholders in general, as well as in relation to specific projects. Stakeholders have different communication requirements depending on their power and influence. The power-interest grid is provided below:



As described by Latha Thamma reddi at https://www.projectmanagement.com/wikis/368897/stakeholder-analysis--using-the-power-interest-grid :

- "High power - High interest are the stakeholders are decision makers and have the biggest impact on the project success and hence you must closely manage their expectations.
- High power - Low Interest are the stakeholder needed to be kept in loop, these stakeholders need to be kept satisfied even though they aren't interested because they yield power. These type of stakeholders should be dealt with cautiously as well since they may use their power in a not desired way in the project if they become unsatisfied.
- Low power – High interest are people you should keep adequately informed, and talk to them to ensure that no major issues are arising. These people can often be very helpful with the detail of your project.
- Low power - low interest are people you should not bore with excessive communication".

References and resources

- Australian Government, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, Governance Toolkit: Working with Partners, https://www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/manage-your-charity/governance-hub/governance-toolkit/governance-toolkit-working-partners
- Hunt, J. (2013). Engagement with Indigenous Communities in Key Sectors. Resource sheet no. 23. Produced for the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse, https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/c3d74d39-0ded-4196-b221-cc4240d8ec90/ctgc-rs23.pdf.aspx?inline=true

- The Intersector Project, The Intersector Toolkit: Tools for Cross-Sector Collaboration, https://intersector.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/The-Intersector-Project-Toolkit.pdf

- National Congress of Australia's First Peoples. (2013). Principles for a Partnership-Centred Approach for NGOs Working with Aboriginal Organisations and Communities in the Northern Territory. Downloaded from https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=3d5e7a9d-7e07-4d2a-87eb-9b0ba66dcd65&subId=408413

- National Resource Center. (updated 2010). Partnerships: Frameworks for Working Together. Downloaded from The Strengthening Nonprofits: A Capacity Builder's Resource Library, https://communityactionpartnership.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Partnerships-Framework-Resource.pdf

- Purdom, L, Nonprofit Collaboration Toolkit, available from: https://www.familyjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Nonprofit-Collaboration-Toolkit.pdf

- Swift Digital, 2022, 8 Steps to Develop a Communications Strategy [with link to Free Template download], https://swiftdigital.com.au/blog/communications-strategy/

- Thamma reddi, L, 2024 'Stakeholder Analysis using the Power Interest Grid' https://www.projectmanagement.com/wikis/368897/stakeholder-analysis--using-the-power-interest-grid

- Volunteering Australia, Quick Guide to Volunteer Management, https://volunteeringhub.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Volunteering-Resource-Hub-Quick-Guide-to-Volunteer-Management.pdf

Youtube videos

- Erasmus+ Youth Academy, 2023, 15.22 minutes How to ensure visibility & dissemination in your NGO? Online Learning, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQg-PabfX5I

- The Open University, Building relationships with donors (Free course with statement of participation), https://www.open.edu/openlearn/money-business/business-strategy-studies/building-relationships-donors/content-section-0?active-tab=description-tab

- The Open University, Winning Resources and Support: Track 1 (audio) , https://www.open.edu/openlearn/money-business/winning-resources-and-support

- Proper Project Management, How To Create A Stakeholder Register (2024) &.57 minutes https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMXFWLEKuww

- UC Davis, Fundraising and Development Specialization, (free course), https://www.coursera.org/specializations/fundraising-development

- Wharton Online, Crowdfunding (free course), https://www.coursera.org/learn/wharton-crowdfunding

Section 5.2 Activities

Activity 5.2.1 The 30 second pitch

In thirty seconds state:

- The name of your organisation
- What your organisation does
- What you want
- Why you want it.

Now write it down.

Revisit activity 2.1 in Section Two.

Activity 5.2.2 From contact to collaboration

To successfully implement the funding strategy you created in Developing a funding strategy, you will need to build professional relationships with your community, funders, and other organisations.

It's who you know

It is best to start with the organisations and people you are already familiar with and then expand outwards. Develop a list of organisations and people that your organisation currently works with and the reasons why. Start with your organisational contact list and people that you regularly liaise with. Detail the current relationship you have with the person and/or organisation.

Six degrees of separation

Next, for each organisation and person on your list, identify who they know. Links may be formal or informal. For example, if a Board member is also a member of a local sporting team, write down any member of the team who may also support your organisation's objectives. This will also help you identify other ways in which Board members may be useful to your organisation.

Consider the organisations and people in your current network. Who do they work with, or fund or receive funding from? For the people they fund, who else are they getting funding from, and are they organisations who might also fund you? Social media sites like LinkedIn and Twitter make it easy for you to find our who people/organisations are following and being followed by, as well as the people/organisations they frequently tag in their posts. This can help you understand the broader network of influence and funding in which other people are operating. Identify who is part of that network that might benefit from knowing you, and you from knowing them.

Who do you know?	Current relationship	Who do they know? Who are they funded by?	Current Relationship

Communicate strategically

Using the lists above as well as the list of current and potential funders developed in Developing a funding strategy, brainstorm ways you may further develop these relationships by answering the questions below.

Who do we need to communicate with?

Why do we want to communicate with them?

What do we want to communicate with them about?

How will we communicate with them? (i.e., telephone, email)

When/ how often will we communicate with them?

Who is responsible for communicating with them?

Ask staff and volunteers to note when they have contacted the person and/or organisation and for what reason.

Do you need to follow up?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, when?

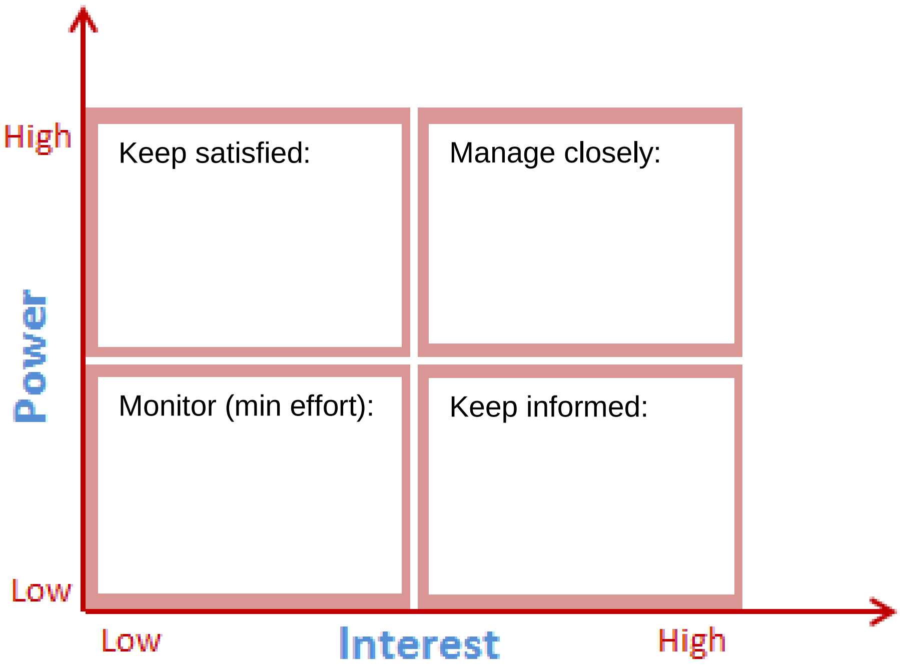
If no, explain why

TIP: Follow up quickly

Foll up quickly with someone who shows interest. If you think a “no” is more l like a “not now”, ask when it would be a good time to reach out again to see if situations have changed.

Activity 5.2.3 Your stakeholders according to the power-interest grid

In the grid below, plot all your stakeholders for the project you are proposing.



Once you have identified all your stakeholders, enter them into the table below with ideas about how often you should communicate with them and by what means:

Stakeholder	Form of communication (e.g. letter, email, social media tag, invitation to meeting or event)	Frequency of communication (e.g. weekly, monthly, quarterly, when news arises)	Social media handles	Already following their social media posts? Y/N

Section 6 Developing a proposal

Section 6 Developing a proposal

This section outlines how to develop a grant proposal which:

- Meets the needs of your community and client groups
- Is consistent with your organisation's vision, purpose and strategic directions
- Reflects the funder's values and interests
- Promotes their aims
- Complies with the funding guidelines.

When developing your proposal, allow time to:

- Become familiar with the submission process
- Ascertain the funder's priorities and requirements
- Brainstorm a proposal to match:
  - The funder's objectives
  - The community's identified needs
  - Your organisation's aims, goals and functions
- Identify whether your proposal may be strengthened by collaborating with others
- Check your proposal with an external person to make sure it matches the objectives
- Focus on why? who? how? and what it will achieve?

The following parts of this section of the resource will take you through the proposal development process:

6.1 Understand the funder: Highlights the importance of reading ALL documentation about the application process and the funder's objectives. It is critical that your proposal meets the funder's criteria. Contact the funder to clarify any matters

6.2 Designing your proposal: Explains factors to be considered and areas to be addressed when developing your proposal. This section assists you to identify the problem, describe your proposal, its outcomes and benefits

6.3 Identifying opportunities for collaboration: Increase your funding opportunities by collaborating with others. This may be a requirement to meet eligibility criteria or to strengthen your proposal

6.4 Identifying risk: Identify and take steps to mitigate all risks which may be associated with your proposal. Activities and resources are provided to assist you

6.5 Setting objectives and measuring outcomes: All proposals should specify the intended improvements and how these improvements will be measured. This section provides information about how to set SMART goals and develop an evaluation plan.

Section 6.1 Understand the funder

The funding guidelines

Before you start to develop a proposal, make sure you:

- Carefully study the funding guidelines, application processes, and any other information which may be relevant to the funder
- Scale and address your proposal to what is being requested/offered by the funder
- Note evaluation criteria and any application deadlines and requirements (especially closing date and time, formatting and file size requirements, need to set up an online profile, early deadlines for registering your proposal online, compulsory questions)
- Understand the funder's goals and priorities.

Warning: It may be tempting not to read all the relevant documents if you:

- Have extensive experience in writing grant applications
- Have submitted an application to the scheme before
- Have a long relationship with the funding body
- Are overwhelmed by the amount of reading material.

Avoid this temptation!!!

Do not underestimate the importance of understanding the funding guidelines, application processes, and funder's objectives. The funding guidelines and processes, and the funder's objectives and criteria may have changed since you last applied for funding. We can also bring our bias when we have a project we want funded, but it needs to match the criteria. Remember that a funder may receive an overwhelming number of applications and be looking for an easy way to shortlist them. Your application may be rejected without being read in full if you fail to:

- Follow guidelines
- Comply with requirements
- Submit a proposal which aligns with the funder's objectives.

The funder

Build a proactive and responsive relationship with the funder. Contact them early to:

- Clarify their expectations and outcomes
- Check whether you can append additional information to your application (e.g., information not requested but which will assist you to 'sell' your organisation or concept), or if you can provide it at a later date
- Understand the assessment process
- Build a personal relationship with the organisation
- Request a list of previously funded activities (it not available publicly)
- Promote the unique aspects of your organisation.

TIPS:

- Don't wait until the last minute to contact the funder directly with questions. This may leave the impression that your organisation is not well organised or prepared
- If you don't fully understand the guidelines, process, evaluation criteria etc, contact the funder for clarification
- Many funders hold online information sessions. Take advantage of these and ask questions there
- If you miss an online information session, ask if there is a recording that can be shared.

To meet the funder's objectives and priorities, investigate previously funded services and activities to:

- Gain insight into programs favoured by the funder
- Avoid duplication of previously funded activities
    - However, if you have a reason for duplicating previously similar or the same activities that the funder has previously funded (e.g. with a different group, in a different place, in a different political or legislative environment) – make the rationale clear. Remember that funders are accountable for their decisions to fund some activities (which means they were unable to fund others). Anticipate any concerns they may have in this regard and make it easy for them to show that they have selected something worthwhile.

Complying with guidelines

Checklists

Some funders provide a checklist to be completed prior to submission. Checklists help to:

- Provide all the necessary information
- Avoid omissions or errors.

If the funder has not provided you with a checklist, develop your own. This is a good strategy to ensure that you actively read the guidelines.

Deadlines

Guidelines often tell you the final date and time for:

- Contacting the funder to ask questions
- Applications opening
- Applications closing (it is important to know this and work back from this date – allowing plenty of review time)
- Information sessions.

You will also need to be aware of:

- Announcement of successful applications
- Expected start and completion dates
- Expectations for any interim and/or final reports and/or financial acquittals (if relevant)
- Record the closing dates. If you use an electronic reminder system - set reminders for the closing date as well as time out from that date (e.g one month, two weeks, one week)
- Some funders set an exact time by which an application must be received. Make sure you know whether any regional time differences exist
- Deadlines are a fact of life. Make sure you submit your application on time. There is no flexibility with this
- Plan to have your application completed one or two weeks early. This will allow for proofreading without time pressure
- Submitting your application early may also leave a favourable impression with the funder regarding your time management skills.

Eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria and compulsory compliance requirements must be adhered to. Some funding programs require you to submit essential supporting documentation (i.e., certificates of insurance, audits or financial reports, ABN numbers, annual reports). Collate and store these items in an accessible location so they are readily available.

To fulfil the funder's requirements you may also have to partner with another organisation (see Identifying opportunities for collaboration).

Contract compliance

Does the current grant application contain a copy of the proposed contract? If yes, find out if your organisation:

- Has sought legal advice/clarification?
- Is compliant with the clauses?
- Can make changes to the clauses if appropriate?

Prioritise

Highlight the questions you have to answer and underline key words or phrases. Try to use the same language as the funder.

TIPS: Understand the funder and their requirements

- Read the information provided and contact the funder to clarify any matters you do not understand
- Demonstrate to the funder that you understand their priorities and have the expertise required to meet them and achieve community benefits
- Record deadlines and adhere to them. They are not flexible
- If funding applications contain checklists, use these prior to submission
- If the funding application does not contain a checklist, develop one to ensure all essential items have been completed, formatting requirements are met, and additional information is attached
- Make a file containing copies of core organisational information so it can be easily located when you complete your application.

TIPS: Familiarise yourself with the submission process

- If the application needs to be entered using an online system, register early and log into the online system. Becoming familiar with the requirements and nuances of the online system will make your submission process less stressful
- Be aware of any information that cannot be changed once entered into the system. This may apply where applications need to be 'registered'
- If attachments need to be uploaded, check to ensure all items are attached in the correct format and meet any size limitations.

Section 6.1 Activities

Activity 6.1.1 Create a user account

If the submission system is open, login and complete all the questions to which you already know the answers (ABN, etc). However, be aware of any information that cannot be amended once entered (e.g. project leader, project title).

After your first pass of the application, make a list of the information that is outstanding. Note what steps need to be taken to get that outstanding information (e.g. amount of public liability insurance, project description) and who is responsible.

Activity 6.1.2 Understand the funder's objectives and priorities

Many funding bodies will provide information about their objectives and priorities.

Which documents will assist you to understand the funder's objectives and priorities? Write the document titles and locations here (e.g. the fund guidelines, the organisation's publicly available strategy, plan, vision, purpose, etc.)

Do the documents stipulate the funder's objectives and priorities?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, write them here.

If they give a clear sense of what they do not fund (types of activities, types of costs), write them here:

If no, contact the funder to seek clarification.

Are there any key words or phrases used in the funder's documentation?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, write them here.

If no, contact the funder for clarification. Save their response to your files in case you need to refer to the details or the contact person at a later date.

Objectives?

Brainstorm ways to meet the funder's objectives. If you find it easier, mindmap your thoughts.

Write down what the funder wants.

Write down what you can do.

Write down instances where you have done this before (i.e. your evidence demonstrating your capability)

Write down how what you can do will meet the funder's needs.

Write down how this will meet your organisation's objectives.

Write down how it will benefit your community and clients.

Write down who else might benefit and how (secondary beneficiaries and benefits).

Section 6.2 Designing your proposal

When developing your proposal, identify the problem, specify your aims, objectives, activities, outputs and outcomes.

Your proposal should reflect:

- The funder's priorities/requirements/objectives
- The needs of your community and clients
- Your organisation's role, goals and strategic directions.

Funding bodies want you to clearly describe:

- The identified need
- What you are offering them
- What your proposal will achieve.

Your proposal should inform the funder about:

- The underlying problem or need (see Demonstrating needs in Section 1)
- Your proposed aim/s
- Your proposed objectives
- Your planned activities and timelines
- The products and services you will generate (i.e. outputs)
- The outcomes and benefits anticipated (see Setting objectives and measuring outcomes in Section 6.5)
- The resources required to conduct the activities and produce the services
- Total cost involved in delivering the activities and the amount you are asking for (see Your budget in Section 7).

For more guidance about your proposal's aims, objectives and activities, please refer to Developing your proposal's aims, objectives, and activities in Section 6.2, below and Setting objectives and measuring outcomes in Section 6.5.

Questions you may want to consider when developing your proposal are outlined in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Proposal development questions

Proposal Area	Questions
Concept/Idea	WHAT is the identified need? WHO is the targeted population? WHY does the problem need to be addressed? WHAT does the funder want? WHAT do you propose to do? HOW will your proposal meet the identified need and the funder's aims?
Activities	WHAT activities will you be doing? WHO will be doing them? HOW will the activities be delivered? HOW long will you be undertaking the activities? WHAT will the activities achieve? HOW will your achievements be measured (See Setting objectives and measuring outcomes (Section 6.5))?
Budget	WHAT resources and materials are needed? WHY are the resources and materials needed? HOW long do you need the resources and materials for? HOW much do they cost? HOW much of the total cost will be met by your organisation? HOW much of the total cost will be requested from the funder? (See Your budget in Section 7)
Organisational Track Record and Proposal Team	WHY should the funder fund your organisation? WHAT experience does your organisation have in producing outcomes and benefits? WHAT skills and qualifications does the proposed team possess?

The identified need

For background, see Section 1 (Demonstrating needs).

Tell the funder about the underlying problem or need you have identified:

- Demonstrate that the need exists
- Underscore the urgency of addressing the need
- Establish your expertise and knowledge (see Demonstrating needs).

Provide information about:

- The targeted client group
- Why they need your proposed program/service
- How often they will use your service.

Prioritise needs by assessing the:

- Number of people who experience the problem and/or are detrimentally impacted
- Harms caused to the social, environmental, physical, and/or mental wellbeing of the individual and community
- Availability, suitability, and effectiveness of other services and/or programs.

If you are seeking:

- Continued funding, tell the funder:
    - How your current activities are measured and provide up-to-date statistics about the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of these activities
    - How the service will respond to emerging needs and/or periods of high demand.
- Funds to start a new service or program of work, consider which sources of evidence may be useful to include in your proposal (see the list below).

Evidence which demonstrates need, significance, and/or consumer, community support

The following sources of information may assist you to demonstrate community need:

- Letters of support that highlight the difference your proposal will make
- Needs assessment findings which detail and prioritise problems, map complementary services, and identify gaps
- Quality assurance surveys which demonstrate the relevance and effectiveness of your proposed activities
- Case studies which illustrate:
    - The beneficial outcomes and impacts of your activities
    - What is likely to occur if the activities are not provided
- Information obtained from local, sub-regional or regional plans.

See also Section 1 for more information on Demonstrating needs.

Developing your proposal's aims, objectives, and activities

Develop a clear, achievable and measurable approach to address the identified need and funder's priorities and requirements:

- Define your proposal's aims
- Set your objectives - use action-oriented words (e.g. create, decrease, deliver, develop, establish, enable, improve, increase, produce, provide, reduce)
- Outline the activities you will undertake to achieve your objectives
- Detail who will be involved in executing the proposal
- Develop measures to assess:
    - What you are doing
    - How well you are doing it
    - What difference it will make, and who benefits?

Description of aims, objectives, and activities

Aims are broad, general, and intangible statements which:

- Provide a succinct description of what your proposal hopes to achieve
- Are directly linked with the identified need.

Objectives are:

- The steps involved in achieving your aims
- The measurable outcomes of the program
- Specific, realistic and tangible (see Setting objectives and measuring outcomes in Section 6.5).

Activities:

- Are the specific actions and tasks required to achieve your objectives
- Have defined start and end dates.

Outcomes:

- Are the end result of your proposal
- Are specific, focused and easily interpreted
- Measure whether your proposal has achieved its aims (see Setting objectives and measuring outcomes in Section 6.5).

Your proposed activities

In developing the specific activities and tasks required to achieve your objectives, consider:

- The approach you will adopt
- What actions and tasks are required
- Why you selected your approach, activities and tasks
- Who will undertake the activities and tasks:
    - The skills, knowledge, and experience required
    - How much time they will contribute
    - Whether any new staff will be recruited
- When the activities will start and finish
- How your proposal will be administered (including lines of authority, supervision, reporting and communication). This is especially important for a large proposal or if more than one agency is involved.

Many proposals forget to quantify the amount of time and resources contributed by volunteers. Describing tasks that volunteers can undertake highlights the value added by the volunteers, as well as the cost-effectiveness of the project.

Warning: Do not over commit staff to achieving the proposed activities. Funders may ask about other funding commitments and how you will free up the time of an already fully deployed individual. Be prepared to discuss with funders how staff will allocate their time.

TIPS: Designing your proposal

- Aims are broad statements that describe what programs or activities should achieve. They reflect the purpose and priorities of your program
- Ensure aims are easily understandable
- Aims must start with an action/verb
- Well-articulated objectives are critical to a proposal's success as they define the methods adopted by the funding recipient
- Case studies can capture the imagination of funding panels. If used appropriately, they humanise the organisational story and can present a compelling picture – especially if they can illustrate the impact of what you are proposing (i.e. if you have done a pilot study or trial of your activity). Avoid case studies that make a problem or issue look so complicated that your proposal will have little chance of leading to change
- Select facts or statistics which best support your proposal
- Use data which are current, accurate, and targeted, such as those presented in The National Alcohol and Drug Knowledgebase https://nadk.flinders.edu.au/
- Do not use statistics which are out-of-date, incorrect, generic or too broad

- It may be helpful to include a Gantt chart or some other scheduling tool so the assessor can clearly see the start and end time for each activity
- Establish an organisational chart which clearly defines the lines of authority and supervision, and the staff relationships with clients
- It needs to be clear who is responsible for financial management, project outcomes, and reporting. Develop a tracking sheet to monitor staff allocations
- A skills matrix may be useful to describe the skills required to deliver the proposed activities. Identify staff already employed and those who will be recruited specifically for the project.

References and resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (updated 2018). Gaining Consensus Among Stakeholders Through the Nominal Group Technique. Evaluation Briefs. Available at https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief7.pdf
- The National Alcohol and Drug Knowledgebase https://nadk.flinders.edu.au/
- O'Neal-McElrath, T., Kanter, L., & English, L. J. (2019). Winning grants step by step: The complete workbook for planning, developing, and writing successful proposals. John Wiley & Sons.
- Randall B. Dunham, (2006), Nominal Group Technique: A Users' Guide https://sswm.info/sites/default/files/reference_attachments/DUNHAM%201998%20Nominal%20Group%20Technique%20-%20A%20Users'%20Guide.pdf

Youtube videos

- Totem Consulting, What is a Gantt Chart (3.26 minutes), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwseLrxkKKE

Project management and planning software

You will find lots of software available for project management and planning. Popular choices include:

- Microsoft Project
- Monday.com
- Teams Planner
- Smartsheet
- Jira

Section 6.2 Activities

Activity 6.2.1 Create a mindmap

Before writing your proposal:

- Brainstorm ways to meet the funder's objectives
- List the broad program areas/services that you intend to provide and their objectives
- Identify the activity/ies for each area and objective
- Map the order and timing for the activities and objectives
- Explain why you chose the activity to achieve your objective
- Describe the evidence base for your chosen delivery model, methods, activities, and outcomes
- Indicate how the planned work will effectively lead to the anticipated outcomes.

Mindmap your thoughts.

Answer the questions in the table below. Use bullet points or post-it notes to separate out ideas. Every time you have a new idea, put it on a post-it note and then stick them all on the wall.

Proposal Area	Questions
Concept/Idea	WHAT is the identified need? WHO is the targeted population? WHY does the problem need to be addressed? WHAT does the funder want? WHAT do you propose to do? HOW will your proposal meet the identified need and the funder's aims?
Activities	WHAT activities will you be doing? WHO will be doing them? HOW will the activities be delivered? HOW long will you be undertaking the activities? WHAT will the activities achieve? HOW will your achievements be measured? (See Setting objectives and measuring outcomes in Section 6.5)

Proposal Area	Questions
Budget	WHAT resources and materials are needed? WHY are the resources and materials needed? HOW long do you need the resources and materials for? HOW much do they cost? HOW much of the total cost will be met by your organisation? HOW much of the total cost will be requested from the funder? (See Your budget in Section 7)
Organisational Track Record and Proposal Team	WHY should the funder fund your organisation? WHAT experience does your organisation have in producing outcomes and benefits? WHAT skills and qualifications does the proposed team possess?

Once you have all your ideas written out, you can group them together and see what goes with what. Arrange your thoughts into relevant grouping.

Possible grouping include:

- What the funder wants
- Your capabilities
- Your track record
- Costs and timings
- Background to project
- What you propose to do.

Activity 6.2.2 Summarise your mindmap

Take a moment to focus on the need/problem that your organisation seeks to address.

Develop a two or three-sentence description that describes the need/problem that your proposal (and the funder's money) will address. Write it here:

Write down the funder's priorities and objectives.

Write down what you can do.

Write down how your proposal will meet the funder's objectives.

Write down how your proposal will meet your organisation's objectives.

Write down how your proposal will address the identifed problem and benefit the community.

Section 6.3 Identifying opportunities for collaboration

When developing your funding application, there may be opportunities to collaborate with other organisations and individuals to ensure you deliver optimal outcomes.

If you are not a peer-based organisation, you should consider the benefits of partnering with peer-based organisations that may align with the focus of funding (these are organisations that exclusively or predominantly employ people with lived or living experience of drug use, mental health, blood borne viruses, trauma, working in the military, first responders, etc).

If you are proposing an activity that will benefit a particular priority population or community group, you should consider the benefits of partnering with community organisations or groups who support these populations (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, multicultural, refugee, migrant, asylum seeker or nationality-based organisations, gender and sexuality diverse organisations).

The decision to collaborate will depend on the:

- Proposed solution/project
- The natural fit of the partners, where the contribution and expertise of each organisation is clear and complementary.
- Funding application guidelines (see Organisational compliance regarding eligibility criteria)
- Funder's expectations.

Always check the funding application guidelines to see if collaborations are accepted.

If in doubt, contact the funder to seek clarification.

Choosing a collaborative partner

When identifying organisations or individuals for potential collaboration consider if:

- You share common ideologies, interests and ways of working. For instance, it would be difficult for a harm reduction organisation and an abstinence-based organisation to reconcile their philosophies
- There is shared respect
- You have clear expectations about what each organisation:
    - Brings to the collaboration
    - Hopes to get from the collaboration. Stakes can be financial, practical or symbolic (e.g. acknowledgment and/or prestige)
- You have processes in place to work through potential conflicts (see Building relationships).

You may want to look for opportunities to partner with another organisation on smaller projects or initiatives first, to make sure that you work well together and to show evidence of previous collaboration.

Identify key people from your respective organisations and establish a small working group to:

- Consider who else should be involved
- Identify and allocate the key tasks and allocate timelines
- Assign a key person to coordinate the development of the funding application
- Schedule regular meetings to review and discuss progress
- Assign overall responsibility to one person to submit the funding application.

References and resources

- Australian Government, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, Governance Toolkit: Working with Partners, https://www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/manage-your-charity/governance-hub/governance-toolkit/governance-toolkit-working-partners
- Australian Government, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2023, Key organisations for working with culturally and linguistically diverse families (resource sheet) https://aifs.gov.au/resources/resource-sheets/key-organisations-working-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-families
- The Good Project Website. (2013). The Good Collaboration Toolkit: An Approach to Building, Sustaining, and Carrying out Successful Collaboration. https://www.thegoodproject.org/collaborationtoolkit
- Hunt, J. (2013). Engagement with Indigenous Communities in Key Sectors. Resource sheet no. 23. Produced for the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse. https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/c3d74d39-0ded-4196-b221-cc4240d8ec90/ctgc-rs23.pdf.aspx?inline=true
- The Intersector Project, The Intersector Toolkit: Tools for Cross-Sector Collaboration, https://intersector.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/The-Intersector-Project-Toolkit.pdf
- National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples. (2013). Principles for a Partnership-Centred Approach for NGOs Working with Aboriginal Organisations and Communities in the Northern Territory. Downloaded from https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=3d5e7a9d-7e07-4d2a-87eb-9b0ba66dcd65&subId=408413
- National Resource Center. (updated 2010). Partnerships: Frameworks for Working Together. Downloaded from The Strengthening Nonprofits: A Capacity Builder’s Resource Library, https://communityactionpartnership.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Partnerships-Framework-Resource.pdf
- New South Wales Department of Community Services. (2009). Working with Aboringinal People and Communities. A Practice Resource. New South Wales Department of Community Services, Ashfield: NSW. http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/321308/working_with_aboriginal.pdf
- Purdom, L, Nonprofit Collaboration Toolkit, available from: https://www.familyjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Nonprofit-Collaboration-Toolkit.pdf

- Tennyson, R. (2011). The Partnering Toolbook (4th ed). International Business Leaders Forum. https://archive.thepartneringinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Partnering-Toolbook-en-20113.pdf
- VicHealth. (2011). The Partnership Analysis Tool and Checklist. https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-05/VH_Partnerships-Analysis-Tool_web%5B1%5D.pdf

Youtube videos

- Proper Project Management, How To Create A Stakeholder Register (2024) &.57 minutes https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMXFWLEKuww

Section 6.3 Activities

Activity 6.3.1 Identify collaborative opportunities

Read and complete the activities in:

- The Good Project's Collaboration Toolkit - https://www.thegoodproject.org/collaborationtoolkit
- The Partnering Toolbook (4th ed) - https://archive.thepartneringinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Partnering-Toolbook-en-20113.pdf

Section 6.4 Organisational risk

Managing risk is not crisis management. It requires thinking proactively about what risks may arise. There are many such risks.

Risks may be internal or external and include legal, economic, contractual, operational, and political risk. Of course, we are all now more aware than ever of the risk of a pandemic!

Organisations should have a range of risk management policies and plans to reduce the:

- Likelihood of the risk occurring
- Consequences of the risk.

These two dimensions of risk form the risk matrix, which gives you the ability to define risk as from low to extreme. There are several variations of risk matrices, but a basic one is shown below:

		Consequence				
		Negligible 1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	Major 4	Catastrophic 5
Likelihood	5 Almost certain	Moderate 5	High 10	Extreme 15	Extreme 20	Extreme 25
	4 Likely	Moderate 4	High 8	High 12	Extreme 16	Extreme 20
	3 Possible	Low 3	Moderate 6	High 9	High 12	Extreme 15
	2 Unlikely	Low 2	Moderate 4	Moderate 6	High 8	High 10
	1 Rare	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Moderate 4	Moderate 5

Ask the funder if they want a risk management plan in information in your application.

Program and project risk

Risk management is a formal part of contract management. A risk management plan takes resources to develop and maintain.

Planning for risk

Risk management plans are formal, written documents which:

- Provide information about potential risks (category, probability and impact)
- Allocate staff roles and responsibilities for monitoring, controlling, and reporting risk
- Outline the plan for reducing risk occurrence and impact.

Risk mitigation

Processes involved in risk mitigation include:

- Identifying the risk/s
- Assessing the probability, nature and scope
- Developing plans to respond to the risk, for example:
  - Contingency plans are predefined actions if an identified risk event occurs
  - Fallback plans are developed for risks that have a high impact on meeting project objectives, and are implemented if attempts to reduce the risk are not effective
- Contingency reserves or allowances held by the project sponsor or organisation to reduce the risk of cost or schedule overruns to an acceptable level.

Develop a risk management plan

To manage the risks inherent in your proposal, it is necessary to develop a risk management plan which monitors, controls, and reports on risk.

- Create a risk register (using an Excel spread sheet) to help you identify project risks, analyse risk severity and document possible solutions
- Identify risk management and mitigation strategies
- Clearly describe the activities you will undertake
- Identify how you will manage changes in scope throughout the contract period
- Identify what may cause a risk to eventuate
- Develop appropriate responses to risky situations
- Analyse the level of risk tolerance accepted by the funder.

Failure to manage risk may negatively impact:

- The services provided to the community
- Your relationship with the funder
- Your contractual obligations
- The long term sustainability of your organisation.

The most common project risks are detailed in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Common project risks

Type of risk	Managing or reducing risk
Scope risk Scope risk eventuates when the boundaries of your project are not clearly defined. The scope of your application is defined by your: • Objectives • Goal • Phases • Tasks • Resources • Budget • Limitations and • Schedule parameters (e.g., you only provide counselling to men aged over 18 but workers start seeing anyone who presents at your clinic).	Defined deliverables or performance indicators, objectives, activities, clients, geographic area, and hours of operation are clearly communicated to stakeholders, senior management and team members. Objectives are tangible and reflect your organisational objectives.
Cost risk The costs which you have provided in your budget may be affected by internal and external factors (e.g., increases in salaries; cost of materials, increases in utility/transport costs).	Make sure you clearly specify the resources and materials needed. If the contract period is long, factor in increases for fluctuating costs. When providing estimates for material expenses, use the upper estimates. Include a contingency amount. Prepare an exhaustive budget with line items for your proposal. Establish good accounting procedures.
Schedule risk Identify the risks that may impact your	To minimise schedule risks: • Break down the flow of activities into

Type of risk	Managing or reducing risk
ability to meet your milestones and deadlines according to the proposed timeline. Achieving timelines and agreed critical paths may be difficult if there is extensive reliance on external parties or materials. Scheduling phases and activities realistically will enable: • You to manage changes throughout the contract period • Goal setting and the development of critical paths • Clarity in reporting requirements.	small, clearly defined components • Identify which components rely on others being completed • Allocate relatively short timeframes for each component. When formulating the critical path, ensure that holidays and other periods of staff taking leave are built into the equation. Wherever possible, include other projected periods of high demand in your organisation. If you will need to recruit a new team member, consider how easy the position will be to fill in a timely manner.
Performance risk Performance risk arises when activities fail to produce anticipated results and/or there is a failure to complete an activity on time.	Make objectives tangible, feasible, and credible. Construct a schedule to identify priority activities. Identify potential 'red tape' impediments (e.g., financial, contractual, ethical or other approvals) that may impact on the performance of your activities.
Governance risk Governance and decision risk usually occur where an organisation's governance and decision-making structures are not clearly articulated or communicated to staff, funders, clients and the community.	Develop a governance model for your proposal which describes the roles of team members and decision-making process. Describe the ground rules for participation in the program and the processes for sharing information with the rest of the organisation. Be specific about the commitment expected from Board members, external stakeholders, and team members.
Strategic risk Strategic risks may result from: • Choosing a technology which does not work for outreach services • Choosing a technology that requires infrastructure or resourcing that is unavailable to your clients and community	Clearly state how the proposed services will be provided and highlight the beneficial outcomes for clients. Conducting a community needs assessment and a review of the program/service you are implementing will help you to minimise any feasibility or design risks.

Type of risk	Managing or reducing risk
• Proposing activities that are inflexible and/or inaccessible to clients • Not being able to secure infrastructure support or cooperation from other parties to successfully execute your proposal.	
Legal risk Alcohol and drug organisations may encounter many legal and regulatory obligations, as well as contract risks.	Your organisation's policies and procedures may need to be adapted to reduce legal risk. Make sure these policies and procedures are continuously reviewed and implemented for all activities and program.
Environmental risk Environmental risks are risks associated with external hazards, including storms, floods; earthquakes; vandalism.	Organisations have little control over environmental risks. Ensure your organisation has adequate insurance cover.
Resource risk Resource issues such as staff turnover and inadequate access to education and professional development are common risks. There is always a risk that your key experts or senior staff will leave and that your team are inexperienced or need to acquire new skills. In addition, you may need to invest in new materials, technology, or resources to replace outdated or unreliable equipment.	Develop policies and procedures to manage and minimise the disruption of organisational and staff changes. Build capacity amongst multiple team members. Estimate costs accurately. Do not place undue expectations on the capacity of the staff to undertake the proposed activities. Ensure any contracted and/or collaborative work is clearly defined in contracts and memoranda of understanding. Ensure sufficient funds have been requested for: • Training and professional development • New materials and technology required to conduct the proposed work.
Interpersonal conflict risk Conflict management may arise with a number of internal and external	Develop conflict management strategies and train staff in conflict management techniques.

Type of risk	Managing or reducing risk
stakeholders throughout the development of the funding application.	

If you are having difficulty in developing risk management plans for your program or service, consult similar agencies, advocacy groups, or a professional service to develop such a plan.

Consulting a professional service may involve a development cost and then a yearly review.

References and resources

- Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS). (2013). Risk Management and Quality Improvement Handbook. Ultimo: NSW. https://studylib.net/doc/18540376/risk-management-and-quality-improvement-handbook
- Australian Government Comcover. (2010). Factsheet 1: AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 - Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines. https://goodcdn.app/memberhq/vicsport/uploads/GGT-4.12.2---COV_216905_Risk_Management_Fact_Sheet_FA3_23082010_0.pdf
- The Community Door Website http:// www.communitydoor.org.au/risk-management
- Figure from: Kaya, Gulsum Kubra, 2018, 'Good risk assessment practice in hospitals', PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, Department of Engineering, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323570642_Good_risk_assessment_practice_in_hospitals
- Newdick, D. (2011). Risk Management and ISO 31000. https://www.scribd.com/presentation/241898708/Risk-Managment-and-ISO-31000-by-Doug-Newdick
- NSW Government, Volunteer risk management toolkit, https://www.nsw.gov.au/community-services/volunteering/resources-for-volunteering-nsw/volunteer-risk-management
- Our Community Website: Helpsheets, Checklists, and Policies for Risk Management.https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=1245
- South Australian Government Department of Premier and Cabinet Website. This website provides information and training resources on risk management responsibilities and legal obligations for organisations. Standards Australia. (2009). AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009, Risk management - Principles and guidelines. Sydney, NSW. https://policy.deakin.edu.au/download.php?id=214&version=4&associated
- Volunteering Australia. (2003). Running the Risk: Risk Management Tool for Volunteer Involving Organisations. Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services: ACT. https://volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/files_mf/1377053059VAManagersrunningtherisk.pdf

Section 6.4 Activity

Activity 6.4.1 Identify and manage risks

List all the possible risks associated with your proposal. Consider the likelihood and consequences of the risks eventuating.

Develop a plan to reduce the chances of any risk which may impact the successful delivery of your proposal. Plan how you can either prevent the risk from eventuating and/or develop strategies to reduce the impact of the risk if it does occur.

Develop a risk register and assign responsibility to a staff member to ensure the risk is monitored and managed. Complete the table below.

Risky event	Consequences	Who will be impacted?	Probability of risk occurring	Level of control	Risk management plan	Risk mitigation plan	Responsible person
List all possible events	**List all possible consequences**		**High – Med – Low**	**High – Med – Low**	**How do you prevent the risk from occurring?**	**How do you reduce the consequences of the risk?**	

As many of the risks which may be associated with your proposal are also likely to be linked to other activities undertaken by your organisation, it is possible that your organisation already has plans in place to manage and reduce these risks.

List all the policies that your organisation currently has in place to manage risks.

Are all staff familiar with these policies?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Where can staff access these policies?

Are these suitable to reduce the likelihood and consequences of the risk occurring for your proposed activities?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If the policies are not suitable, do the current policies need to be adapted or will you need to develop others?

Is risk management routinely discussed and revised in your organisation?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, record those processes here (eg. Quarterly team meetings):

If no, where and how could you embed routine risk management and review?

Section 6.5 Setting objectives and measuring outcomes

Your proposal's objectives will be informed by:

- The funder's priorities and goals
- Your identified need
- Your ability to propose and successfully implement a solution
- Your organisation's purpose and vision.

One way of writing the objectives for your application is to use the S.M.A.R.T method.

In addition, specific objectives should answer 6 questions:

1. **Who** - who is involved?
2. **What** - what will be accomplished?
3. **Where** - identify a location
4. **When** - establish a timeframe
5. **Which** - identify what activities you will undertake and the resources and materials you need
6. **Why** - detail the reasons, purpose or benefits of the goal.

For measurable objectives you must establish criteria for measuring progress. To determine if your goal is measurable, ask:

- How many?
- How much?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?
- To measure impact, you also need to know what you started with – your 'baseline'
- Do you have good data on the current situation?
- Do you have an idea of what numbers would indicate good, excellent or outstanding success at the completion of your activity?
- How will you capture the data you need to evaluate any intervention you intend to introduce?

Attainable objectives make it easier to prioritise your actions and activities and establish what you need to do to accomplish your goals. To determine if your goal is attainable, ask:

- How can it be done (with our current expertise and resources as well as those we are applying funding to attain)?
- Will our activities and actions be acceptable to stakeholders and end-users?
- Will they be feasible to undertake?

Your objectives should be realistic. Only you can decide how high you should aim. Consider what you are both willing and able to do. Ask yourself:

- What have you accomplished previously?
- Why does it matter?
- What can we realistically achieve with the funding we are requesting?
- What would constitute an unrealistic aim that would make our project look too ambitious to fund?

Timely objectives are grounded within a timeframe. Otherwise there is no urgency or priority given to your activities. They incorporate short and medium term objectives. Consider:

- What conditions need to exist for the goal to be accomplished?
- By when?

Tangible objectives may be the production of reports, brochures, education and training resources, community events, or the implementation of a new service (in full or as a pilot) or the extension of an existing one. They might even be a toolkit like this one.

Measuring outputs and outcomes

Funders are accountable for the money they donate to organisations and increasingly request information about the organisation's operations, activities, outputs, and outcomes. Measuring outcomes is therefore an important component of service delivery and managing your funding.

Alcohol and other drug non-government organisations should proactively allocate resources into developing and maintaining output and outcome measurement processes to ensure the organisation can:

- Articulate their processes for continuous quality improvement
- Quantify results if they want support for ongoing programs.

When assessing your proposal, funders will expect you to outline an evaluation plan. Your evaluation plan will need to identify:

- The activities undertaken
- The services or products created
- Your key performance indicators
- How your results will be evaluated.

Answer the questions:

- What did we do?
- How did we do it?
- What did it achieve?
- What difference did it make?
- What could we improve on?

Outcomes

An outcome is the end result of a program. It may be intended or unintended and can be either positive or negative. Outcomes are ways of measuring whether your program or practice achieved its aims.

Specifying outcomes will give you opportunities to measure the success of the program. You can break down the outcomes into indicators which will also enable you to track how the program is progressing.

For AOD agencies, outcomes may include both changes in client health and help-seeking behaviour as well as improvements in staff knowledge and service quality.

An outcome statement should be specific, focused, easily interpreted, and:

- Identify the intended result(s) of the agency, with the level of achievement against the intended result(s) being measured
- Specify the target group(s) of the program/service
- Specify the activities undertaken by the agency that contribute to the achievement of the intended result(s).

Focus on the positive outcomes your proposal may achieve and identify what improvements are likely.

Such outcomes may include:

- How your proposal may strengthen the community
- Increased collaboration between community services sectors
- Improved access to and quality of services
- Improvements in client health, housing and other experiences.

You can include hypothetical statements as long as they are plausible, reasonable and based on facts. For example:

Last year, our service was forced to turn away 200 people. The proposed intervention means that we will be able to cater for an additional 50 people. Given that a new local development will attract 100 new people to the local area, we expect that our service will be able to cater for 250 people.

If there are known costs associated with your service or general topic, you could use that too. To extend the hypothetical example above:

If one in two people who we were forced to turn away present instead to an emergency department, it would not be unreasonable to assume that being able to service an additional 50 people through this grant could save almost $20,000 in emergency presentations (ie $789 per person for 25 people, based on figures for national average cost per emergency presentation 2020-2021 published by the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority 2023).

Features of good proposals

A good proposal will demonstrate to funders that you:

- Know your community
- Collaborate with others to accomplish the best results for your community and clients
- Are knowledgeable about the best methods to employ and/or innovative in your approach
- Have the demonstrated skills and expertise to deliver on you proposed activity
- Have identified objectives, outcomes and indicators of success – and are committed to achieving them (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 Measuring good proposals

Features of good proposals	Evaluation criteria
Know your community Identify your targeted need using information obtained from local sources, literature reviews, and government policies Demonstrate that your proposal's objectives address the need and align with your funder's priorities	**WHY?**
Work together - who can help? Outline which organisations and community members will be involved in the planning, development and implementation of your proposal Demonstrate that your proposal involves a broad range of stakeholders and will contribute to increased cooperation between services Demonstrate how the input of volunteers, client advisory groups, people with lived/living experience and/or peers strengthens your proposal Outline how your proposal will enhance the wellbeing of community members and incorporate strategies for involving disadvantaged and marginalised populations in the design and management of your proposal	**WHO?**

Features of good proposals	Evaluation criteria
Try new things - is everyone involved? Demonstrate what you have provided before and what new services and/or processes you will be employing to maximise impact Provide information which details the success and/or gaps in current services provided Emphasise how your approach is different (or at least new to your geographic region or your end-users) and why it is needed	**HOW?**
Will it make a lasting difference? Explain how your proposal will provide a lasting positive impact for the wider community beyond the direct funding period. What capacity will it build for short, medium and long-term outcomes and collaborations? Detail how you will monitor progress and assess impact	**WHAT WILL IT ACHIEVE?**

References and resources

- Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Website: Innovative Practice Toolkit , https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Sharing-Innovative-Practice-Toolkit-web-version-16-Dec-2010_1.pdf

- The Community Toolbox Website: Logic models - http://ctb.ku.edu/en/ table-of-contents/overview/models-for- community-health-and-development/ logic-model-development/main

- Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority, National Hospital Cost Data Collection (NHCDC) Public Sector Report 2020-21, (2023) https://www.ihacpa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-06/national_hospital_cost_data_collection_report_public_sector_2020-21_0.pdf

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- University of California, SMART Goals: A How to Guide, https://www.ucop.edu/local-human-resources/_files/performance-appraisal/How%20to%20write%20SMART%20Goals%20v2.pdf

Section 6.5 Activities

Activity 6.5.1 Your objectives checklist

When preparing your objectives, consider the matters below.

	YES	NO
Have you stated your objectives in quantifiable terms?		
Can your objectives be measured as outcomes, not processes?		
How will you measure your outcomes?		
What data collection processes or tools do you already have in place?		
What data collection processes or tools will you need to identify or develop?		
Are there any other metrics relevant to the objectives of your proposal (eg. Cost savings?)		
Do your objectives specify the results of an activity?		
Have you identified the longer term objective(s) for your activity?		
Do your objectives identify the target audience or community being served?		
Have you considered secondary beneficiaries of your activity? (e.g. will your activity offset the use of other services? Will it benefit families, carers if they are not the primary focus of your activity?)		
Are your objectives realistic and capable of being accomplished within the specified timeframe?		
Do your aims and objectives link directly to your need statement?		
Where you have multiple program areas (the steps or building blocks that make up the overall program/activity), have you identified the objectives of each one?		

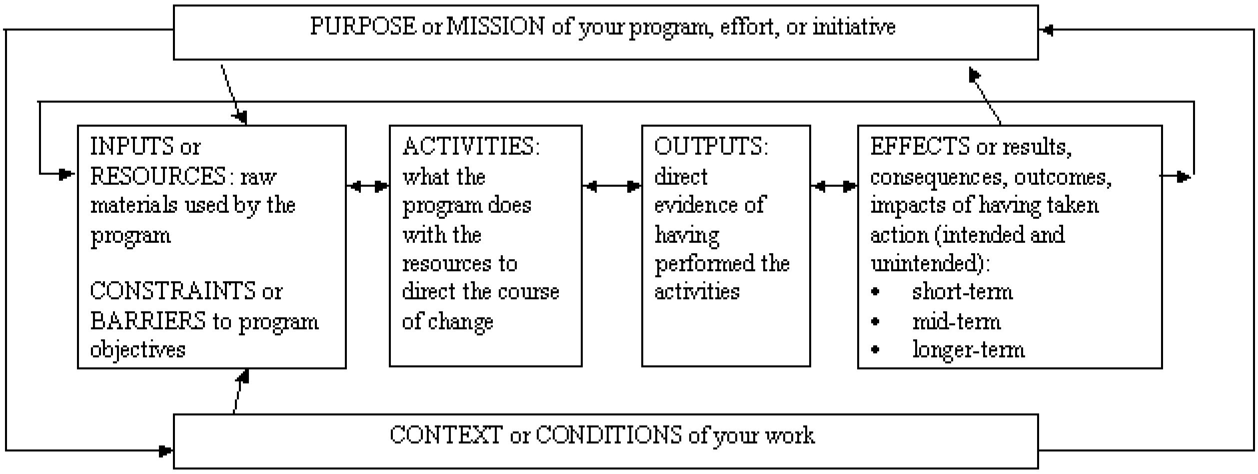
	YES	NO
Have you identified the activity(ies) of each program area?		
Are your objectives inclusive of all relevant groups and individuals in your target population?		
Have you allowed plenty of time to accomplish the objectives?		
Have you determined how you will measure the change projected in each objective? If an objective cannot be measured, it may need to be changed.		
Have you determined how you will know when the objectives are met (performance indicators)?		
Have you budgeted sufficient time and money for the evaluation (measurement) of your objectives?		

Activity 6.5.3 Develop a logic model

Logic models present a picture of how your proposal is intended to work. They quickly explain to the funder:

- Why your strategy is a good response to the identified need
- What activities you will implement
- Which activities are contingent on others (in which case you will need to show a very clear risk management strategy for what happens if a step cannot be completed)
- The results you expect to see.

An example of a logic model is provided below, reproduced from The Community Toolbox website: [http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/overview/ models-for-community-health-and-development/logic-model-development/main](http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/overview/models-for-community-health-and-development/logic-model-development/main)



Activity 6.5.4 Identify short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes

Outcomes often evolve as you develop your evaluation plan. Follow the steps below to identify the outcomes you want to achieve on the way to meeting your objectives. Make sure your outcomes are meaningful as this helps keep people motivated and allows them to focus on the destination rather than just how to get there.

Step one: Create a detailed summary statement outlining all the outcomes you would like to achieve

Link your outcomes to the original aims of your proposal. Include all the changes you would like to see as a result of the intervention.

Record what has been observed that indicates an outcome has progressed. To ensure that monitoring and evaluation occur, incorporate these processes into your logic model.

Write your statement here.

Step two: Link short-, with medium- and long-term outcomes

Link the short-, medium- and long-term outcomes by asking what short-term outcomes need to occur for the medium-term outcomes to occur, and what medium-term outcomes need to occur for the long term outcomes to occur.

Identify short-term outcomes - what would you expect to occur in your organisation and target group in 0-6 months?

Identify medium-term outcomes - what would you expect to occur in your organisation and target group in 6-12 months?

Identify long-term outcomes - what would you expect to occur in your organisation and target group in 12+ months?

Step three: Pursue SMART and meaningful outcomes

Ensure the outcomes you have identified are **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**ttainable, **r**ealistic and **t**imely. Discuss your expectations with your team to make sure they understand and share your expectations. If your team do not share your expectations or think the outcomes are SMART, you may want to revisit them.

Have you discussed your expectations with your team?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Do they think the identified outcomes are SMART?

☐ YES ☐ NO

It is essential to check with your team to confirm they will measure what you want them to measure.

Have you checked with your team and clearly worked through the processes involved in measuring your outcomes?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Section 7
Your budget

Section 7 Your budget

This section outlines how to develop a comprehensive, compliant budget for your funding application. Your budget may be presented as a simple one-page statement of income and expenses (plus budget justification, see below) or a complex set of budget papers, including explanatory notes and detailed revenue or expense items.

Your budget:

- Is one of the most important sections of your application
- Must detail how much your proposal will cost to deliver and how much funding you are requesting
- Is completed after you have:
  - Planned your proposal
  - Identified the staff, operating needs, and other costs required to deliver the proposed project, program or service
- Needs to be precise, accurate, and transparent.

Pay particular attention to all aspects of your budget. It is the part of funding applications which often lack sufficient detail, contain mathematical errors, or misses key components. Be honest about your proposed expenditure and income and have it checked by an independent reviewer. Your budget needs to clearly:

- Show the total costs involved in delivering your proposal
- Indicate the amount of in-kind support provided
- State how much funding you are seeking (i.e., your "price")
- Demonstrate how the funding will be allocated
- Show calculations or refer to quotations received from external providers
- Justify the funding amount requested.

Budget criteria

Carefully read the budget criteria in the application guidelines when planning your proposal and identifying resources. Often funders will provide a budget and specific instructions for use. Look for:

- Exclusion of types of expenses (e.g., no overhead costs allowed, no salary support, no consumables)
- Spending caps on certain expenses (e.g., travel limited to $10,000)
- Overall funding limits (e.g., total costs cannot exceed $300,000 per year)
- Any statements about allowances for on-costs
- Whether your budget should be GST inclusive or exclusive.

Your funding request MUST comply with all limitations.

Determining budget costs

Identify all costs that are necessary and reasonable to execute your proposal. All costs should be in proportion to the anticipated outcomes. Ask yourself whether the costs are:

- Allowable?
- Able to be allocated to an activity or resource?
- Reasonable?
- Necessary?

Budgets are usually broken down into two categories including salaries and other research costs. They are usually calculated on a yearly basis and for the life of the proposal to identify the total amount requested.

Common costs are detailed in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Common budget items

Salaries	Other research costs
Salaries	Travel and accommodation
Salary on-costs such as superannuation, benefits, etc.	Advertising and promotion eg printing
Postgraduate Scholarships	Overheads e.g. rent and utilities
Consultants	Events e.g. catering, room hire
	Communications and IT eg software licenses
	Consumer and Community Engagement
	Research e.g. clinical trials, publications
	Training and development
	Equipment inc. service and maintenance costs

Note: you will need to provide justification for each line item and may need to include in-kind costs in the relevant sections of your budget along with some contingencies ie additional funds set aside to cover unforeseen costs (see more information below).

In-kind costs

Your in-kind costs are any of your resources that will be used to deliver your proposal but for which you are not seeking funding or are being provided without charge. For example:

- Your activities may be delivered by volunteers / partner organisations
- Overhead costs ie rent, utilities, advertising expenses etc
- Equipment supplied that is required for the proposal.

Estimate the costs of these contributions and inform the funder. Emphasise that your organisation is not seeking funding for these items.

In-kind costs demonstrate to the funder that your proposal:

- Offers value for money
- Is supported by your organisation and others
- Is sustainable as your organisation is also contributing to its delivery.

TIP: Calculate volunteer hours

You can calculate the value of volunteer hours by using The Centre for Volunteering's online Cost of Volunteering Calculator at https://www.volunteering.com.au/resources-tools/cost-of-volunteering-calculator/ where 'The replacement cost of a volunteer is calculated using the average hourly part-time wage of a person of their age in their state of residence, plus 15% employer on-costs (inclusive of superannuation, payroll tax and administration expenses).'

Contingencies

Set aside a portion of your budget (usually 10%) for contingencies and unpredictable demands (e.g., recruitment advertising, staff training, sudden material cost increases).

If your anticipated costs exceed the amount allowable in the application guidelines, you will need to:

- Make decisions about those activities that are not essential to your proposal
- Identify where you might seek additional funding or support from other sources.

Prioritising features

Depending on the available funds, you may need to prioritise:

- How much service and/or how many services you can provide
- How many staff you can support
- The achievable outcomes.

If the costs of your proposal are prohibitive consider:

- Scaling back your plans
- Removing the least cost-effective expenditures
- Approaching other funders to support some components.

Where available funds are limited, you could pitch for a pilot, trial or proof of concept. However, you still need to demonstrate a high likelihood of success and explore options for continued funding.

When approaching other funders, you could enter into an agreement for matched funding if you are successful. If this is the case, make sure you mention matched funding in your grant application, as it will show a high return on investment for each dollar provided by the funding body.

National standard of accounts

It may be beneficial to refer to the National Standard Chart of Accounts, available from https://www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/manage-your-charity/national-standard-chart-accounts, as a reference when completing budgets. The National Standard Chart of Accounts is an agreed list of accounts and definitions used by Australian Governments when requesting financial information from not-for-profit community organisations. 'While it is not compulsory for not for profit organisations to adopt the SCOA for their own accounting purposes, it may be in their best interests to do so, particularly where funding is received from more than one government department' (https://nfpas.com.au/resources/standard-chart-of-accounts/)

Warning: Do not reduce your estimates without reducing your program of work as this will contribute to the risk of the project either not being completed or a quality service not being provided. When assessing your proposal, the funding body will be quick to recognise these risks. Significant over- or under-estimates suggest that you may not have fully assessed the scope of the work.

Budget justification

A budget justification (or budget narrative) is an essential part of your application. It describes each budget item and justifies why each item is needed and how much each item will cost.

A budget justification:

- Explains the rationale behind each expenditure line (i.e. why it is essential and how it will contribute to outcomes)
- Indicates how your budget is cost effective and offers value for money.

It may include explanations about:

- The roles and tasks of the staffing positions, as they relate to the proposed program of work (i.e., what each person will contribute and be responsible for)
- Any proposed travel and accommodation costs (i.e., why, where, how often, how long with precise details of costs involved). Each year, the Australian Taxation Office publishes reasonable travel allowance rates for domestic and overseas travel expenses. These amounts provide a useful guide for budgeting at https://www.ato.gov.au/businesses-and-organisations/hiring-and-paying-your-workers/payg-withholding/payments-you-need-to-withhold-from/payments-to-employees/allowances-and-reimbursements/travel-allowances
- Any new equipment purchases (i.e., what it is, why you need it, how it will be used).

Your budget justification section should:

- Explain all line items in the budget, even if they are straightforward or transparent, it is good to include details
- Indicate how your proposed expenses are reasonable and necessary for the conduct of the specific proposed service/program (i.e. not the general running of your organisation broadly)
- Highlight how your budget is cost effective and offers value for money. Put yourself in the funders' shoes. Will they feel like they are paying for the entire program, or that for X dollars they commit, another X dollars is being provided in-kind and/or by another party. How will their dollars be leveraged for further funding in the future?
- Outline the in-kind support offered by partnering organisations, senior team members, or volunteers in your budget justification and indicate the proportion of the overall cost of the proposal that this represents.

Review your budget

Complete Activity 7.4 Your budget costs checklist to make sure your budget:

- Complies with the funding application guidelines
- Details all the costs associated with delivering your proposal
- Is accurate, specific, reasonable, and transparent.

Double check: Make sure the amount of funding requested equals the proposed expenditure for your proposal.

TIPS: Your budget

- For online applications, you may need to enter your budget online rather than in an uploaded attachment. By familiarising yourself with online submission systems early, you will be aware of these requirements
- You cannot complete your budget until you have planned your services/program and identified the staff and/or operating needs required
- Be precise — a budget for $19,870 is more precise than a request for $20,000 and indicates the care and precision you have taken with the proposal and budget
- When budgeting for salary for projects longer than one year, be aware of any salary increments that might apply to future years
- Set aside a portion of your budget for contingencies and unpredictable demands (e.g., fluctuations in user needs such as out-of-hours care, recruitment advertising, staff training). Indexation may be included by the funding body, particularly for government grants and projects being delivered over longer periods of time. However, if you suspect your contingency budget will not be able to accommodate indexation (this may be the case if you need to build infrastructure or your project involves ordering raw materials), you may need to account for indexation in your budget lines per year

- Plan your budget so that it takes into account periods of high service demand/needs
- Prior to submitting your application, double check your budget to make sure that your anticipated costs/expenditure do not exceed the funding application budget, or any limits of subsections within it
- Make sure all calculations are tallied up correctly and separated over specific periods as required ie yearly and life of project.

References and resources

- The Centre for Volunteering, Cost of Volunteering Calculator, https://www.volunteering.com.au/resources-tools/cost-of-volunteering-calculator/
- Civicus. Budgeting toolkit. (2011) https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/resources/toolkits/603-budgeting
- Diegert, Mary, 'The Art Of Grant Budgeting: A Guide For Nonprofit CFOs' (2023) https://blueavocado.org/finance/grant-budgeting/
- National Standard Chart of Accounts, available from https://www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/manage-your-charity/national-standard-chart-accounts
- Not for Profit Accounting Specialists Website, 'National Standard Chart of Accounts (NSCOA)' (2014) https://nfpas.com.au/national-standard-chart-of-accounts-nscoa/
- Sport and Recreation Victoria, 'In-Kind Labour and Voluntary Support fact sheet and template' https://sport.vic.gov.au/resources/documents/fact-sheet-kind-labour-and-voluntary-support

YouTube videos

- How Finance. (2009). Making a Budget: Developing a Project Budget. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQYEDejI66Y
- Jefferson Public Citizens. (2012). Application - Part Two: Budget, Work Plan, and Team Member Apps. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEabmmqUWr0

Internet searches

- 'Grant budget template'
- 'Reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expense amounts' from Australian Tax Office

Section 7 Activities

Activity 7.1 Check the funding guidelines

Look for limits to the overall amount requested, staff costs, travel costs, and overheads.

Do the application guidelines specify any limits for funding requests?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If no - double check. If you can’t find any details on limitations, you could contact the funder to discuss anything that may apply.

Make sure you comply with the guidelines when asking questions.

If, yes - write the items which will not be funded and/or limits to the items which may be claimed in your application below.

Activity 7.2 In-kind support form

Complete the table on the next page, noting all the in-kind support required to successfully implement your proposal. Remember, in-kind support includes both time and resources / equipment donated by volunteers, partners, Board members, local businesses, community members, and staff.

Activity 7.2 In-kind support form continued

Proposal Name:

Details of In-kind support:

Activity	**Skills / qualifications needed**	**Volunteers / staff member allocated**	**Number of hours**	**Rate per hour**	**Total**
Eg attendance at board meetings	*Specialist in the field*	*Name, Position, Organisation*	*2 meetings per year (2 hours per meeting, 2 hours prep x 2 years)*	*$75 / hour x 8 hrs*	*$600*

REMEMBER: You can calculate the value of volunteer hours by using The Centre for Volunteering's online Cost of Volunteering Calculator at https://www.volunteering.com.au/resources-tools/cost-of-volunteering-calculator/ where 'The replacement cost of a volunteer is calculated using the average hourly part-time wage of a person of their age in their state of residence, plus 15% employer on-costs (inclusive of superannuation, payroll tax and administration expenses).'

Activity 7.3 Your budget template

Your budget should include all the costs associated with delivering your proposal. It should clearly detail:

- The actual staff, resources, and materials required and explain why these are needed
- The proportion of funding requested.

You can adapt or delete the examples as you fill out the table with your own project details.

Note: The 17% oncosts used in this example is for illustrative purposes only. Oncosts typically differ according to the employee's type of contract (eg. casual, fixed term, continuing). Check what oncosts apply in your organisation and/or the percentage allowed by the funding body.

	Salary (per annum (PA)) +	**On-costs % (PA)**	**Time allocated (FTE per month)**	**Sub-total for life of proposal**	**Amount requested**
Staff (example)	*$34,000 (+)*	*+17% oncosts = $39,780*	*60% FTE (39,780*60%) = $23,868 PA* *($23,868/12 months) = $1,989 per month*	*$17,901 ($1,989*9 months)*	*$17,901*
Staff (example)	*$34,000 (+)*	*+17% oncosts = $39,780*	*60% FTE (39,780*60%) = $23,868 PA* *($23,868/12 months) = $1,989 per month*	*$17,901 ($1,989*9 months)*	*In-kind*

Other costs involved

List all the other resources, materials, and products that your proposal will require. Also include a contingency amount (generally about 5–10% of the budget) to allow for any unexpected or increased costs and an amount for overheads. Note what will be provided in-kind. If you are providing your overheads as an in-kind cost, make sure you write it down so the funder can fully appreciate the value of your proposal.

	Amount	Total costs	Total per year (inc on-costs)	Sub-total for life of proposal	Amount requested
*Travel costs for attendance at board meetings (2 per year x 2 years) * 2 members*	*Accommodation - $158 / night Flights - $510 Food / Incidentals - $85 Transport - $100*	*$853.00 per person per workshop*	*$3,412 $853 x2 workshops / year x 2 people*	*$6,824 x 2 years*	*$6,824*

Activity 7.4 Your budget costs checklist

Review the costs you have included in your budget against the funding application guidelines and your proposal. Make sure:

- You have costed all the resources and materials needed to deliver your proposed activities in your budget
- The costs included are:
    - Allowable
    - Reasonable
    - Necessary
    - Justified.

	YES	NO
Are all costs allowable?		
Does the budget include all the activities outlined in your project/ service delivery plan?		
Have you included all the income and expenditure related to your proposed activities? You cannot ask for additional costs later.		
Are all budget items related to the delivery of your proposal (refer to Table 7.1 Common budget items) listed?		
Are your budget estimates accurate, specific, realistic, and transparent?		
Can you allocate the estimated costs to a specific activity or product?		
Are all costs reasonable?		
Do the proposed costs reflect appropriate rates of pay, on-costs, penalty rates, and projected increases (e.g., consumer price index increases)?		
Are all costs necessary?		
Have you justified all the costs in a budget justification statement?		
Limits on expenses (see Activity 7.1 Check the funding guidelines)		
Do the application guidelines specify any limits on overall funding mount or spend per year (e.g., total costs cannot exceed $300,000 per year)?		
Have salaries and on-costs, supplies and equipment, operating and transportation expenses been included?		
Do the application guidelines specify any limits on the types of expenses which may be claimed (e.g., no infrastructure costs)?		
Do the application guidelines specify any limits on certain expenses (e.g., travel limited to $10,000)?		

	YES	NO
Salaries and professional development All personnel from your organisation who will be involved in your proposal should be listed on the personnel budget along with their base salary, oncosts, and the amount of time they will be contributing to the proposal as a fraction of their full-time equivalent salary (see Activity 7.3 Your budget template). The assessment panel will consider the amount of time you have listed for each of the senior/key personnel and will judge whether the figures accord with their expectations, based on the program proposed.		
Have you provided calculations for on-costs?		
Have you indicated how much time each staff member will be locating to the proposal?		
If staff need to complete training to deliver your proposal, have our provided an estimate for training and development?		
Variable costs		
Are any of the costs variable (e.g. salary increments or CPI)?		
If yes, have you explained what the potential variances are?		
Does the funding body allow you to include overheads, or indirect costs in your budget?		
Equipment and sub-contracting		
Have you included costs associated with hiring and/or buying equipment and materials or sub-contracting?		
If yes, have you obtained multiple quotes (if required)?		
Have you indicated how these items are necessary to fulfil the aims of your proposal?		
Have you factored in the highest quote in your budget just in case the lower priced item is not available when you are executing your project?		
Travel		
Have you factored in all costs associated with travel: airfares, transfers, accommodation, car hire, taxi or vehicle mileage reimbursement/petrol, and meal allowances?		
Have you quantified how many trips are needed?		
Consultants, consortium, and partnership costs		
Have you provided an estimate for any costs associated with stablishing partnerships?		
Actual costs vs requested amount		
In-kind costs: Even if personnel and/or volunteers will not be paid from the funds being sought, it is important to provide an estimate of		

	YES	NO
thet ime that these team members will contribute to the program of work (use Activity 7.2 In-kind support form). Have your provided an estimate for in-kind costs?		
Have you differentiated between cost (i.e., actual costs incurred) and price (i.e., the proportion of the proposal you are asking the funding body to provide)?		
Other items		
Are there any other items that need to be included as part of your budget (e.g., printing, advertising, honorariums or reimbursement for consultation/engagement groups)?		
Have you provided an estimate for indirect or overhead costs incurred as part of your service delivery (e.g., utilities, rent, insurances)?		
Are your budget items grouped into sub-categories which reflect the critical areas of expense?		
Have your proposed costs been rounded off to the nearest dollar amount?		
GST: Have you checked whether your total costs are GST inclusive or exclusive?		
Do not include GST if your organisation is registered for GST. For information about GST refer to the Australian Taxation Office website - https://www.ato.gov.au/		

Section 8
Writing the funding application

Section 8 Writing the funding application

This section outlines:

- The core components of a funding application
- Where to use and how to present evidence of need and organisational track record as detailed in Demonstrating needs in Section 1 and About your organization in Section 2.

Do not write your application until you have:

- Assessed the community's needs (see Demonstrating needs in Section 1)
- Researched the funder (see Funding sources in Section 5)
- Researched and planned your organisation's activities in response to:
  - An identified need
  - Your organisational objectives
  - The funder's priorities
- Determined achievable outcomes
- Developed a budget (see Your budget in Section 7)
- Developed your proposal's aims, objectives and activities (see Section 6.5).

Remember: If your application is hastily written, without careful thought or planning, the funding body may think that your organisation will not be able to successfully execute the program. Complete your planning before you start writing.

The following will assist you to work through, step by step, the process of writing your funding application. This part of the resource contains the following sections:

8.1 How to write well: Provides advice and guidance for writing persuasive and effective funding applications.

8.2 An Executive Summary and Cover Letter: Describes how to write an executive summary and covering letter. Always write your executive summary last and provide a brief overview of your application.

8.3 Setting the scene: Describes how to write a background to inform the funder about the:

- Problem which exists and why it should be addressed
- Solution proposed by your organisation
- Objectives that will be achieved.

8.4 Describing your proposal: Explains how to detail the activities proposed and resources and materials required if your funding application is successful. Your description of your proposed activities serves as a roadmap for the entire project.

It provides:

- Guidance on the prioritisation of activities
- The scope of work
- The processes, policies, and quality standards it will adhere to
- An indication of who your stakeholders are and your communication strategies
- An overview of the broad strategy involved in managing costs and personnel
- How performance and benefits will be measured.

8.5 Demonstrating your organisation's strengths: This subsection applies the information you collated in About your organisation in Section 2. Review the information and select items which highlight your organisation's capacity to successfully execute your proposal.

8.6 Contract compliance: Outlines common contractual matters and demonstrates how to construct a contract compliance matrix.

8.7 Checking the application: Provides useful tips and suggestions for checking your funding application prior to finalisation and submission.

Section 8.1 How to write well

Persuasive writing techniques

Writing successful funding applications requires specific technical writing skills. **You need to write to sell.**

Funding applications are documents of persuasion. To persuade the funder to invest in your proposal, tell them **what** you are going to do and **why** it will meet their requirements (Table 8.1).

Convince the funder that:

- An urgent and compelling problem exists (think severity of consequences and number of people affected)
- Your solution will address the problem, achieve its objectives, and impact the community
- Your organisation will successfully execute the proposal
- The cost involved is appropriate.

Table 8.1 Explaining the what and why of your proposal

Do not just TELL the funder	Explain and clarify
What the problem is	WHY it is urgent
What activities you will undertake	WHY the activities were selected WHY they will achieve the outcomes and impact the community
What the previous experience of your organisation is	WHY your organisation will successfully meet their expectations and objectives. Think of the knowledge and skills in your organization
What the cost of the proposal is	WHY it is value for money

Convincing applications **always**:

- Make a strong entrance
- Stress one important message
- Write from the funder's perspective
- Appeal to the interests of the funder
- Highlight the strengths of your organisation
- Emphasise the benefits of your proposal
- Are concise, easy to follow, and jargon free.

What is your message?

It is easy to get caught up in the process of writing and forget to clearly articulate your key message.

Plan what you will say. Ask yourself six questions before you start to write your funding application:

1. What am I trying to achieve?
2. Who am I writing to and what do I know about them?
3. What do I want to say?
4. How much space do I have?
5. How will my application demonstrate knowledge and competence?
6. How much time do I have to complete my section of the application?

Develop an outline and list the:

- Most important points you want to make
- Information you want to get across
- Facts you want to write about.

Checkpoint: If you start to think “where am I going with this”, go back and have a look at what you planned to say.

The funder’s perspective

You must show that you care about the funder’s reputation and objectives:

- Read, address, and comply with the funder’s application guidelines
- Tailor the application, even if the proposal is for a continuation of services, to the items specified in the grant guidelines
- Highlight how your organisation’s and application’s objectives correspond with the funder’s objectives
- Demonstrate that your organisation will address the identified need in an evidence-based and financially responsible manner.

TIP:

Imagine you are the funder preparing a media release of the project/s that you are funding. How excited would you be as the funder to announce your project/activity? Would the announcement contribute to the positive light in which the funder is seen by their followers/members/supporters?

Remember: The person assessing your application may have read similar proposals so consider the points below.

- Capture their attention
- Tell them something new and interesting
- Present your message creatively
  - Ask “how can I describe this in a way that people will remember?”
  - A story or case study can be more vivid and memorable than facts alone
  - Dot points, figures or breakout boxes with direct quotations can support your message.
- Know your target audience
  - Assess their knowledge about the topic
  - Understanding their needs and expectations will help you decide what to include in your application.

No-one is born a good writer. Learning to write well is a skill. It takes lots of practice and requires constructive, critical feedback. Plus, good writers know they can always become better writers.

Use the exercises provided to develop and/or hone your writing skills.

And, but, therefore – a narrative to frame your proposal

The ‘And, but, therefore’ narrative template was developed in 2012 by scientist-turned-filmmaker Randy Olson, but has been in use intuitively in many forms of storytelling (including Little Miss Muffet!). It is a useful way to structure an engaging narrative that does not just repeat fact after fact or issue after issue in the hope that the audience will see a story as important.

Adapting your proposal to ‘and, but, therefore’ can assist you to identify the core problem and solution that is at the heart of your proposal. This is the key message you need to convey to your funder.

For example:

The new injectable drug X is increasing in popularity in Y town **and** with it are alarming rates of blood born viruses. Needle syringe programs are an excellent way to reduce the risk of blood borne viruses **but** there are no needle syringe programs in Y town **therefore**, we are seeking funding to establish a 24 hour needle syringe program.

Or

Clients seeking assistance for alcohol dependence are more likely to engage in services where they feel understood **and** this is something that can best be provided by staff with lived experience **but** we do not have the resources to employ an alcohol addiction counsellor with lived experience **therefore** we are seeking funding to employ an lived experience alcohol addiction counsellor.

References and resources

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- Frederick, P. (2012). Persuasive Writing: How to Harness the Power of Words. UK: Pearson
- Gitlin, L. N. & Lyons, K.J. (2008). Successful Grant Writing: Strategies for Health and Human Service Professionals (3rd ed). New York: Springer
- GrantGopher, Seven Tips for Cleaning Up Your Grant Writing (undated), https://grantgopher.com/Blog/Seven-Tips-for-Cleaning-Up-Your-Grant-Writing
- Monash University, Improve Your Writing, https://www.monash.edu/student-academic-success/excel-at-writing/improve-your-writing
- Olson, Randy. Houston, we have a narrative: Why science needs story. University of Chicago Press, 2015.
- Olson, Randy. "Narrative Is Everything: The ABT Framework and Narrative Evolution." (2019) Independent publication, https://www.amazon.com.au/Narrative-Everything-ABT-Framework-Evolution/dp/107223257X
- The ReadWriteThink Website: Persuasive Writing Strategy Guide - http://www.readwritethink.org/professional- development/strategy-guides/persuasive- writing-30142.html
- Stringfield, M.I. (2013). The Art and Science of Persuasive Grant Writing: An Empirical Framework for Writing Winning Grants. San Diego State University. https://digitallibrary.sdsu.edu/islandora/object/sdsu%3A3046
- Ward, D. (2006). Writing Grant Proposals That Win. 3rd ed. Sudbury: Jones and Bartlett
- Wason, S. D. (2004). Webster's New World Grantwriting Handbook. Hoboken: Wiley
- Westphal, L. (1999). How to write to sell a service. Direct Marketing, 62(2)

Websites with writing exercises

- Hurt, Karen CIVICUS toolkit 'Writing Effectively and Powerfully', (undated) available from https://www.civicus.org/index.php/es/centro-de-medios/recursos/manuales/619-writing-effectively-a-powerfully
- Online Writing Lab, Purdue University, https://owl.purdue.edu/owl_exercises/index.htm

YouTube videos

- Influence at work. (2012). Science Of Persuasion. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFdCzN7RYbw
- TED-Ed. (2013). What Aristotle and Joshua Bell can teach us about persuasion. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2dEuMFR8kw
- Writing in the Sciences Online, ABT - The And, But, Therefore Structure: Storytelling in Science Writing, (2021) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gU_5uinhmmU

Section 8.1 Activities

Activity 8.1.1 Preparing to write the funding application checklist

Before you begin writing your funding application, complete the checklist below. If you answer NO to any of these questions, refer back to previous sections in this resource to address them.

	YES	NO
Are you clear about why and for whom you are writing the proposal?		
Do you understand what the funder for whom you are preparing the application wants?		
Do you know your organisational identity, capacity, strengths and weaknesses?		
Are you able to present a credible track record in relation to financial management, evaluation, technical competence and general management ability?		
Have you comprehensively planned your proposal?		
Can you confidently and succinctly describe:		
• Why your proposal is necessary?		
• What activities you will undertake?		
• What human and material resources are needed?		
• What the outputs and outcomes will be?		
• How you will measure the outputs and outcomes?		
• How much your proposal will cost to deliver?		

Activity 8.1.2 Analyse your audience

Read the CIVICUS toolkit ‘Writing Effectively and Powerfully,’ available from https://www.civicus.org/index.php/es/centro-de-medios/recursos/manuales/619-writing-effectively-a-powerfully, and complete an audience analysis and answer the questions below.

What does the funder know about my community’s need, proposed solution, and organisation’s expertise?

What do they not know?

What do I know about my community’s need, proposed solution, and organisation’s expertise that they do not know?

Do I need to do any further research? If yes, go back and look at previous sections of this resource.

☐ YES ☐ NO

What are the funder’s attitudes, values and beliefs about my community’s need, proposed solution, and organisation’s expertise?

What does the funder expect and need from my application?

Activity 8.1.3 Brainstorm and develop an outline

You need to persuade the funder that your:

- Need is real and urgent
- Proposal will help meet the funder’s goals
- Proposal is methodologically sound and has achievable objectives
- Team and organisation has the necessary skills and experience to successfully implement the proposal and deliver results
- Costs are appropriate.

Where possible, brainstorm with other members of your application writing team and complete the Persuasion Map developed by ReadWriteThink. This resource is also available online at http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/persuasion_map/.

Develop an outline and write what you want to say very briefly:

My topic is…

My target audience is…

My secondary audience is…

My objective is…

My main message is...

I will substantiate it by using these three points...

I will make my introduction interesting by starting off with...

I will lead from my introduction into...

Activity 8.1.4 And, but, therefore

What are one or two facts, one problem and one solution that you can use to create an ‘and, but, therefore’ around which to frame your proposal?

List the background facts to your proposal below:

List the problem that you want to address below (your ‘but’):

List the solution you are proposing for this problem below (your ‘therefore’):

Now, what is the simplest way in which you can combine one or two background facts with the problem and the solution in the ‘and, but, therefore’ format?

Critique what you have written. Are all the statement directly related to one another? Do you need to make any changes to your narrative so that it is tighter or simpler? Are your background facts the ones the funder is most likely to be interested in?

Trialing different versions of the ‘and, but, therefore’ narrative will help you really clarify what it is you want to do with your funding and how it relates to a bigger picture/problem.

Section 8.2 Executive summary and cover letter

Executive summary

An executive summary or abstract should be included in all funding applications (unless otherwise stipulated). It is a fundamental part of your application that summarises your application's key information and can help persuade the assessor that your application has merit. It needs to be included as soon as possible in your application (depending on formatting or online submission requirements) and preferable on the first page.

Develop your executive summary after you have finished writing your application. Your executive summary is your “sales pitch”. Assessors will start to form an opinion about your application after reading the first page.

Capture the reviewer's attention and tell them:

- What you want to do
- Why it is important
- Why you will succeed
- How much it will cost.

Your executive summary should:

- Be clear, easy to read, and understand
- Accurately depict the rationale, outcomes, and impacts of your application
- Get to the point with as few words as possible – anything else is a distraction from your key message.

Cover letter

Include a cover letter on your organisation's letterhead. It should be signed by either the Chair of your Board, the CEO, Executive Director or Executive Officer.

A cover letter lets the funder know:

- The name of your organisation and who to contact about your application
- How much you are applying for
- What your application will deliver.

It needs to be clear and succinct.

Executive summaries and cover letters may not be required for applications submitted via the web or an electronic proforma. Check the funder's guidelines. However, even if an executive summary is not required formally, you should still include a succinct summary of your proposal as early as possible in your application.

References and resources

- American Journal Experts (2022) ‘How to Write an Executive Summary for a Grant Proposal’ https://www.aje.com/arc/how-to-write-an-executive-summary-for-a-grant-proposal/

YouTube videos

- Michelle J. (2013). Write a Winning Executive Summary. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9zRapFoHV0

- McLeod, S. (2012). How to Write a Summary. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGWO1ldEhtQ

Section 8.2 Activities

Activity 8.2.1 Prepare an overview of your application

Develop an executive summary for your application. Write your summary here. Remember to keep it brief. You can try a one page version, then a 300 word version then a 100 word statement. Being able to do all three versions will indicate how clear you are about what you want to do.

Tell the funder:

What you want to do

Why it is important

Why you will succeed

How much it will cost.

Activity 8.2.2 Develop a cover letter template

Writing a cover letter is your last task. Organisations can develop proformas to assist in this process. A cover letter should not be more than one page.

Tell the funder:

The name of your organisation

Who to contact about your application

How much you are applying for

What your application will deliver

Consider:

Who will sign your cover letter? Write their name here.

Do you have an electronic signature for your organisation’s signatory?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Find out if your CEO is comfortable sharing their e-sig or if you need to factor time in for them to sign the document and return it to you.

Section 8.3 Setting the scene

When you start to write your funding application it is important to first set the scene. All funding applications should contain a background statement which:

- Introduces the need/problem and emphasises its detrimental impact
- Describes how your proposal will address the need and provide sustainable benefits
- Aligns your proposal's aims and objectives with the funder's priorities.

A good background statement convinces the reader that you know:

- What is going on in your local area (i.e., you understand the needs and issues and their importance to your community)
- How to address it
- What the funder wants.

Remember: Keep your background statement brief (unless otherwise indicated). You are demonstrating your knowledge; not writing a review of the area. In most instances, 1 page could be sufficient but you should also be informed by the grant guidelines which may have a word or page limit.

Describing the need

Your description of need does not have to be long and involved. Short, concise information captures the reader's attention.

Clearly explain the:

- Public health issue affecting your community or other need which exists (e.g., professional development)
- Gap between what exists now and what could or should be
- Benefits to result from your proposal.

Use the evidence collected in Demonstrating needs in Section 1. Present both objective information and personal stories or vignettes to inform the funder about your community's situation.

Answer the following questions:

- What is the need?
- Why should it be addressed now?
- What will happen if the need is not addressed now?
- Who did you talk to or what research did you do to find out about the problem?
- What other strategies are in place to address the need?
- What will be the community benefit if your proposal is funded?

Review your need statement to be sure that it does not contain or present a solution. Your solution will come later. Start with the problem, not the solution.

How will your proposal address the need?

Your proposal should be appropriate to the size of the problem being addressed.

Dedicate some content in the background section of your application to reiterating what the funder is asking for and detail how your assessment of the perceived priorities of the funder align with the needs of the community, and your organisation's philosophy, purpose, and direction.

Answer the "So What" question by detailing the significance of the application and explain why it is important to address the need and identify the scope of the proposal. Basically, think about why the funder should care as much as you do.

If the funding guidelines outline the funder's objectives, make sure you reiterate or refer specifically to them in your grant application.

References and resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2007). Impact and Value: Telling your Program's Story, https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/library/pdf/success_story_workbook.pdf
- Shapiro, Janet, Civicus. Writing a Funding Proposal Toolkit (undated), https://www.civicus.org/documents/toolkits/Writing%20a%20funding%20proposal.pdf
- University of Western Sydney. Guide to Writing a Project Description. Downloaded from http://www.uws.edu. au/research/researchers/preparing_a_grant_application/guide_to_writing_a_project_description

Section 8.3 Activities

Activity 8.3.1 Write your background statement

Good background statements convince the funder:

- There is an urgent need which should be addressed
- You know how to address the problem
- Your solution has a demonstrated or high chance of success (use any available data or evidence to back this up)
- The community will benefit from your proposal
- The benefits to the community align with the funder's priorities.

Describe the need

Use the quantitative and/or qualitative evidence collected in Demonstrating needs in Section 1 to answer the following questions.

What is the need?

Why should it be addressed now?

What will happen if the need is not addressed now?

Who did you talk to or what research did you do to find out about the problem?

Summarise your proposal

Briefly outline how you will address the need. Emphasise your evidence base, aims, and objectives. Inform the funder whether there are other strategies in place to address the need and how your proposal will complement these strategies.

What are you doing?

Why have you chosen this method?

Why the method you have chosen is the best way to address the problem.

Align objectives

Describe how your aims and objectives:

- Reflect the funder's priorities
- Will benefit the community.

What are your expected outcomes?

How will your outcomes benefit the community?

How does this match the funder's priorities?

Review your background statement

Present your description of need to someone who does not have a good understanding of the problem. Ask them if they understand what the problem is and why it should be addressed.

Did your colleague understand your description of need?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Did their understanding match yours?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If their understanding reflects yours, you are on the right track. If it doesn't, clarify any differences and rewrite your description.

Section 8.4 Describing your proposal

Your proposal description should demonstrate that you have an acceptable, credible, and feasible strategy to address the identified needs and funder's priorities. If done well, it should:

- Establish organisational credibility
- Demonstrate good management skills
- Specify all the key components of the proposal including when and how they will be achieved
- Indicate who the team will be.

You must:

- Clearly define your proposal's aims and objectives
- Outline your activities and describe how they will be implemented
- Provide an evaluation strategy
- Outline the skill set required to deliver your proposal
- Describe the anticipated long-term impact of your proposal.

Your description has to convince the funder that your organisation:

- Has the expert knowledge and technical skills to design and deliver a proposal that will meet the identified need
- Will deliver the proposal in accordance with the funder's expectations
- Has identified appropriate outcomes and systems to measure performance
- Is able to complete the proposal in a timely manner and within budget
- Has recognised, evaluated, and taken steps to reduce any risks associated with the proposal.

In developing a thorough description of your proposal, identify any risks which may eventuate (e.g., if the program/service is poorly scoped or the objectives are not clearly defined) (see Identifying risk in Section 6).

Poorly written, unclear or incomplete project descriptions are not likely to receive funding.

What should be in your description?

Your proposal description serves as a roadmap for the entire project. It provides:

- Guidance on the prioritisation and sequencing of activities
- The scope of work (what is included and what is excluded)
- The processes, policies, and quality standards to which it will adhere
- An indication of who your stakeholders are and your stakeholder communication strategies

- An overview of the broad strategy involved in managing costs and personnel
- How performance and benefits will be measured.

Due to the variety of elements and complexity involved in writing your proposal, structure and label your document with clear headings in a consistent, logical order. This will allow readers to navigate the document and easily see important details. Refer to the guidelines and any templates provided that indicate the headings/sections the funder requires.

The main areas to include in your proposal description are:

- Scope (i.e. target population, geographic location, service features)
- Human and material resources required
- Activities and implementation timeline
- Deliverables and outputs
- Constraints (if any)
- Risk management
- Budget and amount requested (see Your budget in Section 7)
- Communication and governance strategy
- Evaluation plan.

Deliverables and outputs

The deliverables are the intended end-result of your proposed program of work or service.

Use the objectives identified by the funder and develop a list of activities that will achieve them. Describe in detail what activities will be involved in achieving the funder's objectives.

Include a statement of when and how these will be achieved.

Sometimes funding bodies will specify the deliverables they expect when they fund a particular program/service. Double-check the grant application guidelines to ascertain whether: the funding body has specified a set of deliverables and objectives and you have addressed these deliverables and objectives in your application.

Schedule

A well-thought out schedule should indicate the due dates for your activities, milestones and deliverables.

A schedule usually takes the form of a timeline or Gantt chart depicting tasks mapped on a timeline. The schedule outlines the sequence of activities and events which must occur for the successful execution of your proposal.

If your proposal has many different components, you can develop several schedules and attach them to your application. Such schedules may include:

- An overall timeline
- Recruitment and other start up activities
- A piloting schedule
- An implementation schedule
- Resource allocation schedule.

Sometimes funding bodies will specify deadlines for deliverables. Double-check the grant application guidelines to see if deadlines have been imposed for any deliverables and make sure that you have addressed these in your grant application.

If you think that a deliverable deadline imposed by a funder is not realistic either:

- Refine your proposed activities and associated estimates so that they are better aligned with the funder's expectations
- Contact the funder to discuss your concerns about due dates for deliverable(s) and ask if dates can be negotiated.

Other common components in proposal plans

A range of other items may be included in your proposal description. These items have been described elsewhere in this resource. Your proposal description may also want to:

- Nominate the members of the project team and specify their roles (see Demonstrating your organisation's strengths below)
- Describe how communications will be conducted (see Identifying risk in Section 6)
- Identify potential risks and describe strategies to address them (see Identifying risk in Section 6).

TIPS: Describing your proposal

- Err on the side of caution. Do not make bold unsubstantiated claims or include overly optimistic outcomes. Only include achievable activities and outcomes
- Be specific. Tell the funder exactly what you will be providing. For example, if you are asking for funds to deliver prevention programs in schools then tell them how many schools you will be targeting
- Tell them what schools you will be approaching and why you have chosen those schools.

Section 8.4 Activity

Activity 8.4.1 Draft your proposal description

Your proposal description details your strategy to meet the identified need and funder's priorities. It needs to be acceptable, credible, and feasible.

The questions below will assist you to draft a proposal description based on the Results Based Accountability Framework (see About your organization in Section 2).

Your proposal's objectives

What are your proposal's objectives? If the funder has told you what they want the funding to achieve, make sure your proposal's objectives are aligned with the funder's objectives.

What you will do

What activities or services will you undertake or provide to achieve the objectives? Clearly state:

- What you will provide. Be specific (e.g., do not say we will provide workshops. Say we will provide 8 workshops).
- Why you have chosen these activities and/or services. Demonstrate the appropriateness and effectiveness of your proposal for your target population.

Resources and materials

What resources and materials will be required to achieve your objectives? Tell the funder what:

- Services will be offered
- When they will be offered
- Number of staff required
- Skill set required.

The milestones

How will you implement the activities and/or services? Tell the funder:

- When each activity will start and finish
- How you will know when each activity has been completed
- Who will be responsible for achieving each milestone.

This information can be incorporated into your timeline/schedule/gantt chart.

Reporting progress

Tell the funder:

- How you will measure outputs and outcomes
- What indicators you have determined to measure if the services and activities are meeting their targeted outcomes
- How you will report on your progress and the outcomes
- How you will manage risk.

Section 8.5 Demonstrating your organisation’s strengths

Your application must document your organisation's:

- Capacity
- Resources
- Expertise
- Experience in delivering similar proposals
- Ability to achieve positive outcomes.

Tell the funder:

- About the key personnel involved
- Who you are
- What you do
- The ways in which your organisation is different or unique.

Although the evaluation criteria used by funding bodies to determine the awarding of funding may vary, generally it will specifically require you to demonstrate the:

- Capability of the key personnel
- Extent to which your organisation's resources can support the proposed program/service.

Provide all essential information so the funder is able to make an informed decision about your organisation's capacity to fulfil the proposal requirements.

Select the most relevant information from the service and staff information developed and saved in Your organisation’s track record in Section 2 and Your board, staff and volunteers in Section 2.

The detail you can provide about your organisation may be constrained by the space allocated in the grant application. If so, select the most relevant detail applicable to this proposal. Tell the funding body relevant details about your organisation and staff in the body of the proposal. If relevant, note what other information can be provided upon request.

To provide further information about your agency, attach a brochure or other prepared statements (e.g., annual report, strategic plan) as a web link.

Alternatively, inform the funder where the information can be found on your website or that it can be provided to them on request.

Why would a funder give your organisation money?

Having a great idea or providing a great service is not enough. This does not answer what the funder is looking for. A funder may invest in your organisation if they are convinced that your:

- Proposal is acceptable, feasible and credible
- Organisation is able to deliver the proposal on time, on budget, and with quality outcomes better than your competitors (especially if they are proposing the same or similar activity/service).

The unique qualities of your organisation

Tell the funder about the unique qualities of your organisation by providing a detailed outline of:

- Who you are
- What you do
- What makes you different or unique from other organisations.

It is easy to assume that funders already know who you are and what you do, especially if you have been in receipt of regular funding from a given body. However, this can be a fatal error.

It is essential to provide the funder with an overview of your organisation or service. You will need to:

- Provide brief details about the establishment of your organisation and its purpose
- Demonstrate how the proposal fits within or extends the organisation's purpose
- Describe the organisation's:
    - Governance structure
    - Staffing and employment levels
    - Programs
    - Leadership
    - Special skills/features
- Reiterate your organisation's expertise, especially as it relates to the subject of your proposal and the specifics of the deliverables you have identified and/or the service model you propose to use
- Inform the funder about your clients, including:
    - Any special or unusual needs they may have
    - Why they rely on your organisation
    - Details (e.g. statistics) about the number of people who are or will be reached through your programs
- Provide all essential information to give the reader a clear picture of what your organisation does and what it currently offers that is unique, acceptable, credible, and feasible.

Your previous programs and services

Emphasise your success in delivering services and programs and achieving outcomes. Document how current services are delivered, demonstrate the potential for a different approach, or highlight why your service will meet the funder's requirements and expectations better than other applicants. Include brief details of:

- Past funding received
- The activities undertaken and processes involved to meet identified community needs
- The outcomes achieved or lessons learned
- The evaluation methods employed
- The long-term benefits to the community
- Collaborations with other organisations or community groups
- How the previous example relates to the current funding application.

If your organisation is new or starting up, consider adding details about any organisations you may have collaborated with to-date.

Your proposal team

The funder will want evidence that the key personnel involved in the proposal have the relevant qualifications and experience.

Experience is not only based on skills, it is based on lived experience. If your proposal is designed to benefit a group of people, they should be involved in its development, delivery and assessment. Include all relevant people and stakeholders in your team and steering/reference/client engagement committees.

Have you included people in your team with relevant lived experience (e.g. youth, ageing, drug use, trauma, mental health, disability) or cultural identification (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people who use drugs, new migrants?.

Provide:

- Details about who will take the project leadership role
- Short biographies for each proposed team member, noting their experience and expertise
- Details of team members' roles and responsibilities, including how much time they will contribute.

You should also point out which people have a track record of successful collaboration with one another, to highlight the strength of the team. At the same time, if your proposal involves new collaborations, describe how the proposal will build capacity for building new collaborations.

This information helps the funder to understand that the proposed project staff are competent and have the capacity to successfully undertake the project. They also want to be assured that the duties of the proposed staff are clearly defined.

Keep descriptions succinct and only include what is relevant. When compiling short biographies, focus on the work experience of participants that is most relevant to your proposal.

Demonstrate that your organisation is “ready to go” and has the skills and resources to successfully complete the project.

If you need to recruit new staff or train existing staff to deliver aspects of the proposal, make sure that this is:

- Clearly indicated with appropriate recruitment/trainign time allocated
- Recorded as a risk in the risk management section of your proposal (see Identifying risk in Section 6)
- Detailed in the budget section of your application (see Your budget in Section 7).

If you are recruiting new staff or training existing staff, explain how this is necessary to deliver the expected outcomes. Make sure recruitment and training are accommodated in your project timelines.

Referees

Some applications require you to submit referee details. When selecting your referees, ensure that they understand your organisational capacity and what is expected from the funder so they can advocate on your behalf.

The selection of referees may vary with different projects and proposals. Ensure that your nominated referees are the best choice to support a particular proposal. Think about your options and select them carefully.

Prior to submitting your proposal, contact and check your nominated referee’s availability, and inform them about:

- Your project’s aims and objectives
- The funder’s priorities
- What their support will involve.

Letters of support and media articles can also document your success and partnerships with other organisations. If possible, include these as examples of your organisational capacity.

TIPS: Demonstrating your organisation's strengths

- Assume that the reviewer of your funding application knows nothing about your organisation
- Provide sufficient detail about who you are and what you do to ensure that the reader gets a clear picture of your organisation and its unique roles and functions
- Provide brief details about the establishment of your organisation and its purpose. Demonstrate how the proposal fits within or extends your organisation's purpose (see Section 2)
- Describe your organisation's governance structure, staffing and employment levels, programs, leadership, and special skills and expertise.

References and resources

- Australian Government, Workforce Planning Guide 2023 Edition, https://www.apsc.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-04/APS%20Centre%20of%20Excellence%20-%20Workforce%20Planning%20Guide%20-%20Accessibility.pdf
- The Grant Gopher Blog contains information about demonstrating your organisation's strengths - https://www. grantgopher.com/News/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/721/How-to- Communicate-Your-Organization- Qualifications-in-a-Grant-Proposal.aspx
- Markin, K.M. (2006). How to Write an Outreach Grant Proposal. Chronicle of Higher Education (September). Downloaded from https://chronicle. com/article/How-to-Write-an-Outreach- Grant/46879/

Section 8.5 Activities

Activity 8.5.1 Sell your organisation

The funder is “buying’” what your organisation is providing. Convince the funder that your organisation has the experience, capacity, and ability to deliver results. Tell the funder about:

- The unique qualities of your organisation
- The successes and benefits produced by previous programs and services
- The qualifications and expertise of the team involved in delivering your proposal.

Pick referees who are able to substantiate your claims and speak positively about their previous experience collaborating and/or working with your organisation.

Your organisation’s uniqueness

Why should the funder give your organisation their money? When answering the question, include a brief overview of your organisation, it’s expertise in relation to the subject and objectives of your proposal, and your clients and community. Write your response here.

Previous successes

From the database developed in Your organisation’s track record in Section 2, select previous projects, programs, and/or services which demonstrate your ability to deliver your current proposal. You do not need to have been the lead agency in each proposal and this list does not need to be exhaustive. However, either the outcomes and/or the activities involved should be relevant to your current proposal.

Record the name, duration, funder, activities and/or collaborations involved, and successful outcomes in the table below or develop your own table.

Program name	Start / end	Funder	Activities/ collaborations	Outcomes

Your proposal team

Adapt the short biographies developed in Your board, staff and volunteers to highlight the qualifications, expertise, skills, and roles and responsibilities of key personnel involved in implementing your proposal. Identify team leaders and contact people.

Use the table below or create your own to record the names, expertise, short description, and roles and responsibilities of those involved in implementing your proposal.

Staff member name	Qualifications and expertise	Short description	Role in current proposal

Select your referees

Write the names of 3 potential referees here. Outline your previous relationship and why the nominated person is best placed to provide your organisation with a reference for this proposal.

Make sure you contact the referee to discuss your application and ascertain their availability and willingness to provide a reference prior to submitting your application.

Have you contacted the nominated referees?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Section 8.6 Contract compliance

Funding bodies will want an agreement in place with the successful organisation to outline terms of the contract before work commences.

The contract will include what the funder expects in regards to deliverables, timelines and terms and conditions for receiving the funds.

If you are provided with a draft contract to review in advance of your application, you can use a contract compliance checklist to learn about and check each clause and identify if you agree or if changes may need to be considered (see activity below).

A contract often details:

- The parties to the contract
- Background to the agreement
- An agreement
- Defined terms (these are noted in the definition section and are capitalised throughout the contract)
- Standard clauses (also known as boilerplate clauses)
- Intellectual Property Rights to ownership of any products that are produced as a result of the program/service
- A schedule for deliverables
- A schedule for payments. You should check this schedule against other forms of cashflow to make sure that payments do not delay progress against your timelines.

Read through the contract and note down any clauses:

- Which you are uncertain about or which appear ambiguous
- You partially agree with
- You disagree with.

When reading through the contract, consider the list of organisational needs that you developed in Building relationships in Section 5 and note any deficiencies.

Write down potential remedies for each deficiency you identify.

Removing uncertainty

If you are unsure about the meaning of any of the contract's clauses or if they appear ambiguous, contact the funder to seek clarification and/or get legal advice.

Varying the contract terms

Check the funding guidelines with the funder to see whether you may vary the contract clauses.

If contract clauses are able to be varied, construct a contract compliance table indicating the clauses with which you:

- Partially agree
- Agree
- Disagree.

If you partially agree to some of the clauses, indicate exactly what changes you require.

For example, you may want to make sure that you are able to submit activity reports and financial statements at the same time thereby reducing the amount of time that you spend preparing and submitting reports.

Your contract compliance table will form the basis of your contract negotiations with the funder from your application. You may need legal representation for specific clauses. (see After submission in Section 10) for more information about negotiating the contract terms).

TIP:

Only seek to vary the clauses which would result in an unfair situation or onerous burden being placed on your organisation or which conflict with your other non-negotiable obligations.

Refer to the section on Contract Negotiation in Section 10 for more information.

Risk analysis

If the funder does not permit applicant organisations to make any changes to the contract clauses, consider the contract carefully and make a note of any clauses which may result in an onerous burden being placed upon your organisation or conflict with your existing obligations. Determine whether you wish to enter into a contract with the funder by considering:

- Your relationship with the funder
- The potential benefits of the funding
- The likelihood of the burden arising
- Potential outcomes of the burden.

In the risk management section of your proposal, identify the risks in contract clauses, and the likelihood and potential outcomes of the risks eventuating. Inform the funder about how you will prevent such risks from eventuating (e.g., highlight the communication and/or project management strategy that you plan to implement to counteract such risk).

TIPS: Contract compliance

- Always speak with the funder to clarify any ambiguous contract clauses or areas of concern and determine what contract clauses can be varied or deleted

- Consider whether you can incorporate an amount in your budget for contract management services. This may be included as a standalone consulting cost or as part of an infrastructure cost. Contact a lawyer or project management firm to find out the costs for such services. Alternatively, liaise with a local government department to see if they can provide such a service or explore other *pro bono* options.

References and resources

The websites and resources below may also be useful in explaining common contract terms and matters.

- Australian Contract Law Website, https://www.australiancontractlaw.info/law/terms

- Australian National Audit Office (2007). Developing and Managing Contracts: Getting the Right Outcome, Paying the Right Price. Canberra: Department of Finance and Administration., https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20070621024524/http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/73896/20070621-0000/www.anao.gov.au/uploads/documents/Developing_and_Managing_Contracts.pdf

- Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Government Contract Management Guide, 2023, https://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/australian-government-contract-management-guide-july-2023.pdf

- Reid, T. (2004). How to Construct a Contract Compliance Matrix. Contract Management. (January), 40-44., https://www.acqnotes.com/Attachments/How%20to%20Constructs%20a%20Contract%20Compliance%20Matrix%20by%20Tom%20Reid.pdf

Section 8.6 Activity

Activity 8.6.1 Develop a contract compliance matrix

Create a word document and insert a table with four columns (see example below).

1. Name column one: Section or Clause #.
2. Name column two: Clause Description.
3. Name column three: PAD (partial agreement, agreement, disagreement).
4. Suggested changes required

Go through each section and clause of the contract and make a note in the PAD column about whether you partially agree, agree, or do not agree with each clause.

If you partially agree with a clause - make a note of the change that you would like to see included.

The attached document provides you with a template for a contract compliance matrix which you can adapt to suit your needs.

Contract compliance matrix

Section / clause	Clause description	PAD	Changes required

Section 8.7 Checking the application

Once you have completed your funding application, carefully check it, or better still have someone else check it for you to make sure that it meets the funder's requirements and answers all of their questions.

Some online systems will have a function for you to check completeness.

Assume there will be errors or omissions and look for them

Checklists

Checklists are an invaluable way to ensure that all required elements of the application have been completed, and are presented in the form and structure required by the funder.

If applications contain checklists – or they are provided by the funder, use these prior to submission.

If there are no checklists, develop your own! Ensure your checklist notes any deadlines, eligibility criteria, essential questions and requirements, evaluation criteria, and formatting and layout details.

Share these with the people on your team who will review your proposal prior to submission.

Section 9 Submitting the application

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How exciting! You're ready to submit the fruits of all of your laborious work planning and developing your funding application. But, be warned - things can go wrong at such critical moments and they often do.

Some circumstances you can plan for, others you cannot.

Things that you need to be aware of prior to submitting your completed application include:

- Never leave it to the last minute
- Overestimate the time you will need to complete all aspects of the application
- If other people need to sign-off on your application, contact them in advance to schedule time in their diary for review, with sufficient time for you to address any of their concerns and submit on time. Ideally, do this as soon as you have made the decision to apply for funding
- Most applications can be submitted on-line or via email. Always leave sufficient time for this as electronic 'glitches' can easily occur. Plan to submit your application during business hours (in the relevant timezone) as you may require assistance from the funder or the online submission system IT support if something goes wrong
- If you are using an online system, make sure the login details and authority is shared by more than one person
- If hard copies are required, check:
    - The number of copies needed
    - Whether they have to be stapled or clipped
    - Whether they have to be marked as 'master' and 'duplicates'
- Regularly save your documents and do periodic back ups on shared drives that other people in your grant writing team can access.
- Make sure the application has been signed:
    - Have an electronic signature for the CEO readily accessible
- Make sure that you have included all attachments and that they are presented in a logical order and numbered if appropriate.

Section 10
After submission

Section 10 After submission

Congratulations! Your funding application is completed AND submitted on time. Take even a brief moment out with your team to celebrate, then schedule a debrief with everyone involved to identify what can be improved for the next submission.

Record keeping

- Tidy up the e-folder with your application drafts
- If the submission system has a function for you to save a copy of the submitted application, save this file and make it clear that it is the submitted version
- Keep a copy of the receipt of submission (if any). If it is an email, save that to your files, too
- Add the details of the funding application (e.g., funder's name, date of submission, program name) to your organisation's activities list and include in annual reports, Board meetings, and other communication tools.

Follow up your submission

Submitting your application is not the end of the funding process.

If you did not receive a submission confirmation, check with the funder to ensure your application was delivered and accepted.

Assessment procedures and processes vary widely. Some funding bodies clearly outline their assessment procedures. If you are unclear about the assessment process and expected time to announcement, contact the funder and seek clarification.

Be patient: the decision-making process can take anywhere from a few weeks to six months or more.

Responding to assessment panels

Some funders have a process of review, where you are provided with comments and have an opportunity to respond. When assessing your application, the assessment panel may:

- Provide feedback or make comments on your application
- Seek further information, detail, clarification or corrections
- Indicate an interest in your proposal but seek modifications to it before it undergoes final assessment.

Applicants will usually be required to respond by a specified date. When responding, follow the same processes used when developing and writing the application (e.g. develop a response team and provide clear timelines, provide well researched information, ensure any modifications are acceptable and feasible).

TIP: Responses to a review panel/committee should always be polite and constructive, reiterating any positive feedback received. Never be argumentative or defensive.

Submit your response on time!

Successful funding applications

If your application is successful, you will need to:

- Clarify your responsibilities at the outset, particularly financial reporting. This will prevent misunderstandings and more serious problems later
- Find out whether the funder has specific forms, procedures, and deadlines for reporting on the progress of your proposal
- Send a copy of your application to your finance and/or contract management team (where applicable)
- Negotiate and execute the contract.

Contract negotiation

Contract clauses may need to be negotiated if you:

- Identified any issues in your contract compliance matrix prior to submitting your application
- Did not receive a copy of the contract prior to submission.

You may be asked to complete or review a Schedule. The Schedule sets out the:

- Activities, objectives, and deliverables
- Reporting requirements
- Total amount to be paid and payment instalments.

Check the Schedule to make sure it is consistent with your funding proposal.

When negotiating with the funder:

- Only seek to vary parts of the contract which would result in an unfair or onerous burden on your organisation or negatively impact on your ability to provide the services detailed in the Schedule
- Be prepared to provide a rationale for each term you want to add or modify
- Do not take an all or nothing approach. If you are not making progress:
    - Break the negotiations into sections and work towards a solution by reaching an agreement on each separate part
- Get legal representation if required to make specific changes to a clause or to understand a clause better before requesting changes be made.
- Ask the funder why they will not vary or delete the contract term. In some instances, the funder is unable to vary the contract term but may be willing to make a formal undertaking that they will not seek to rely on or enforce the term. In this situation, make sure that there is no clause in the contract which states that the contract represents the whole of the agreement

- Avoid personalising the negotiations by using language such as “I believe” or “I think.” Focus on statements of fact (e.g., if we provide you with the intellectual rights to our program, then we will not be able to continue to provide it to the community when the contract terminates)

- Keep negotiations timely

  - Protracted negotiations may negatively impact your organisational reputation and ability to work with the funder
  - Know when to complete the negotiations. If the funder accepts your requested changes, the negotiation is finished.

TIPS: Negotiating do’s and don’ts

Do

- Maintain communication: Always set a time for the next discussion

- Prepare and practice your response: Negotiating is stressful and requires attention to detail that comes with practice

- Keep your word: Integrity is the foundation of all negotiations and agreements.

Don’t

- Submit a long list of demands: The funder may conclude that you are too far apart to come to an agreement

- Respond only in writing: Instead, conduct your negotiations through personal discussions and explain your thinking, then follow up in writing

- Say what you won’t do: This will send the funder the message that you are rigid and uncompromising

- Abdicate the process to your legal department or lawyer: Make sure that you are involved with all discussions to avoid misunderstandings

- Revisit contract clauses to which you have already agreed: Once you agree, the issue is settled and off the table.

Unsuccessful funding applications

If your application was unsuccessful, take a minute to recognise that the number one reason why an application is not funded is because it was never submitted. On that count, you were successful! You should thank your team for all their work getting the application submitted.

Then it’s time to learn from your experience and improve the chances of success on your next funding application.

You can ask the funder for feedback. Specifically, ask if:

- Your application needed more information about:
  - The problem or need
  - Your proposal
  - The evaluation plan
  - The budget
  - Your organisational capacity and service team
- The funder would be interested in reconsidering the full, or a modified version of the proposal at a future date.

Keep a record of your discussions with the funder and make a note of the name of the person with whom you communicated. If required, confirm any undertakings in writing.

If the funder identified any weaknesses in your application - fix them and discuss them at your team debrief. Conduct an analysis of services in your region to look for:

- Duplication
- Partnership opportunities.

In some instances, there may be nothing technically wrong with your application. There may simply be other areas of need which were of higher priority or met the funder's objectives.

Be flexible, adaptable and persistent

- Review your funding strategy and identify other opportunities
- Develop a media statement emphasising the need for the service in the area and let potential partners approach you
- Continue to cultivate your relationship with the funder as future possibilities may arise. Send copies of annual reports and organisational updates so they can become further acquainted with your organisation.

TIP:

Regardless of whether or not you were successful, learn as much as you can about any other applications that were funded by the same scheme. Discuss with your team why you think those applications were funded.

References and resources

- The Australian National Audit Office Procurement and Contract Management, (2023), https://www.anao.gov.au/work/insights/procurement-and-contract-management
- Grant Gopher, (undated), The Top Five Reasons Grant Applications Are Rejected, https://grantgopher.com/Blog/The-Top-Five-Reasons-Grant-Applications-Are-Rejected

Section 10 Activity

Activity 10.1 Conduct a SWOT analysis of an unsuccessful funding application

Use the SWOT analysis template in Activity 2.3.5 Conduct a SWOT analysis in Section 2. Examine all components of your application to identify what you did well and what could have been done better. Consider your application's:

- Strengths
  - Identify the key strengths of your application.
  - Look at what you did well and build on that next time.
- Weaknesses
  - Was your proposal realistic and achievable within the time frame?
  - Was your budget accurate?
  - Did you clearly identify your targeted population, geographic region, expected outcomes?
  - Did you allow sufficient time to develop a high-quality application? Get your team members to write down how many hours they spent on different aspects of your application to assist with future planning.
  - What will you do differently next time?
- Opportunities
  - What lessons can be learned?
  - Could you improve your preparation, planning, and writing processes?
  - Would you consider partnering with the same or another organisation?
  - What other funding opportunities are available?
  - Which organisations were awarded funding and what are they doing? Make sure you follow their progress to learn from their successes and how they engage with stakeholders.
  - If the funding is available regularly (eg an annual scheme), put milestones etc. in the team diary to plan for the next round.
- Threats
  - What can you do to make sure that you don't make the same mistakes next time?
  - What happens if key staff involved in writing your funding applications leave?
  - Does the funding pool you are seeking money from have a limited amount it can allocate?
  - Are organisations located nearby providing services similar to your funding application.