



AMERICAN COMPOSERS FORUM, PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

Proposal Writing Tips

Narrative

- Read the guidelines carefully. Be sure you are using current guidelines.
- Start your grant application well ahead of the deadline. Do not wait until the week or day before the deadline to start working on it.
- Answer all the narrative questions and answer them in the order they are asked. Do not make the review panel search for information.
- Use a readable font, such as Times New Roman 12-point.
- Leave reasonable margins (ex. 1 inch)
- Proofread for spelling, typographical, and grammatical errors. Use spell check.
- Have one or two other people review your application for clarity. Remember that the panel reviewing your application may not be familiar with your work.

Budget

- Make sure your figures are accurate and appropriate for the project.
- In addition to a simple spreadsheet with income (committed and pending) and expenses, include a budget narrative to explain why each cost is integral to the project.
- In the budget narrative, explain your cost estimates. Ex. X # musicians at Y # hours = Z \$. Include price quotes for vendors, if applicable.
- Make sure your numbers add up.
- Think about what expenditures could be cut, in the event that you are awarded a grant at a lesser than amount that you requested.

Work Samples

- Keep in mind that a panel may only listen to a few minutes of your work. Provide cues for selections that you definitely want the panel to hear.
- Include a detailed track listing. The more information, the better: title, composition date, duration, performers, and any other pertinent information.
- Include a work sample for all key collaborators in the project.
- Test all work samples before submitting them to make sure they work.
- If applicable, remove shrink wrap before submitting CDs/DVDs
- Remember to protect your work samples during shipment.
- If you would like your work samples returned to you, remember to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your application. Work samples will not be kept on file.

General Tips

- Remember to submit five copies of your application on three-holed paper. Submit one copy of work samples.
- Make sure all of your copies of your application are readable.
- Collate and paperclip copies together. Do not staple.

- ACF Philadelphia is a re-granting organization with a limited grants budget. We simply cannot afford to give grants to all worthy applicants. Do not take rejection personally. Keep trying.
- After the decisions are announced, you may schedule an appointment with James Falconi to hear panel feedback and discuss ways to strengthen future applications.

Participate in the Process

- Nominate grant review panelists! To nominate yourself or another qualified candidate for consideration by the Panelists Committee, please send a one-paragraph bio that includes academic and/or professional credentials to Denise Buczko.
- Send us your thoughts! If you have suggestions on ways we can improve the grant application process, please contact Denise Buczko or James Falconi.

Check out these other resources:

American Composers Forum Application Tips: Putting Your Best Foot Forward
A [PDF](#) (44 kb) of some tips to help your program application succeed prepared by Dr. Philip Blackburn, Ph.D., the Forum's Director of Artist Services.

https://www.composersforum.org/objects/Programs/App_tips.pdf

Arts Resources Network: Grant Writing Tips for Individual Artists

http://www.artsresourcenetwork.net/professional_growth/apt/grantwriting.asp

Arts Resources Network: Tips for Great Grantwriting

http://www.artsresourcenetwork.net/professional_growth/apt/granttips.asp

Fractured Atlas

FREE online courses for individual artists in fundraising, marketing, professional identity

http://www.fracturedatlas.org/site/prodev/fractured_u

Foundation Center

Tools, Resources, and Online Training for Individual Grantseekers

<http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/individuals/>