

Project Grant Pre-Submission Self-Review Guide

(For Individual Artist Applicants)

Use this guide to review your application **before you submit**.

It helps you step into the reviewer's perspective and check for clarity, alignment, and readiness.

This is **not a scoring sheet** and not a checklist for perfection.

It's a way to make sure your application clearly explains **what you're doing, why it matters, and how you'll do it**.

1. Big-Picture Test (Start Here)

Before reviewing individual questions, ask yourself:

Can I clearly explain, in 1–2 sentences:

- What I am planning to do?
- Why I am doing this project now?
- Who this project is for (beyond myself)?

If this feels hard to answer, your narratives may need refocusing.

2. Project Summary Check

(Question 1: Project Summary)

Ask yourself:

- Is it clear **what I'm making or presenting?**
- Is it clear that **I am the lead artist?**
- Is the location or setting clear (studio, venue, community space, etc.)?

Panelists should be able to picture the project after reading this section once.

Test: Could someone briefly describe my project without asking follow-up questions?

3. Impact Check

(Question 2: Impact)

Panelists are asking: **Why does this project matter?**

Ask yourself:

- Did I explain why this project is important *to me* at this moment?
- Did I explain why it matters *to others* (audience, community, participants)?
- Did I include realistic outcomes (number of works, events, days, or people)?

Avoid abstract language without examples.

Sentence test:

This project matters because _____, and it will result in _____.

If you can't complete this clearly, revise.

4. Engagement Check

(Question 3: Engagement)

Panelists are asking: **Who are you serving and how will they engage with the work?**

Ask yourself:

- Did I clearly name my intended audience or participants?
- Did I explain *how* they will experience or engage with the project?
- Did I address accessibility (location, cost, communication, format)?

Remember:

Engagement does **not** have to be large-scale — it has to be **intentional and realistic**.

Ask yourself:

How will someone outside of me encounter this work?

5. Feasibility Check

(Question 4: Feasibility + Budget)

Panelists are asking: **Can this artist realistically carry out this project?**

Ask yourself:

- Is my project scope appropriate for a \$2,000 grant?
- Does my timeline make sense?
- Does my budget clearly match what I described in the narrative?
- Does my cash match equal or exceed the grant request?

If you are the only person involved, that's okay — just be clear and realistic.

Red flag check:

- *Does my budget include things I never mentioned?*
- *Does my narrative promise more than my budget supports?*

6. Artistic Excellence & Work Samples

(Project Summary + Supporting Materials)

Panelists are asking: **Can this artist do the work they're proposing?**

Ask yourself:

- Do my work samples reflect the kind of work I'm proposing?
- Is the quality clear within the first few samples?
- Did I choose *relevant* samples, not just my favorites?

Panelists spend limited time reviewing materials. Strong alignment matters more than quantity.

Ask yourself:

If someone only looked at my samples, would they understand my artistic strengths?

7. Alignment Check (Very Important)

Review all sections together.

Ask:

- Do my answers reinforce each other?
- Is there a clear line between:
 - My artistic practice
 - The project I'm proposing
 - The budget and timeline

Nothing should feel disconnected or contradictory.

8. Tone & Voice

Ask yourself:

- Does this sound like me?
- Is the tone clear and confident, without exaggeration?
- Did I avoid trying to guess what panelists “want to hear”?

Clear and honest is stronger than polished or dramatic.

9. Final Reflection Question

Answer this in one or two sentences:

What do I most want panelists to understand about me and this project when they finish reading?

If your application doesn't clearly support that answer, revise with that goal in mind.

Helpful Tip for Workshops or Peer Review

Have someone read **only one section** of your application and ask:

- “What do you think this artist is planning to do?”
- “Who do you think this project is for?”

Any confusion points directly to where revision is needed.

Final Reminder

Strong Project Grant applications are not about big ideas or perfect language.

They are about:

- Clarity
- Alignment
- Realistic scope
- Artistic readiness

If your application clearly answers each question and your materials support your story, you are on the right track.