Project Grant Pre-Submission Self-Review Guide

(For Organizational 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 is a way to make sure your application clearly explains what you are doing, why it matters, who it serves, and how you will carry it out.

1. Big-Picture Test (Start Here)

Before reviewing individual questions, ask:

Can we clearly explain, in one or two sentences:

- What this project is

- Why we are doing it now

- Who benefits from it

If leadership or staff give different answers, the narratives may need tightening.

2. Project Summary Check

(Question 1: Project Summary)

Panelists are asking: What is this project and who is leading it?

Ask yourself:

- Is the project clearly described (activities, format, timeline)?

- Is it clear who is leading the project artistically and administratively?

- Is the location or setting clearly identified?

This section should give panelists a clear mental picture of the project.

Test:
Could someone explain this project to a colleague after reading this once?

3. Impact Check

(Question 2: Impact)

Panelists are asking: Why does this project matter?

Ask yourself:

- Did we explain why this project is important to our organization's mission?

- Did we explain why it matters to the community?

- Did we include realistic anticipated results (activities, artists involved, audiences reached)?

Avoid mission statements that are not clearly connected to the specific project.

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

If this feels generic, revise for specificity.

4. Engagement Check

(Question 3: Engagement)

Panelists are asking: Who are you serving and how will you reach them?

Ask yourself:

- Did we clearly identify intended audiences or participants?

- Are outreach and promotion strategies realistic for our capacity?

- Did we address accessibility and inclusion (space, cost, communication)?

Engagement does not need to be large-scale. It needs to be intentional and appropriate.

Ask yourself:
How will community members actually encounter or participate in this project?

5. Feasibility Check

(Question 4: Feasibility and Budget)

Panelists are asking: Can this organization realistically deliver this project?

Ask yourself:

- Is the project scope appropriate for the requested grant amount?

- Are staff roles, artists, volunteers, and partners clearly defined?

- If volunteers play a key role, is their recruitment and support explained?

- Does the budget clearly reflect what is described in the narrative?

- Does the cash match meet the 1:1 requirement?

Red flag check:

- Are there expenses with no narrative explanation?

- Does the project promise more than the budget can support?

6. Artistic Excellence and Work Samples

(Project Summary and Supporting Materials)

Panelists are asking: Is the artistic quality strong and appropriate for this project?

Ask yourself:

- Do the work samples reflect the type of work proposed?

- Are key artists clearly identified and represented in the materials?

- Do samples show artistic skill, clarity, and relevance?

Panelists spend limited time on materials. Quality and relevance matter more than volume.

Ask yourself:
Do these materials clearly demonstrate our organization's artistic strengths?

7. Alignment Check (Very Important)

Review all sections together.

Ask:

- Do the narratives reinforce each other?

- Is there a clear connection between project goals, community impact, artistic work, and the budget and staffing?

Nothing should feel disconnected or contradictory.

8. Tone and Voice

Ask:

- Does this sound clear and honest, not promotional?

- Is the tone confident but grounded?

- Did we avoid jargon or internal language panelists may not know?

Clear explanations are stronger than marketing language.

9. Final Reflection Question

Answer this in one or two sentences:

What do we most want panelists to understand about this project and why it matters?

If your application does not clearly support that answer, revise with that focus.

Helpful Tip

Ask someone not involved in writing the application to read one section and answer:

- What is this organization planning to do?

- Who is this project for?

Any confusion points directly to where revision is needed.

Final Reminder

Strong organizational Project Grant applications are not about scale or complexity.
They are about:

- Clear purpose

- Community relevance

- Realistic planning

- Strong artistic quality

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