Winning NDIS ILC (Information, Linkages and Capacity Building) Grant Funding for Mental Illness Consumer Groups

THE STEP BY STEP GUIDE

Our Consumer Place is Australia's Mental Health Resource Centre run entirely by people diagnosed with 'mental illness'

ourconsumerplace.com.au
RESOURCE CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS

Our Consumer Place acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government

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Foreword

Every group needs some money. Groups that try to achieve a lot need more. Getting that money is a lot of work. Just finding places that have money is a lot of work.

There's a new source of grants funding coming on to the scene: NDIS funding. Most of the NDIS's funds are spent on services for individuals, but quite a lot is going to be spent on making grants to organisations that serve particular areas of disability. This side of the scheme is referred to as the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC)side. Among the areas within disability that will be considered for ILC funding is mental illness. If you're a mental illness consumer group that wants to get a message out, this could be a chance for you.

Here's the test.

Go to the NDIS ILC grants page at https://ilctoolkit.ndis.gov.au/grants/current-grant-opportunities. Go down the bottom to look at the grants they've already funded (for NSW, for example, in the last round, https://ndis.gov.au/medias/documents/ilc-jurisdiction-rnd2-nsw/NSW-ILC-Jurisdictional-Rd-2.docx).

All consumer groups believe – quite rightly - that they have a unique perspective to offer and unique skills and experience and contacts to bring to bear on the situation. What's your reaction to looking at these grants? Let me guess.

Nearly all groups think highly enough of their work to be able to say "Why are they funding these (yes, no doubt worthy, up to a point) initiatives when they could be doing funding the *really important work we're doing?*"

Well, from where we're sitting the answer is probably that you didn't apply – or, perhaps, that you could do with a hand getting a really telling grants application together. So we're here to help.

In what follows we set out what the grants scheme has to offer, what they're looking for, what the rules are, how you can organise to get an application is, and how to maximise your chances of hitting the mark.

There are no guarantees in any of this, and there are a lot of other groups out there (a lot, even, of mental illness consumer groups) who are just as hungry as you are and who will now probably be entering the race, but as the stone tablets Moses brought down from Mount Sinai all those years ago said so clearly, YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT.

Win or lose, you'll build the capacity of your group to look for other sources of funding and do better next time. You'll have notified the world that you're out there hunting for bear. You'll have pulled your ideas together into practical recommendations. You're making a bit for a seat at the table. You won't always be successful, but even when you're not you'll learn how to set out a concise and confident argument on why people should support your work, and that can't hurt. What's the downside?

Merinda Epstein

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Begin at the beginning

You're going to have to travel a hard path to get that grant. You're going to have to work with people – with your people. You'll all need understanding and the ability to rub along together. How do you do this? What makes a consumer group a safe place?

A CODE OF ETHICS FOR CONSUMERS

"Do unto us as you would have us do unto you"

The simplest code of ethics is the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

A Code of Ethics for consumers might need to address:

1. **Confidentiality:** what's said in the group stays in the group. Open discussion requires trust in each other. If people can't be assured of confidentiality, then what they speculate about or reveal about their past or their ambitions will be less useful to them and to the group as a whole.
2. **Respect:** for yourself and for all others. Many consumers have experienced profound disrespect from service providers, family and friends. It's crucial that we respect each other. Our self-respect also often suffers following a diagnosis, and it is important that each of us actively supports self-respect as well as acting respectfully to others.
3. **Tolerance:** "Think for yourselves and let others enjoy the privilege to do so too." (Voltaire) People's experiences and beliefs result in a wide variety of views about all sorts of issues and events.
4. **Finding common ground:** It is important to keep in mind that, as consumers, we have much more in common than we have differences. We need to be united to achieve our shared goals, and points of difference between us shouldn't get in the way of that.
5. **Honesty:** Hidden agendas can be very disruptive to any group. Be up front about what you think, what you're hoping to achieve by a certain course of action, and what you want from the group.
6. **Public responsibility:** Maintaining a respectable public image is important to the success of any consumer group, particularly if members want to have an influence on mental health policy and service delivery. Alcohol and illegal drug abuse will alienate many in the community, and many potential members will stay away if the group has a reputation of condoning these.
7. **Peer support:** Simple. We support each other.
8. **Empathy:** All members have experienced distress of various kinds. Being able to relate other people's difficulties to periods in your own life is a powerful tool in developing respect and tolerance within the group.

Part One

First, let's lay out what we're talking about when we talk about these grants.

About the NDIS

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) launched in July 2013 with the NDIS Act 2013 , after decades of discussion about the urgent need for a better way to fund and operate disability services in Australia. It's been rolled out gradually state by state ever since. The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is an independent statutory agency (at arm's length from government) set up to operate the Scheme.

The NDIS's aim is to provide Australians with a permanent and significant disability (well, the ones under the age of 65, at least) with the reasonable and necessary supports they need to live an ordinary life. It's had its growing pains, and it's on a steep learning curve, but it's a chance for us to get it right this time.

The NDIS helps people with disability to:

Access mainstream services and supports
These are the services available for all Australians from people like doctors or teachers through the health and education systems. It also covers areas like public housing and the justice and aged care systems.

Access community services and supports
These are activities and services available to everyone in a community, such as sports clubs, community groups, libraries or charities.

Maintain informal support arrangements
This is help people get from their family and friends. It is support people don't pay for and is generally part of most people's lives.

Receive reasonable and necessary funded supports
The NDIS can pay for supports that are reasonable and necessary. This means they are related to a person's disability and are required for them to live an ordinary life and achieve their goals.

All those services, however, are directed at people with disabilities as individuals. There are some things – information, linkages, and capacity building - that need to be directed at people with disabilities (and their families and carers) as a class, or classes. For these you need a wider focus. These come under the ILC – Information, Linkages, and Capacity building – which comes under the NDIS.

About the ILC

The ILC Policy Framework endorsed by the COAG Disability Reform Council states that the broad aims of ILC are:

> To provide information, referral and capacity building supports for people with disability, their families, and carers that are not directly tied to a person through an Individually Funded Package (NDIS plan)
>
> To partner with local communities, mainstream and universal services to improve access and inclusion for people with disability

In December 2015, the NDIA released the ILC Commissioning Framework (its action plan), with a budget of approximately $120 million to be distributed by 2019-20[1]. The ILC Commissioning Framework spells out the priorities for this funding.

There are basically two forms of ILC funding.

One – the National Readiness grants - are directed at previously existing broad-based support work that was being handled by the states before the NDIS came along. Up till then, Commonwealth, state and territory governments had funded their own general disability support activities, in their own way, at their own pace. It was all pretty haphazard, but nobody wanted to simply sweep it all away without anything to replace it, and a lot of the ILC money has to go to that. They're trying to use these changes to improve the system; they're hoping for a nationally consistent approach to ILC activities, with a strong focus on outcomes and a reduction of duplication.

Still, if your group was already providing ILC services in a state or territory or nationally you'll almost certainly have noticed this process occurring and, we hope, got in for your chop.

The other ILC stream is for special-purpose grants, and that's what we're focusing on here.

The fundamental basis of both these forms is the ILC Policy Framework that has been agreed between all Australia's governments. Look over this, and see where you think your group should have a role.

[1] The ILC Policy Framework takes priority over the ILC Commissioning Framework, and the NDIA can't fund anything in the ILC that does not fit into the agreed government position in the ILC Policy Framework.

The ILC Policy Framework

Within the broad aims – which are, it's worth repeating, to provide information, referral and capacity building supports for people with disability, their families, and carers and to partner with local communities, mainstream and universal services to improve access and inclusion for people with disability – there are separate streams.

The streams are:

1. Information, Linkages and Referrals
2. Capacity building for mainstream services
3. Community awareness and capacity building
4. Individual capacity building
5. Local area co-ordination (LAC)

Examples of activities under the five streams are explored below. Whilst the streams are considered separately in this document, they could be implemented with consideration to a variety of service delivery models, including multi-stream combinations.

Stream one: Information, linkages and referrals

Information, linkages and referrals will connect people with disability, their families and carers with appropriate disability, community and mainstream supports.

People usually need information before they can access services and supports. The types of information that people with disability, their families and carers, may seek include:

- information about specific disabilities and the impacts of diagnosis
- information about targeted supports for people with disability, their family and carers, as well as generic community-based supports
- information on specific disabilities that aims to help people with disability, as well as their families and carers, to best use available supports to promote independence and enhance their capacity to self-navigate service systems
- support to use existing information sources or relevant organisations to get information
- information that addresses the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities through the context of location and background; and
- information that addresses the needs of Indigenous Australians and their respective language, social or nation groups

For people with lower level support needs associated with psycho-social disability, ILC will link people into relevant mainstream, clinical and community based supports. This is a critical role for this cohort as appropriately coordinated referrals can have an early intervention effect.

For carers and families, access to ILC will mean better access to information and supports about both the needs and circumstances of the person with disability they are caring for, and about their role as carer and sustaining this role. Local Area Coordination and individual capacity building will be important functions of ILC for carers.

Information available to people through ILC will be tailored to make sure that people get the information that they need.

People with disability, their families or carers will also be able to use the information and referrals function as a gateway to the NDIS – a range of community, mainstream and private organisations can also refer people to access NDIS supports. This function will also support information networks to help people navigate the range of supports available as part of the NDIS.

For this reason, a variety of resources could be made available to the public, including information online and through face-to-face services. A centralised electronic database of providers could be developed that indicates the range of products and services, their availability and links to measures of performance and quality.

This role may be outsourced, with organisations funded to provide these services. Additionally, funding organisations to provide information and referral services will mean that people who do not have a relationship with the NDIS can use these services. It will also enable the NDIS to build on and support established networks.

ILC could also encourage informal and peer supports in providing information and linkages to people with disability, their families and carers. Families, carers and peers are a valuable network of knowledge and can provide information and connection to a variety of services. and support.

ILC could assist people to access services and supports, as part of the NDIS pathways to support function. This could be a part of the Local Area Coordination role. All of these services would be delivered in ways that are accessible for people with disability.

Initiatives under this stream could include:

- web-based supports
- telephone information
- face-to-face information supports
- group infomation sessions
- peer support and information and experience sharing
- fact sheets

- pre-planning support
- referral and linkages to other supports.

This support may be delivered through disability-specific organisations and programs. It may also be delivered through whole of population programs where ILC will aim to ensure that the program is adapted to be inclusive or particularly responsive to people with disability.

The NDIS should encourage the continued operation of these organisations and activities, and may contribute funding recognising the broad community benefit and specific early intervention outcomes achieved.

Stream two: Capacity building for mainstream services

People with disability, their families and carers, like all community members, access and interact with mainstream and universal systems and supports. An NDIS objective is to ensure people with disability connect with and access mainstream supports.

Mainstream services are considered to be government funded services (for example, education, health care, public housing, transport and employment services), and services/supports provided by the community or private sector (for example, a swimming pool, neighbourhood houses and men's sheds, gym or theatre).

The NDIS will fund supports to enhance social and economic participation for people with disability. Therefore, it has a role and interest in supporting a proactive effort in improving accessibility and inclusion of people with disability.

However, the introduction of NDIS does not shift the responsibilities of mainstream and universal services in ensuring greater accessibility and inclusion, nor is the NDIS a funding source for mainstream services. As such, the NDIS can identify and inform areas where governments, in implementing the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, should focus effort to ensure accessible mainstream supports, programs and community infrastructure.

Importantly, the NDIS will also be able to identify areas for improvement at the local level and work with key partners to achieve these goals, some examples of which may include:

- building the capacity of mainstream and universal providers in meeting their responsibilities
- making them more inclusive of people with disability, for example in areas such as employment, education and health services
- providing organisations with information on how to improve accessibility, for example by improving wheelchair access to buildings and infrastructure, signage, website and communication accessibility; and

- enhancing 'best practice' in service delivery, for example through support to develop tools and resources that support practitioners across mainstream services to provide services to people with disability.

Mainstream capacity building through ILC could be delivered through projects and activities facilitated by:

- Local Area Coordination (refer Stream 5 of ILC)
- disability or diagnosis specific or other organisations; and/or
- people with disability or their representatives.

Stream three: Community awareness and capacity building

Investing in community awareness and capacity building will create opportunities for the social and economic participation of people with disability, their families and carers, improving personal outcomes and strengthening the connection between people with disability and their communities.

Community capacity building initiatives can further support organisations (such as not for profit organisations, local councils, businesses) and people within communities to be inclusive of people with disability, and understand of the needs of families and carers.

The NDIS recognises that governments play a role in fostering the social inclusion of people with disability and their families and carers and that these activities should continue and complement the NDIS.

The NDIS has a key role in supporting and strengthening effective local initiatives by community groups and businesses to address disability issues in the community (for example social isolation). This may include the provision of funding.

Community awareness and capacity building initiatives may include:

- opportunities that enhance the capacity of local communities to identify local practical solutions
- public campaigns to improve the community's general disability awareness and understanding
- creating personal networks that connect people with disability to opportunities (for example, employment opportunities) they may otherwise miss
- basic training to individuals (for example, paid employees, business operators or volunteers) to enable them to better relate to, or work with, people with disability
- community activities in which people with disability can participate

- consulting with, or incorporating the views of, people with disability, their families and carers in the provision of community activities and other goods and services; and
- investing in product design and technology to facilitate the inclusion of people with disability in the community.

This stream will support the insurance principles of the NDIS, reducing the call for disability supports by building the long-term capacity of the community to more effectively support people with disability, their families and carers. Activities undertaken within this stream should demonstrate this.

Stream four: Individual capacity building

Individual capacity building fosters the principle of choice and control, improving outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers. It can also drive market changes, including potential cost reductions, through innovation as participants' needs and expectations evolve.

Individual capacity building has the potential to benefit a range of people with disability, and their families and carers, who are eligible for an IFP or who are just outside of the access criteria for the scheme and would otherwise need to test their eligibility (and therefore support the insurance principles of the NDIS). The supports under this stream are often one-off, low intensity or episodic and are better delivered and managed through funding arrangements outside of IFPs.

Effectively delivering this stream can mean that people are more able to communicate their preferences and to make informed and independent decisions.

This funding stream can support courses, groups and organisations to help build capacity, self-advocacy and decision-making, facilitate mentoring and peer support and help provide people with information that will support choice.

Examples of individual capacity building supports may include:

- diagnosis-specific capacity building (for example, orientation training for people with vision impairment where this is low cost and short term);
- programs for carers and counselling for people who are caring for someone with disability (including psychosocial disability).
- parent breaks and programs to provide parents with skills and information about disability
- professional development for example for parents and education providers
- decision making supports and supports for self-advocacy, helping people with disability, their families, carers and communities to work together with and for people with disability; and
- diagnosis specific peer support groups.

These can be effective in supporting an individual with planning, establishing linkages with mainstream and other supports, facilitating peer support networks and understanding the most effective support options appropriate to the person's needs.

To build the capacity of people with disability, the NDIS could:

- fund and facilitate local support networks to provide opportunities for people with disability to learn from the experience of others
- fund peer support groups to lessen isolation (for example for people with a mental illness or an acquired brain injury)
- fund training courses and mentor programs to help people to self-advocate and assume increasing levels of choice and control over their funding, supports and interactions with providers
- fund and facilitate carer capacity building and support programs; and
- provide one-off, low level or episodic supports which focus on preventative intervention (for example counselling).

This support may be delivered through disability-specific organisations and programs, or through whole of population programmes where ILC will aim to ensure that the program is adapted for people with disability.

The NDIS should encourage the continued operation of these organisations and activities, and may contribute funding recognising both the broad community benefit and the benefits to individuals, families and carers.

Stream five: Local area co-ordination (LAC)

Local Area Coordination (LAC) is the development of relationships between the NDIS, people with disability, their families and carers, and the local community (including informal networks, community groups, disability and mainstream services).

The LAC role connects across each of the streams of ILC, which include information and linkages and individual capacity building as well as working with mainstream services and communities to better enable access and participation. While the LAC would have a role to play in delivering each of the ILC streams, it may not be the only mechanism for ILC delivery.

It should be noted that LAC functions could be undertaken by an individual or a small team, depending on the needs of people with disability, the community and the local context. People with disability will benefit from the community building and mainstream support roles of the LAC, though the level of intensity of LAC involvement will be greater for scheme participants with a lighter touch for the broader population.

What's Not On Offer

The NDIS wants consumer groups to aid consumers in accessing the services that are available.

There are, of course, a number of lively debates about the nature of these services – their coverage, their inclusions and exclusions, and the services they provide. Consumer groups may have strong opinions on one or another of these general issues, and may even wish to take some action to bring those opinions to the notice of the government, but if so they will have to fund any such actions from their own resources. ILC grants cannot be used for advocacy.

Show Me the Money

So what are the parameters?

Well, the last round of project funding (what the NDIA calls Jurisdictional) grants – to the limited number of states who'd joined up by then – handed out some $28m.

This was made up of grants to particular disability areas –

Populations	Number	Average	Median
Acquired Brain Injury	1	$165,850	$165,850
Autism Spectrum Disorder	8	$99,172	$89,380
All people with disability	25	$150,367	$112,463
Cognitive Disability	1	$213,749	$213,749
Down Syndrome	3	$307,173	$186,680
Hearing Impairment	6	$138,086	$135,333
Intellectual disability	14	$191,984	$128,195
Muscular Dystrophy	2	$56,939	$56,939

Populations	Number	Average	Median
Neurocognitive disability	1	$328,690	$328,690
Neuromuscular conditions	2	$94,259	$94,259
Physical disability	2	$148,074	$148,074
Psycho-social disability	4	$189,060	$152,542
Spinal Cord Injury	1	$154,499	$154,499
Stroke	2	$123,339	$123,339
Vision Impairment	6	$85,996	$96,090

(the size of the *average* grant differs widely between different disabilities; the *median* – the amount where half the grants are larger than that and half are smaller – differs less.)

There were also grants to particular populations –

Populations	Number	Average	Median
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	8	$119,096	$113,415
Children	7	$169,354	$150,000
CALD	15	$115,542	$132,287
Hard to reach	1	$499,295	$499,295
Women	1	$78,383	$78,383
Young adults	4	$133,277	$93,852
Youth	5	$209,736	$209,812

The largest grant was $1,399,986.60 over two years (costed, you'll note, to the nearest cent) and smallest was $7,152.80.

To give you some idea of the kind of projects that get funded, the grants to areas of 'psycho-social disability' in the last round were

Mental Health Coordinating Council Inc.

Community engagement education package

A community education package will assist community workers, volunteers and peers to better support people living with a mental health condition or psychosocial disability who are ineligible or do not want to have an NDIS plan. Two training programs for 20-30 people will be trialled and the feedback refined into a good practice model for further scale up. The program aims to equip community workers to use recovery approaches when assessing the needs of people living with mental health conditions, enabling more effective connections and increased participation in the same community activities as everyone else.

$517,280 (over two years)
Community Awareness and Capacity Building
Psycho-social disability

New Horizons Enterprises Limited

STEP OUT

Volunteers will provide companionship and community access for socially isolated people with psychosocial disability. The Step Out volunteer program will be established in Campbelltown, Guildford, Ashfield and Newcastle. Volunteers, most of whom have a psychosocial disability or personal experience relating to people with psychosocial disability, will be recruited, trained and matched to two socially isolated people with psychosocial disability, providing companionship and facilitating community access. It is anticipation that participants will then experience improved capacity for independently pursuing community opportunities and developing friendships. Service Coordinators, some of whom will have a lived experience of psychosocial disability, will each support and oversee up to 25 volunteers. Over time, the program aims to build the capacity of people with psychosocial disability for sustained community participation, independent development of friendships and pursuit of volunteering opportunities or paid work.

$850,000 (over two years)
Individual Capacity Building
Psycho-social disability

Riding For The Disabled Of The ACT Incorporated

Community Connex

Through Community Connex, an Equine Facilitated Learning program will support young adults to develop their social, and emotional wellbeing through interaction with horses. It is a ground based program (non-riding) that teaches self-development and emotional intelligence skills. The program uses experiential learning which is especially suited to people who have difficulty understanding abstract concepts such as emotions and interpersonal skills. By interacting with horses, people can experience the effects of their behaviour, then reflect on what has happened in order to make changes and adjust their behaviour to better manage social situations and environments.

$52,314 (over two years
Individual capacity building
Psycho-social disability

Wellways Australia Limited

Life In Community (LinC)

LinC is a volunteer scheme to reduce isolation through intentional network building. The program will recruit and train a total of 150 volunteers to work alongside 600 participants with psychosocial disability across the ACT, primarily assisting them to develop confidence and skills to build a strong network, increase community participation and develop a sense of belonging within their community. Connection to peer support will also be available via a Helpline.

$301,170.25 (over two years)
Individual capacity building
Psycho-social disability

We're starting with a very small number of examples, and it's not possible at this stage to draw any real conclusions about what gets across the line and what doesn't, but every piece of information is valuable.

What About Us?

What do mental illness consumer groups have to offer that other groups applying for grants don't?

1. What's our expertise?

When we're selected to do something because of our consumer experience, what we're trading is two things:

- our experience of managing a health condition, and
- our experience of using health services. (And any other expertise we might have to offer, such as common sense!)

This experience gives us the basis for our expertise, for why we are there. This is what people want to know about. But, one of the realities of speaking from a consumer perspective, whether you're working in a service, or sitting on a committee, is that it can feel very powerless. Here are some reasons why:

- **Attitudes:** Consumers of mental health services may have long histories of being discredited. There are residual social attitudes that define us as weak, unreliable, untrustworthy, and unable to give truthful testimony. It is no wonder that we might sometimes feel powerless.
- **Sites of power:** The situations in which we find ourselves are often full of people with more power than ourselves: Doctors, professionals, people who have spent years studying at university. It is not uncommon for us to be working alongside people who have quite literally held legal power over our lives.
- **Language:** Power can be coded in language. Without meaning to, people in meetings can seem to be talking another language with its own shorthand and big words. Asking what things mean reminds others of their tendency to use jargon. They will be embarrassed, not you.
- **Remember:**
- No person's experience can be queried as right or wrong. Because it is deeply felt, personal and individual, it is truthful. Sometimes you may have to remind people of this simple fact.

- Often, we have nothing much to lose. Those with least power, have least to lose. This means we can tell the truth. It is refreshing to be around people who can tell the truth.
- When someone is exerting power over you – which happens routinely across all areas of our life – recognise how it makes you feel, what brings it about. It's useful knowledge. Ask yourself this: 'Now why would that person need to put me in my place?' When someone exercises power over you, it is about them.
- Don't give yourself a hard time if you think you just fell into the "I'm powerful too" syndrome. In noticing it rather than denying it, you'll be much better equipped to resist it next time.
- Ultimately, nothing feels good if it is at the expense of our integrity, our 'truth'.

Conclusion: Our strength is our truthfulness and our analyses are bore out of our deeply felt personal experience. This is the source of our power and the reason why we do what we do, wherever we do it. And this is the reason why we are asked to provide consumer perspective in the first place.

About Grants (and You)

Winning grants like this is serious and hard work, but it's not necessarily as difficult as you might believe. There is an art to achieving success, and it can be learned.

This manual provides a process for your group to follow, but we hope it gives you more than that – we hope it provides you with the confidence to apply for grants funding and to keep on applying.

Some groups avoid grantseeking because they think you have to have influence, or special writing skills, or political clout. You don't.

Some people think it's a waste of time even bothering sitting down to develop a single application. Others fire off one application, miss out, and give up. On the other hand, think about how much time other forms of fundraising take you now. Running a chocolate drive, an appeal, a sausage sizzle or a special event is also hard work, and there are limits on how much the most successful raffle is going to bring in.

And success breeds success. If there are two groups with fairly even claims for funding, grantmakers will inevitably lean towards the group that has a solid track record of winning grants funding and successfully completing the funded project.

A successful, targeted grant application pays for itself because it:

- Saves time and money. Some applications take only a few hours work to knock into shape, some a few days – but how many hours and how many people do you need to run a successful raffle or special event to raise $5000? Or $50,000?
- Brings new money into the area. Community groups, particularly in small towns, have a limited pool of individuals and businesses that they can keep hitting on for support. Grants funding means new money comes into the area without coming out of the pockets of your regular supporters.
- Is accessible. There are no barriers stopping you from applying for funding programs where your group meets the criteria.
- Is cheap. You don't have to put in much upfront to get a crack at the big money.
- Raises serious money. You can get an amount sufficient to make a difference - to help you expand, to build new facilities, or reach new audiences.
- Puts you ahead of the pack. Those organisations that know where the funding is and are confident enough to put in a winning application tend to apply for and win further grants.

You can also request and receive funding from a variety of funding sources and partners for one large and complex project.

Some groups will leverage support from one funding body to request funding from another, particularly the various levels of government. In fact, grantmakers will often prefer to support in collaboration than foot the entire cost of the project themselves.

If you're taking this approach, you need to be explicit in each proposal about any requests you have made to other grantmaking bodies. As a matter of courtesy, and as a way of building trust, inform them of:

- The name/s of other foundations and grantmaking bodies
- The amount requested to cover which particular aspect of the project
- When you're likely to receive confirmation of the application

As soon as you're advised of the results of any applications, inform all the other funding bodies you're applying to. Again, you're building a profile of your organisation as one whose financial dealings are transparent and responsible.

Grantseeking Checklist

The important thing about grantseeking is to maximise your time and effort and concentrate on the programs where your group stands the best chance of success.

- Is it compatible with our mission?

- Are we eligible to apply?
- Do we fit their funding priorities?
- Is our project one of the types of proposals that are funded?
- Do they exclude certain types of proposals? Is ours one of them?
- Do they have deadlines for submission, and does this fit with our needs?
- Can we fulfill the contractual obligations the grantmaker requires from successful grantseekers?
- Is our proposed project sympathetic to other projects funded by the NDIA?

Grants funding is not a complete financial answer, a fairy wand, or a magic bullet. It must be fitted into your organisation's general fundraising strategy (which must fit within your strategic plan). You have a number of institutional needs, and you have to look for ways to cover all of them.

Sustainable funding

Sustainable funding – funding that allows you to continue your operations from year to year – comes from a mix of funding sources involving membership, donations, fees and charges, special events and project funding. If you're depending on any one of those sources in isolation, you're taking a risk.

Grantmakers don't like making ongoing gifts (there are very, very few initiatives that are funded beyond a maximum of three years), large donors can switch allegiance, costs can squeeze – it's important for your group that its existence rests on more than one proposal. Too many organisations that have relied on a single funding stream have withered and died when someone decided to stop funding.

All community groups need to establish a diversified fundraising strategy so that they are never reliant on a single source of income. This guide concentrates on seeking grants funding, but don't neglect

- Donations & Bequests
- Community-Business Partnerships
- Membership/Alumni/Friends Fees
- Special Events
- Earned Income

Find out more about all these sources of funding at the Funding Centre website (www.fundingcentre.com.au) or refer to The Complete Fundraising Handbook (www.ourcommunity.com.au/books) for more information about putting in place an integrated fundraising strategy.

Core funding

The main problem with project funding – and that's almost always what you're getting with grants funding – is that it funds your new programs, and sometimes even funds your old programs, but very seldom funds your administrative support. You can end up being diverted into doing projects rather than your core work simply because one will be funded and the other not. Because of this, it's vital to include a fair share of administration costs in your budget.

If the project guidelines don't allow this, think hard before applying.

Getting the Gig

Twelve Rules for Grantseekers

1. Get into the mind of the grantmaker

At the simplest level, read what they say they want and see whether you come under that form of words. It's a case of aligning your values so that you work out the intersection of what they want to achieve and how your group can help them to do so. Probing more deeply,

- What's their main theme?
- What are they most proud of?
- What qualities do they feature in their annual reports?
- What's their motivation for picking this particular grant area?
- If the grantmaker was able to invent their own ideal programs, what would they look like?
- If the grantmaker were to conduct outcome evaluations, what outcome would they regard as a perfect 10?
- How does our project/idea fit into their view of the world?

2. Many cooks can make very good broth, if they're under one chef

Have one person with ultimate responsibility. Then seek assistance and advice. Brainstorm your submission with your partners, stakeholders, and supporters. Develop and maintain a network of contacts who can help you. Develop a project committee, and get key participants in place to assist with developing your applications.

3. Jump the gun

Keep your basic materials – annual budget, annual report or return, business plan, testimonials – up to date.

Exchange generalised letters of support with other organisations now, so you have something to show if you have to dash in a submission over Christmas or Easter or school holidays when everybody's out of contact.

Have a small number of projects ready for final writing-up so you're not caught having to start absolutely from scratch and you can get them in on time when the opportunity arises.

4. Don't complain

Don't waste your time and energy complaining about the short timeframe or the complicated/pointless/misguided/irrelevant guidelines or instructions. These parameters can't be changed, and you just have to accept them with good grace.

5. He who pays the piper calls the tune

READ THE GUIDELINES.

Pay attention to every single tiny detail of the format and instructions, including directions about page limitation, font size, and number of copies required. The application format is not the place to be creative. Even if you believe your own layout is better, do NOT stray from the prescribed application format.

Some organisations – a diminishing proportion – will give you a second chance. But you can't count on it. Everyone is getting more applications these days, and if they already have more good projects than dollars, they can afford to be picky.

6. Lay out a masterpiece

A good application should provide a master plan – an overall vision of where the project is going and what it's expected to do. Provide the context in which your details can be understood.

Describe the project and how it's to be carried out without overloading the page with unnecessary detail (which may result in reviewers missing important information). Guide the reader with headings and bolding.

7. Come on, be reasonable

Don't aim for the moon. If your goals seem too ambitious for the resources you have available grantmakers may be inclined to question your credibility and your ability to complete the initiative on time and on budget.

8. Answer every question

Grantmakers want to fund projects managed by people who are efficient, savvy, responsive, and able to read. Miss out a question and you'll be proving that you're none of these.

9. Don't sweep things under the rug

If you have to leave anything out, then you have to explain and excuse this quite specifically. Just crossing your fingers and hoping that nobody will notice is not an option. Very often, an application loses points because an omission wasn't explained.

10. Don’t look greedy

Ask for an amount that’s reasonable, and match the budget to the scale of the work. Have the budget request clearly reflect the narrative set out in your timeline. Be specific: justify each item for all years of support requested. Defend the amount of staff time quoted, and the need for any consultants and any travel.

11. Be ethical

This isn’t just general handwaving – there are a lot of activities that require you to have thought things out in detail and in advance. Research Centres have special ethics committees, but even user groups have ethics-related policies you have to follow (for example, you have to get people’s clearance before using their name or their photo).

12. Keep your application simple, reasonable, and PROFESSIONAL

Pay attention to detail. Ideally, your application should look as if it’s ready for instant publication. Have someone check every page of every copy of the application to be sure that all pieces are included.

What the NDIA Wants

The NDIA is vitally concerned with the gaps, problems and inequalities that affect people with disabilities – locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally – that need to be addressed. However, as would be expected in a pluralistic society, there are a number of very different views about what types of projects contribute best to the achievement of a fair society (and about which methods work best), and a number of groups representing those views. A lot of them are probably also going to be applying for grants – and could reasonably get them

However right you think your group is, you don’t have a right to that money.

It’s their NDIA’s money; if they don’t give it to you, that’s their right.

It’s not about you, it’s about them

If you apply for a grant that’s not directly in your core area, then remember that the people you’re asking for money probably have little interest in the finer points of your manifesto. To win them over you need to

- Identify your common interests
- Identify where your aims and their aims overlap
- Identify where your activities help to achieve their aims, and
- how you intend to achieve that.

The overlapping area might be only one small part, but you’ll need to target your application to that small part. You have to be able to stand in their shoes and know what they really want. They want to be able to distribute the money they have budgeted to people who can talk their language, who share their aims and who can promise measurable results.

Efficiency

The grantmaker wants someone they can be sure will do the job. This means that track record is very important. If you're an up-and-coming organisation without much to boast about yet, one option is to find someone with a record to undertake the project with you.

The other option is to emphasise the fact that you're a new organisation that has sprung out of a need to meet a challenge, that you're a go-getter organisation and that you're committed to effecting change.

Give them the confidence that you can do what you say you do.

In the last analysis, though, what a grantmaker really, really hates is to give money to someone who doesn't spend it. Be sure that your timelines for hiring, purchasing, etc., are firm, and that you spend the money when you say you will.

A clean desk

Grantmakers don't often spend their nights lying awake fretting about whether the projects that got grants were the best possible choices. Realistically, they know that the quality of the applications in the 10% below the cut-off isn't significantly different from that in the 10% just above the cut-off. They will generally have more good ideas and good projects than they have good dollars to fund. They're going to separate the sheep from the goats on presentation, or good repute, or luck.

If you have something in there that catches their eye, you're in with a chance.

A separate, tailored submission

Don't ever send the same application you sent in to your last grant attempt with only the name changed. Grantmakers can spot a standard application a mile off, because it rarely addresses the unique issues they think are important.

Each submission must be tailored for the particular grantmaker to which it is addressed.

Read the guidelines

What the grantmaker really, really wants is someone who won't make them do extra work.

The main secret to having your grant application considered is to read the guidelines.

In dozens of interviews for our newsletters and books, the single biggest complaint from grantmakers or program managers was that applicants had not READ the guidelines.

> *"Look for the win-win situation – or, more ideally, the win-win-win situation for you, the foundation, and the people you serve."*
>
> Advice from an experienced grantseeker

Some grantmakers still do allow some latitude on the basis that they want to see the best projects funded and don't want to see groups, especially smaller groups, miss out on funding due to minor oversights.

But many now have less enthusiasm for chasing missing details, and there are reasons for it. The major one is the frustrating amount of time spent chasing so many grantseekers who ignore the guidelines, don't follow them, or simply put in the application THEY want to put in regardless of what the grantmaker has actually asked for.

Follow the guidelines

If the first important task is to read the guidelines. the second is to follow them.

You want to ensure that your idea or proposal is the only element being judged and that the possible positive rating of your proposal can't be downgraded because you have failed to include something or failed to answer in the format the grantmaker has requested, or failed to answer a question because you thought it was irrelevant.

You may think these are minor details, and that your cause is so important that whatever your application looks like on paper you should still get the money.

No.

The grantmaker isn't giving money to an issue, they're giving money to people who are able to do something about an issue – people who are

- Competent
- Efficient
- Attentive to detail
- Able to work with other organisations
- Have a demonstrated understanding of the funding body and its aims and mission.

And they don't want to fund people who

- Don't listen
- Can't handle paperwork
- Don't treat their funders with respect
- Don't have any understanding of the funding body and its aims and mission.

Look on the application form as a take-home exam.

Explore the NDIS

Research the types of projects that they've previously funded. Grantmakers can and do change their priorities, though, so it's definitely worth checking to see if any changes have been made from previous years. Many applications don't succeed not because the projects aren't worthwhile, but because they don't fit within the guidelines of that grant program (or because the applicant hasn't explained how they do fit within the guidelines).

The best way to find out more about a grantmaker is to contact it. Talking to key people can maximise your chances of success by putting a human face on your not-for-profit organisation for the grantmaker.

In fact, phone calls can be beneficial for both sides. Ring the grantmaker's office and talk to the person concerned. The contact person may be able to alert you to particular aspects of the program that aren't clearly flagged in the detail, and at worst they may be able to save you time and effort by telling you that for one reason or another your group falls outside their ambit or, perhaps, that they're really not all that interested in what you're doing - be aware, some can be quite blunt.

Don't stop there, though.

- Ask them for advice about what people and organisations are, in their eyes, doing good work in the area.

- Ask them if there are any reports you should be aware of.
- Ask if there are any previous grant recipients who could give you advice.
- Ask (if your project is not relevant) which funding agency they would suggest would be likely to look favourably at your proposal.
- Chase up those leads, and find others of your own.

Making contact on the phone

If you're telephoning a government department or a foundation for further information, keep in mind the following:

- Explore other avenues of getting the information before you call.

  Their time is valuable and sometimes they don't have much time for chit-chat. Check to see whether the question you're about to ask is covered in their annual report, in their brochures, or on their website.

- Don't get dismayed with an unenthusiastic response. They've probably had a hard day and, in any case, this is their job, not their passion.

- Be clear about what you want to ask.

  You'll need to know what you're calling about before you start out. If you want to do more than to arrange to collect the annual report or application guidelines, you need to have your inquiry well formulated so that it doesn't leave an impression of uncertainty from the start. List the questions in order of importance so that whatever time is available the most pressing questions can be asked first.

HOT TIP

Always be very, very nice to the secretaries. They're the ones who, if they like you, can let you know what the real situation is.

Checking the impact of success

Be warned; it's possible to jump at an attractive grant and end up being worse off than you were before. Do your preliminary budgeting carefully and conservatively, factoring in all your project costs and a proportion of your fixed costs, to see if you're going to be losing money. Ask

- Is there any downside risk?
- What's the marginal cost of adding another unit?
- If we put resources into this activity to win funding, how will it impact positively/negatively on our ability to do other work?

Don't undercharge unless you know what you're doing and have a very good reason for it.

A word of warning from one grantmaker:

"Don't overdo it. There's a fine line between an enthusiastic applicant and a nuisance."

Writing a Proposal – The Process

Pre-prep

So you've got a grant you think fits your needs, and you've got a project that could fit the grant. All you have to do is bring the two together.

Put grants on the agenda

Make your grantseeking efforts a topic of discussion at every committee/board meeting – don't just mention grants once a year. Ensure it appears on the agenda as a regular item.

Coordinate the hunt

Appoint one person to coordinate the hunt for relevant grants programs and to coordinate the application when you find one. While you should have a number of people contributing to the eventual proposal, a coordinator ensures quality control and checks; for example, that only one application goes in.

Select the right grant for you

Don't put your egg in too many baskets. It's better to tackle a small number of well-thought-out strategic grants than to throw yourself at everything that's going. That can be hard when you've got a group bursting with ideas, but it helps focus your activities and it means that projects are more likely to get completed on time.

Get organised and stay organised

Keep a grants folder. In one easily findable place, store copies of the grant outline, background material on funders, the project backup, the correspondence, file notes on conversations – make it easy for your successor if you fall under a bus or move on.

Keep on top of all funding opportunities

Through the Funding Centre Scoop and using your own knowledge or searches (use your networks), keep abreast of any new or relevant funding program.

Set up your own grants calendar

Use the information to set up your own tailored calendar of grants funding that includes all the important dates of grants programs relevant to your organisation.

"It helps to know exactly what it is you want to do, then develop a strategy to get you there. Identify your strengths and weaknesses and work towards promoting the strengths and strengthening the weaknesses."

Advice from an experienced grantseeker

How it's Done

Be ready for the starter's gun

Plan your moves in advance, and decide who in the organisation you'll contact first, who in your board or your staff or your executive has to meet together, how you're going to free up the time.

Organise the necessary people as soon as you know the job has to be done. You're not always going to be able to get the people you want – with the best will in the world, people have booked their plane tickets or gone on leave or have exams at the wrong time – so you'll need some alternates. What you're aiming for, though, is an on-call grantwriting team who can complete all the necessary tasks.

Planning the project

You're not applying for the grant for its own sake, you're doing it to promote your goals. You must decide what needs to be done, and then what's feasible within the financial, time, and personnel constraints.

What resources will it take?

Grantseeking isn't free. It's going to take up some of your time and your board's time and your volunteers' time, and you have to be prepared for that before starting so you won't complain afterwards or, worse, skimp and do a half-hearted job.

Big companies often have to spend about 5% of the total project cost just preparing their tenders, and when they're half-billion projects every one they lose is a real blow – but they then hide that cost in what they charge for the next job. On a much smaller scale, it's the same with you. You have to be prepared to throw your organisation behind the effort – and that means you can't afford to chase every grant, and that you'll have to be sure that you'll make enough of a margin on your successful deals to cover the sunk costs of your occasional failures.

First, draw up a process chart setting out what has to be decided:

- What's the opportunity you want to take on?
- Why is it important to take action on this? (a one-sentence statement to convince someone else that it makes sense).
- Does your organisation have the skills or time to adequately respond to this opportunity or challenge? If not, what can you do to get the skills or make time?

Then work out who needs to be consulted:

Getting everyone on the same page

Usually it makes sense to organise a meeting with key personnel, board members or others who can work together to make the organisation more effective in its grantseeking. In the meeting:

1. Clarify why you're calling the meeting
2. Ask for any questions from participants
3. Record these on a sheet of paper
4. Determine which ones you must respond to, to make the meeting successful and which ones should go on a list for future discussion and action.

- Who needs to participate?
- Why?
- What will this person provide that's essential?
- When?
- At what point do they need to be involved?
    - [Board chair]
    - [Business partner]
    - [Staff technician]

> *"It's important to share the joy of grant writing around! Good grant writing can be a big, complex job. Getting everyone involved lifts the weight from one person's shoulders, and makes for a stronger sense of ownership and connection."*
>
> Grantseeker

Then follow these steps (or modify them for your needs):

1. What is your goal for this meeting? Be VERY specific. What will success look like?
2. Based on the goal of the meeting, brainstorm ideas on how you might approach the challenge or opportunity. List these on paper that everyone in the meeting can see.
3. What are the next few steps that have to be taken following the meeting? It may be some writing, research, more assessment or planning or simply reaching out to talk with someone.
4. Determine who will handle these tasks and when they will be due. Whatever the task, make sure the right person is doing the job and it is clear to everyone what the job is and when it has to be done by.
5. Determine what the focus of a follow-up meeting should be, who should attend and why and when it should be.

After following these steps you should find yourselves in a much clearer position about what you're trying to accomplish and why, who needs to be involved and what the action steps are to move forward.

Writing the Grant Application

Although several individuals may write particular pieces, one person should pull the entire application together to make sure it flows and that nothing is omitted or repeated. Look for board members and staff with experience, and get your coalition partners to contribute to sections on which you need assistance.

As you're a consumer-driven group, your members should be given the opportunity to participate, to ensure that overall the final document reflects the ethics and beliefs of the members. Not all members will want to be involved, the form and extent of involvement will vary, but a wide reach is important if your members are to accept that the final version is an accurate representation of your shared values and beliefs. Extended participation in the writing process, furthermore, can build capacity for other projects.

Check the date that the application is due in and aim to have your application to the grantmaker (allow a few days if mailing) at least 5-7 days out from the closing date.

Prepare a NEW application that answers all the particular requirements and needs of each individual granting body. Don't get out the application you sent off to the last grantmaker and just change the name (don't, even worse, send it off without changing the names).

Grantmakers can spot a standard application a mile off, because it rarely addresses the issues they think are particularly important.

Finding a suitable writer

When you've got the outlines of your project sorted out, you need someone who's able to get it into writing.

Some people choke up when faced with a sheet of paper so it's sometimes useful to dictate the basic burden on to tape, and then transcribe that – it can free up the creativity.

"There are a number of things that can set a good application apart. The ones that actually stand out are the ones that have been clear on the links they will develop to the outside community – the ones that mention the groups that they'll be involved in and how they'll be taking the message learned out to the extended community. And also those that indicate how the project will have long-term benefits, or will be solidly built – that can show that the project's not just going to be a one-off that's quickly forgotten but will be something that shows real commitment.

The bad projects are those that aren't clear on the activities they propose to carry out, that don't seem to know where they're going, and that don't show how the project is going to impact on the wider community."

Coordinator, grants program

Anybody can write a submission, but not everybody thinks they can, and if you don't think you can then you often can't. And on the other side, remember you need someone who not only has writing skills but also has a strong belief in the integrity of the organisation.

If you're not confident that you can do an acceptable job, consider sending the job out. Some groups will get a local expert (failing that, someone with a writing or media or public relations background) to write a more compelling application.

Ask your local community development officer if they can help in preparing grant applications or if they know of someone who can. In most areas, there are several people who have amazing success strike rates, partly because they have a good knowledge of the various schemes. Find out who they are and whether they can help you or can spare some time over a coffee to point you in the right direction.

Critiquing the first draft and identifying questions or gaps

Get a person with experience (or even a panel of experts) to look over the first draft for accuracy, completeness, and charm. The reviewer/s will need copies of the circulated guidelines and criteria (and this book).

The reviewer must assess

- Does the draft meet the criteria?
- Is the draft clear?
- Is the draft exciting?
- Does the project look viable?
- Is the draft convincing?
- Is it worth going to a second round?

Finding friends to support your application

Like any grantmaker, the NDIA is particularly concerned that the communities who receive funding actually want and need the programs that they fund. One of its main priorities is for the project to be developed within the community rather than being carried out in isolation.

To demonstrate community consultation,

- Describe the ways and the extent to which your organisation's activities are regularly shaped by the community it serves.
- Explain established mechanisms and processes that allow community members to provide input into program design and implementation.

As a consumer group, you're already doing well on this count, but it's still a good idea to demonstrate what you've done to ensure that the project really does arise from the body of consumers:

- Community consultation, meetings, discussions, surveys
- Membership of community leaders on the advisory board or steering committee for the projects
- Meetings with consumers and self-help groups
- Inclusion of consumers in the project's staff and steering committee.

It may help to have partners in the enterprise, and it will certainly help to show evidence of having consulted and worked with other organisations in the field in the preparation of your submission.

Methods of consultations may include

- informal consultations;
- drilling down deep

  Best done by consumers with experience of other research methods, which enables them to talk to a few people in depth rather than a large number of people in very little detail;
- personal interviews

  These take up time but they might be a very good way to work out the questions consumers want to be asked;
- consumer forums

  With lots of people and lots of stimulation which enables some people to get in touch with the critique they have locked away inside to stay safe, but which now emerges because there are so many people in the room saying the same thing;
- Running focus groups

  A really useful tool if used properly (something that almost never happens).

In the area of mental health, of course, 'consultation' is not unproblematic, and must be employed sincerely or not at all.

"Over the past few decades consumers have become increasingly cynical about attempts by governments, researchers, large organisations, and institutions to consult with us. At first we were enthusiastic because we thought decision-makers were really interested in hearing what we had to say. As time went by we became more realistic, realising that adding us to the list of 'players' achieved little.

Running consultations in this sector is tricky. Ideally decision-makers want, or feel impelled by the politics, to find out what we think about something or other that might exist or might be proposed for the future. It seems that we have undergone an era of intense purposeless consultation. People are getting peeved because they turn up again and again, giving freely of their trust, time and thinking in the process, but nothing changes. In such consultations we are merely treated as 'stakeholders', a term some of us have come to detest because it implies that the stake is the same for all the different groups of people active in the mental health sector--and we thought we were the crazy ones! My life! Your job. These are not the same"

Merinda Epstein

Grantmakers, however, still want to be sure that

- You're not duplicating existing programs
- You're not invading anyone's turf
- You've talked to people who know what the problems are.

As well as these, your organisation wants to be sure that

- Any other organisation that could make a contribution has been asked to do so
- All holes in your expertise have been patched by recruiting the assistance of others.

"Sometimes you can see the quality of the thinking between the lines of an application – but if it can't be communicated well to the person assessing the application, then it probably can't be communicated well to others, and as we are interested in working in partnership with organisations which can help others learn from their innovative work, then having the capacity to communicate well is an important element in itself."

Grantmaker

It's particularly useful to have partners if you're just starting out and haven't yet got hard outcomes to show, and it's practically unavoidable if you're not an incorporated association or some other form of legal entity.

Auspicing

If you're not eligible for a grant to do something in your area, then you can sometimes remedy this by working with an organisation that is eligible. Some organisations provide an umbrella for groups that aren't incorporated.

Many groups look on auspicing as a formality, a triviality, a way to get funding through a friendly charity on a nod and a wink. This isn't the case. Other organisations can't fund anything you want to do; they can only fund those bits of what you do that can be brought under their own charter. This may be easy, or difficult, depending on how closely your aims match together. A lot of projects are always going to fall outside the guidelines.

Nonetheless, it's still worth checking the field out to see who's interested. Someone may be prepared to cut you a bit of slack. If an organisation's primary purpose is strictly and legally charitable, it's allowed to do other things related to the furtherance of that primary purpose Alternatively, you might just ask them to take over the project altogether and cut your expenses.

Get it in writing

If you take this route, it's important to have your inter-agency arrangements regulated by a comprehensive agreement to prevent misunderstandings and channel disputes into manageable procedures.

Some co-operative relationships you can work out for yourself, picking language that covers the essentials, gives something to everybody, and doesn't give away the farm.

There are some occasions when these inter-agency agreements have to take even more weight. Whatever the reason you're seeking auspicing, there's always the possibility that your idea of what's involved isn't the same as that of your prospective partners. The agreements have to be designed with care.

Financial auspicing can run in tandem with many other forms of not-for-profit partnership – sharing of physical resources, mentoring, social entrepreneurship. All these can we worked out between the parties. Tax-related auspicing, on the other hand, involves bringing into the relationship the 800-pound gorilla that is the Australian Tax Office, and all parties are under considerable constraints.

It's important to note, too, where the strength lies in this relationship. The auspicing body generally holds the better cards. They have legal powers the actual project administrator doesn't, and they're one step closer to the source of the money. They're doing you a favour, not the other way round, and in general, what they say goes.

Negotiating

It's easy for two partners in an auspicing agreement to find that things aren't working out the way they expected. What seems to one party like inefficiency can seem to the other like muddling through. What seems like monitoring to one can seem meddling to the other. In good times nobody bothers about who does what: in bad times everybody is treading on each other's feet and shouting. Try and anticipate any hypothetical disagreements ahead of time, and try and draw up an agreement that's expansive enough to cover them. In the worst-case scenario, what happens?

How to negotiate

1. **Know your walkout position in advance.** Make sure you can survive if it all falls through, or you'll have to take what you're given.
2. **See it from the other side.** You're not prepared to negotiate until you can present the other party's case better than they can.
3. **Keep an open mind.** Don't be inflexible - there may be a better deal out there for everyone.
4. **Speak first.** Have your opening remarks scripted and rehearsed. Set the tone to positive.
5. **Ask questions.** You control a negotiation not by talking but by asking the right questions.
6. **Listen, listen, listen.** Most people are so focused on their own agenda that they never hear what the other side is saying.
7. **You're not dividing the pie, you're expanding it.** What can you do for them that's cheap?
8. **Emphasise the items you agree on.** The more items you agree upon, the harder it'll be for them to walk away over the ones that separate you.
9. **To make things nonnegotiable, put them in writing.** People argue with people. They don't argue with printed documents.
10. **Check your ego at the door.** When people say "It's the principle", it's generally not.
11. **Don't stop at the first acceptable outcome.** Try to get to the best agreement possible.
12. **Never allow a negotiation to boil down to one issue.** If there's only one issue, there can be only one winner.
13. **Never concede before you have to.** If the other party has to work for any concessions, they'll value t them more.
14. **Never argue.** No one really ever wins an argument.
15. **Separate the person from the problem.** Don't get personal.
16. **Present your concessions properly.** You're not making a concession, you're changing your position in the light of new information.

It's not possible to draw up a standard agreement that will cover all cases. The agreement will need to be adjusted to meet the needs of the parties and the project. Nonetheless, all these agreements will need to contain (see the Checklist, below)

- a description of the project (deliverables and dates)
- management arrangements (does the auspicing agency have any management responsibility over any elements of the project under any circumstances?)
- payment provisions (how much when - timeline)
- contact arrangements (what positions, perhaps what persons, who convenes)
- participants (organisations, position statements, names; project manager)
- provisions for change of budget/staff/dates/specifications
- clear standards of performance, deliverables, and dates
- provisions for monitoring/inspection evaluation/review
- financial contribution for each party at each stage
- indemnity, release and insurance provisions
- conflict or dispute resolution mechanisms

And may need to contain provisions covering

- allocation of legal liability
- contingency arrangements if there's a blowout in costs, quality, service, deadlines, safety, community relations, or compliance
- contingency arrangements if one partner is dissolved or becomes bankrupt
- leasing/buying land/equipment/buildings arrangements
- ownership of physical assets
- ownership of intellectual property
- confidentiality and privacy,
- who's responsible for publicity
- who's responsible for failure

Agreement Checklist

Agreements relating to every project partnership arrangement should deal with:

- a description of the project (including information on the scope of the project), deliverables, the term and the effective date of the agreement
- payment provisions, including the time, amount and currency
- identification of the management team, including:
    - identification of key individuals and covenants relating to their participation
    - identification of the contract manager
    - provisions for the replacement of key individuals or contract managers
- administrative relationships of the parties, including:
    - identification of the parties' contract manager
    - clarification as to whether either partner may inspect, attend on site, monitor, measure results or otherwise administer the terms and conditions of the agreement
    - a review process, pursuant to which the parties assess performance
    - schedules of meetings and who should attend, in relation to contract administration
- transfer, lease, licence or use of premises or facilities, including responsibilities for insurance, liability, security, operation and maintenance
- allocation of revenue
- agreement on deliverables
- provisions for contract revision arising from material change in unforeseen circumstances (e.g., changes in technology, equivalent materials, applicable laws, or acts of God)
- provisions for contract revision arising from unsustainable material change in foreseeable circumstances (e.g. cost blowouts, time overruns, outcome shortfalls) with trigger mechanisms
- lending, borrowing and financing arrangements, if any, including payments, rates, security and notice
- indemnity, release and insurance provisions
- due diligence of the parties
- applicable manuals, including their preparation, approvals and amendment

- risk management strategy, including risk allocation, guarantees and warranties
- dealing with statutory and regulatory requirements
- process, including approvals, related to engaging subcontractors or other
- private partners
- termination provisions, including:
    - business failure
    - insolvency or bankruptcy
    - breach of contract
    - major change, including provision for re-entry, buy-back, transfer to another partner or shutting down the project
- labour relations provisions, including:
    - wage and benefit guarantees
    - dealing with the cost of staff reduction
    - treatment of employees on contract termination
    - relocation of identified employees to either partner
    - workers' compensation provisions
    - local preference for hiring, if any
- user fees regulation
- general matters, including:
    - conflict or dispute resolution mechanisms, such as commercial arbitration, alternate dispute resolution or other remedies or recourses
    - confidentiality and privacy, subject to the Freedom of Information Act
    - force majeure
    - notices where information is to be sent and conditions governing transfer of information between or among the parties
    - termination provisions that identify which clauses survive termination
    - clarification that the contract is governed by the laws of the relevant State
    - establishment of a contract amendment process
    - clarification that the set of agreements constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and supersedes any prior communications

- identification of how rights may or may not be waived or acquiesced to during the term
- publicity
- ownership of intellectual property, facilities or new technologies developed

Surveying the field

Start by contacting past recipients of grants for information.

Although the grant application process is competitive, most community group leaders are more than happy to share information about what they found to be of most benefit in securing their grant and even what they might do differently to strengthen their proposal next time.

Consider developing collaborative projects.

Collaborate with complementary organisations within your community.

The trend to maximise resources through funding joint proposals is growing in popularity within Australia's grantmaking community. Grantmakers are often in the position of receiving applications from organisations in neighbouring communities, each wishing to achieve similar objectives in different ways, and are concerned that where there is duplication there could be wastage. Funding resources are finite, and the demand is immense.

Check for overlapping responsibilities. At the very least, it's worth trying to find out whether there is anyone else doing what you're doing. Are they potential partners? Are there any other likely partners for your project? Might cooperation broaden the reach and impact of your proposed project within your community without distorting your aims?

Developing partnerships and collaborations

Sometimes the best way to get the work done is to join with another organisation to tackle the issue, or to ensure that you're not overlapping or duplicating, or even to ensure you can get funding with a stronger joint bid than either of you could as separate entities.

There are many successful partnerships at all levels, but whenever you go into partnership – as with a business arrangement – it is important to be crystal clear as to what each party is obliged to commit to the project.

It's essential to set out an agreement as to who does what and who gets what and who has the final say over what.

All these agreements need to contain:

- a description of the project (deliverables and dates)

- payment provisions (how much when – timeline)
- contact arrangements (what positions, perhaps what persons, who convenes)
- participants (organisations, position statements, names; project manager)
- provisions for change of budget/staff/dates/specifications
- provisions for monitoring/inspection evaluation/review
- financial contribution for each party at each stage
- indemnity, release and insurance provisions
- conflict or dispute resolution mechanisms

And may need to contain provisions covering:

- leasing/buying land/equipment
- ownership of intellectual property
- confidentiality and privacy
- who's responsible for publicity
- who's responsible for any failure

Letters of support

If you're asking your colleagues and partners for letters of support – and you should be – do give them a proposed draft letter (individualised to describe how they can contribute to the project). Many people are willing to be supportive but may lack time to draft a letter. If possible, don't use standard letters of support – it's better if the letters are recent and specific about the kind of support being committed.

Collecting the documents you might need

One of the hardest things about putting together a grants funding application is keeping track of all copies of all the normal supporting documentation that most funding bodies will require. Once you have them, they'll only ever need minor updating, which will let you focus all your energy into the application rather than wasting it on chasing documents at the last minute. Keep copies of:

- Proof of incorporation, if applicable
- Proof of tax (DGR, income-tax exempt, etc) status, if applicable
- Australian Business Number (ABN)
- Constitution/Rules
- Board membership list/Officebearer list

- Brief CVs of the board and key project staff
- Annual Report, including copy of audited financial figures
- Budget (including details of other funding sources)
- List of previous successful projects
- Summary of the local situation (might be ABS overview of relevant statistics relevant to your work or area).

It's worth preparing multiple copies of each of these documents and keeping them in an accessible file. Compiled and updated regularly, the file will avert the inevitable mad scramble to collect all the necessary pieces at the last minute. At the same time, these documents can be used as part of further communications and publicity strategies.

Remember, don't flood them with hundreds of pages of too much information. The grant guidelines will list what's required.

Writing a Proposal – Style & Treatment

It's important to communicate your work in the best possible light to appeal to potential funders. Surprisingly, this does not mean expensive bindings or color printing – quite the contrary. All funders unhesitatingly offer the same simple words of advice. "Follow our application guidelines exactly. If an application form is provided, use it, don't improvise. When a page limit's specified, keep to it!"

Making it user-friendly

- Follow the grantmaker's guidelines (margins, spacing, type size, paper size, proposal length) to the letter.
- Your proposal should look professional (e.g. laserprinted, not typed, consistent font, type size and headings), not amateur, without being extravagant.
- If a maximum number of pages is specified, observe it. If you're lucky they'll discard the extra pages, if you're unlucky they'll post the whole manuscript back to you.
- Use simple headings as signposts to guide your reader through the logic of your proposal.
- Number the pages.
- Use plenty of white space, rather than being an overwhelming block of unbroken text.
- Use an easily readable print size.
- Break up the layout with bullets, italics, headings, subheadings, boldface type, colour, borders, charts, or pictures.

- Include graphs and charts, where possible, rather than bare statistics – as long as they're easy to interpret at first glance.
- All statistics and quoted statements should be documented and properly referenced.
- Any acronyms [DGR, etc] should be spelled out in full – [Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR)] – at first use, and, if there's any possibility of confusion, at every use.
- Don't have a binding – this makes it difficult for the assessment committee to make copies.
- Be as brief as possible, and no briefer.

Clear and Passionate

Your language should be:

- Specific
- Accurate
- Concise
- Clear
- Passionate

The project title should make a positive statement (Reducing Juvenile Violence: Involving Young People in Community Sports) rather than being a boringly neutral descriptor (Proposal to Request Funding to Develop a Youth Membership Register).

- Get to the point. Convey something of your enthusiasm, your passion and your interest. Assume you're talking to someone who knows little about your community and your organisation. Relish the chance to tell them who you are, what you want to do, and why. Take pity on the people who process and assess applications and put some of your grant-writing effort into how you communicate with them: it'll pay off!
- Write mainly in short, simple, declarative subject-verb-object (the cat sat on the mat) sentences.
- Write in the active voice ("We will collect data on...") rather than the less forceful passive voice ("Data will be collected on....).
- Write in the first person ("We will establish the program...") and not the less emphatic third person ("The Association will establish the program...").
- Don't be too tentative ("It seems that it is possible to suggest that we ought to give consideration to discussing a tentative approach to defining the issues involved in..."); it advertises lack of confidence. Be positive ("We will....").
- Don't use industry-specific terminology or acronyms that aren't fully explained, or any weasel words, or any clichés.

- Don't make it hard for the grantmaker to find the merit in your proposal. Don't hide the overall benefits or the headline news on the last page of the application.
- Check and recheck for typos, misspellings (don't leave that to the spellchecker) and poor grammar. A grant application is a chance for your organisation to impress on others the value and impact of its work, so it's important to express yourself clearly, concisely and confidently.
- "A sloppy application = a sloppy organisation".

Put your passion into the submission. This is your one chance to infect the readerwith the enthusiasm that led you into this field in the first place.

Writing a Proposal – The Contents

Grant application guidelines can vary from those that require applicants to fill out the funding body's own highly structured application forms to those which just suggest a few headings under which organisations should organise their proposals.

Despite the diversity of their interests, grantmakers really need to be convinced of three things.

The application must prove that

1. a significant need exists,
2. that it's possible to fix it, and
3. that the applicant has the capacity to meet the need in a creative, appropriate and financially responsible manner.

More particularly, what do grantmakers really want to know and how do they want it delivered?

Most grant applications seek submissions that include (in some shape or form):

- An executive summary or covering letter
- A description of your organisation
- A case for support
- A description of the proposed project
- Dissemination activities
- Your evaluation strategies
- A budget
- Indications of future sustainability

Cover letter

The cover letter is particularly important where the application itself has to be put in on a form that breaks your project description up into a lot of different sections that don't give you a chance to make a coherent argument. Use a couple of paragraphs giving the hard (and

fast) sell.

However, some grantmakers don't include the cover letter in the material circulated to assessors, so if anything's really vital put it in somewhere in the body of the application as well.

Executive summary

The Executive Summary is arguably the most important part of the proposal. It needs to capture the imagination of overloaded grantmaking officials. In an absolute maximum of one page (or less if so stipulated by the grantmaker), you must convince them that the proposal is definitely worth considering and that they need to read further.

Even if an application form is prescribed, the Executive Summary can still easily be included in the covering letter attached to the application form.

The Executive Summary needs to include:

- An introductory paragraph, giving an outline of the project, its intended audience and the requested funding amount.
- Your organisation's mission and how it will be enhanced by the proposed project.
- The statement of need, summarising why you're asking for assistance from the NDIA ILC.
- A demonstration of how the project meshes with both the mission of the funding body and your overall goals.
- One or two key statistics to highlight the extent of the problem and the need for your project, providing some evidence that your organisation has undertaken some relevant data collection and research in the development of this proposal.
- Specific details on how the requested grant money will assist in developing a solution to fill the identified gap, and describing the ways particular groups of people will benefit.
- An assessment of the total cost of the project, the amount requested from the grantmaker, and other funding sought and committed, including that provided by your own organisation (which may be in-kind).

The proposal

Introducing yourself

This section of the proposal allows you to establish your credibility and qualifications for funding. It's not the place to write a long-winded history of your organisation but to describe your purposes and long-range goals. The grantmakers want you to demonstrate how your existing programs were developed to meet identified community needs.

If you've got any previous record of achievement in the field, this is the moment to bring it up, with (if possible) heartfelt testimony from the people you've helped.

Include data demonstrating that your organisation has the skills, knowledge, and ability to make the project a success, perhaps including up-to-date individual CVs to back up your claims.

"There are four things we like to see outlined very simply and clearly, and they are the same sorts of things that any corporate board of management would want to see. They are:

- *What do you want to do?*
- *Why do you want to do it?*
- *How are you going to do it? and*
- *What's it going to cost?*

Then you should put in a brief outline for a specific request, not a generality. Don't put in too much jargon or background information – try and think about how you would present it to the public.

The KISS (Keep it simple) principle is very important. When you're looking at about 300 applications, as we do, we're experienced at looking at the first page and saying "That looks good". If it does, we'll dig a bit further to see if the group have got the infrastructure, what they're going to do about the funding next year, what backup have they got, what their management structure is, and so on.

Grab us with the headline and then start to sell us with the first paragraph. Don't try and baffle us with science. Keep it simple and make sure the project is something that is going to have an effect."

Grantmaker

Identifying the problem

This section is sometimes called the statement of need, and its purpose is to build the justification for the proposal. It must convince the grantmaker that there is a significant but not an impossible gap to be filled. Don't overstate the case through highly emotive language – that's quite likely to work against you. The problem must be important, but it can't be so hopeless that it leads potential funders to believe that their investment will be a waste of their limited resources.

Try to set out

1. a specific problem or issue
2. in a geographically identifiable area (not always possible)
3. at a scale that's realistically achievable by your organisation.

A small consumer organisation won't be able to solve the problems of the world – but mere timid repetition of past work won't spark anyone's interest, either. It's a delicate balance.

Don't assume that your reader will understand how large the gap or problem is for your community and how urgent it is to find a solution.

Don't assume too much knowledge of the area, or too little.

Instead of writing a featureless general statement about the need, try writing a simple case study to capture the imagination, bringing the issue to life by illustrating the effect it will have on a typical person.

Don't include any unnecessary arguments. You don't have to spend pages convincing the NDIA that participation of people with mental illness in community activities is a good thing; save your breath for showing why your project will help.

Data

Your case study should be followed (if at all possible) by accurate statistical data to scope the dimensions of the problem your project is addressing. This shows:

- the scale of the project
- that your organisation has done the hard work to thoroughly understand the issues and knows what it takes to address them.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) now has breakdowns on a number of measures that can be useful for not-for-profit groups and local councils in providing factual information to back up their claims for funding.

The information, which covers details on unemployment as well as age, ancestry, income, education, family type and more, can be accessed through the National Regional Profiles on www.abs.gov.au.

Providing the solution

This is the section that explains to potential funders that you've developed a clearly defined, creative, achievable, and measurable strategy to address the issues.

Your proposal has to make a clear and consistent argument for the project. You have to give some reason why you think your approach is going to work. This is known as evidence-based practice.

First, state:

- the overall aims
- the specific objectives of the program.

An aim or goal is usually an abstract but very succinct description of what your program hopes to achieve.

The objectives should be specific, achievable within a set time frame and in a distinct geographical location, and result in real outcomes that are easily measurable.

The proposal must:

- specify project objectives that are (self-evidently) realistic, achievable, and measurable
- establish (and quantify) the benefits that will flow from the project to the beneficiaries and to the grantmaker
- show the benefits of your project or program.

Use research and statistics where possible to show your plan is not plucked from the sky but reasoned and considered.

It's also sometimes useful to include some references from the academic literature to show the level of research you have undertaken.

It helps if you indicate that your organisation is committed to some work in this area even of you don't get the grant (it shows you really think the project is vital). Funding bodies like to see that your project is part of a larger plan for your organisation and its activities, or for your community as a whole.

The proof of the pudding

Once you've promised to do these things, you must be sure that you do them and can demonstrate you've done them. You'll need to plan the stages of implementing the project and document the performance of each stage.

The plan will need to include an evaluation so that you can prove that the grant money has achieved the aims of the grantmaking body and they should give you some more. And keep the grantmaking body in constant contact so they know what you're doing.

Detailing the methods

Each of your stated objectives needs to be matched with a set of clear strategies or actions. These should flow naturally from your objectives and tell the reader how you're going to achieve them, by whom, and by when.

- Begin with a rationale for why this particular approach was chosen at this time and for this community
- Set out the project's methods clearly
- Show why these methods were adopted and alternatives rejected
- Include provision for dissemination and diffusion of the project's learnings
- Include a straightforward timeline, clearly describing and sequencing the planned activities for each objective for the reader.

The timeline will build confidence in your project management skills, showing that you know precisely what needs to be done by when.

To give further integrity to the proposal, the name or title of the person/s responsible for the delivery of each activity on the timeline should also be included. This needs to include volunteers as well as paid staff. Specify a regular process of monitoring and reporting to the grantmaker.

Demonstrating support

Ideally, you should be able to demonstrate constructive partnerships with all other players with interests in the area. A proposal co-signed by two or more organisations will enhance your capacity to deliver, and will prove to potential funders that you're aware of what others in the field are doing.

Even if you don't have a formal relationship with any other community organisation, make it clear in your proposal that you have addressed issues of duplication, that your communication channels are open and that you're ready to take full advantage of future partnering arrangements in the best interests of your community.

If you do decide to work collaboratively with another agency or organisation, ensure that the relationship is formalised and documented. All collaborative work needs to be described in the proposal, and with agreed responsibilities and timelines and payments for each partner clearly defined.

It's important, however, not to be pushed into partnerships that aren't a good fit, that distract your group from its vision, or have practices that don't sit easily with your philosophy.

Consultation

If you're claiming that your activities benefit the community, then you need to get the community to say so. Compliments always sound better coming from somebody else. Get the support of other groups.

- Hold a public meeting and ask for opinions

- Sign up partners
- Lobby for support from local councils and politicians and other community leaders

Most grantmakers will choose a good proposal over a less good one that has more letters of support, but if there are two projects that can't be separated on merit and yours demonstrates a wider community backing, it can make the difference. Document every approach.

Although it's not always necessary to supply letters of support for grant applications, they may be very useful to potential funders. They can provide information about the organisation's importance to the community and whether the project is actually needed by the community it serves.

When requesting letters of support from community members ensure that the support given is for both the proposed project and your organisation as the producer of the project.

On the other hand, lack of broad community support isn't always a sign that the project's unworthy of funding. There may not be wide community support for, say, a cutting-edge project in a conservative community, but some funders may still find the proposal exciting.

Choose your referees carefully. Be sure that they are aware of both the proposed project and your organisation's previous track record in the community.

"Sometimes we find people do not know they are being named as referees", one funder told us. "This is quite unethical. People should be careful with all aspects of their application."

Explaining "Why you?"

There are two levels to selling your case. You have to show that you can do the job – that you've got the experience and the skills and the contacts and the financial stability and the management capacity and the infrastructure necessary – but you also have to show in addition to this that you're the best organisation to do the job.

Two tourists in an African game park were shocked out of their sleeping bags by a roar. A rogue lion was coming at them! One looked around unavailingly for a tree; the other started lacing on his running shoes. "What are you doing?" his companion screamed. "You know you can't outrun a lion!"

"I don't have to outrun a lion," the other said, lacing the other shoe, "I just have to outrun you."

You have to bring out your Unique Selling Point (USP), the factor that distinguishes you from the rest of the pack (or at least those parts of the pack you haven't already bought off through strategic partnerships). This factor could be your mission, your expertise, your consultative processes, or anything else where you hold an advantage. Be positive, though, and avoid direct comparisons.

The budget

The required presentation of the program budget can vary significantly.

Some funders just ask for a simple one-page statement of income and expenses, especially for smaller projects. Others demand a more detailed set of budget papers that includes explanatory notes for various items of revenue or expense.

All grantmakers, however, will require an honest, small budget that demonstrates the ways your organisation will maximise the resources available.

You need to:

- Match the budget to the activities. Be realistic. Don't try to bolster the budget to pay for other activities and don't put in less than what you realistically need. Under-costed budgets are just as damaging to your credibility and your chances of receiving a grant as budgets which are over-inflated. It could mean you run out of funds and are unable to finish the project.
- Match your timelines to the budget. Go through the timeline of activities in your strategy. Get quotations from suppliers for necessary major items to make sure that each of these activities is properly costed and listed.
- Create the framework. List all items of expenditure separately under clear, logical headings such as Building Supplies, Salaries and Wages, Administration, Publicity, Permits etc.
- Consider a percentage of overheads. Work out what percentage (if any) of your regular running costs (telephone, petrol, postage, etc) will need to be spent or even increased for this project. Budget fairly and honestly for these items.
- Consider if a contingency is necessary. A contingency category is now commonly accepted by grantmakers for larger budgets. This should be no more than 5% of the total project budget and should detail the sorts of things you anticipate it might need to cover.
- Factor in what your contribution is (including in-kind support and volunteer hours). You need to include the amount of resources your organisation is committing to the project. It is critical that you show how your own group is supporting the project through either volunteer hours (usually costed at approximately $25 per hour) and in-kind donations of goods and services.
- Account for other proposals. Any additional resources committed by other organisations or groups also need to be listed. These include other funders, sponsorship, large donations, etc.

- Include budget notes (where necessary). Budget notes may sometimes be required to explain unusual items of expenditure. These can be displayed like numbered footnotes at the end of the budget.
- Make sure your budget adds up. When you have finished your costings, go back over them and see that all the line items have been added up and that the final figure is right.
- Check all the figures in the document. Go through wherever a figure is mentioned in your proposal and make sure they are consistent.

Budget Checklist	YES	NO
Does the proposal contain a detailed budget?		
Does the proposal deal with how the project will be funded after the grant period ends (sustainability)?		
Does the budget contain a contribution [in money, in-kind, or in volunteer time] from your own organisation, to demonstrate your belief and commitment?		
Have you done your financial calculations accurately enough to know for certain whether your proposal involves a profit, break-even, or loss?		
Does the budget include provision for your administrative overheads (unless you've decided to subsidise the project)?		
Are you prepared to defend your budget's cost estimates for salaries, goods and services?		

Evaluating results

Most application guidelines now ask you to describe how you're going to find out whether your project is a success. Including a section on evaluation shows that you understand this requirement and that you have taken realistic steps, proportional to the size of the project and its budget, to show the results you have achieved.

It's also important for your own satisfaction and accountability to your community to show that the project worked, or that it didn't, and why. The whole point of evaluation is that it's a tool for learning, and the most important audience for its results is the group that put the project together and implemented it (and, following that, all of the groups and communities trying to do similar projects around Australia).

Horses for courses

The extent of the evaluation should match the size of the project.

A large project with many partners is going to need a much more sophisticated evaluation strategy than a proposal that affects or involves only a limited number of people over a brief period with a relatively small budget. As a general rule the evaluation section needs to include:

- Names and qualifications of evaluators
- Precise details of what will be evaluated; that is, the project objectives
- Evaluation methods to be used for each objective
- The process of data collection
- Criteria to be used to assess success
- Tests and other evaluation instruments to be used
- Ways the evaluation results will be used for future program development.

Evaluation should be part of planning a project and preparing a grant. It will boost your application if you can indicate what your goals are and how you plan to measure your success in meeting them. Take the example of a grant to run a series of workshops on capacity building. Assessment would consist of monitoring the following indicators, in generally increasing order of complexity;

1. **Delivery**
   Report that five workshops were delivered.

2. **Penetration**
   Report that five workshops were delivered to a total of 89 people, or 65% of the stakeholders approached.

3. **Client Satisfaction**
   Report that of 89 clients the average rating on a 1-5 useless-useful scale was 4.1.

4. **Result**
   Report that of 10 clients reassessed a month later, eight were able to recollect 75% of the material covered in the workshop.

5. **Outcome**
   Report that one year later 38 of 89 clients had taken some action in their communities drawing on the skills taught in the workshops.

6. **Rigorous assessment**
   Report that a double-blind assessment of the community and a control community demonstrated greater achievements for the target community on a range of indices than for the control community.

Creating Sustainability for your idea

Some grant applications require you to say how your organisation will continue the project after the grant expires. How will people be paid, equipment maintained, electronic and print publications updated and disseminated?

Your plan should include how funds will be sourced and by whom.

These should include:

- Fundraising campaigns, e.g. direct-mail or special events in support of the project.
- Approaches to corporate sponsors.
- government departments and agencies to be targeted.
- Proposals written to other grantmaking organisations.

What percentage of your organisation's budget will be channelled into the project over time?

"Believe in what you're doing – but be prepared to have it tested, and perhaps even changed (for the better)."

Grantmaker

Disseminating the results – Telling others all about it

It's becoming increasingly important to funders that the learning accumulated during the course of your project be shared with other not-for-profit groups. It's another way of publicly acknowledging the support of your funder and of course publicising your organisation's work.

A small community organisation will not be able to solve all the problems of the world, such as the widening gap between the information rich and the information poor. On the other hand, a simple proposal that works locally may in fact have the power to inspire other communities globally.

If you do have something unique or worthwhile to share,

- list the names and dates of appropriate opportunities to tell your story.
- list who in your organisation is responsible for telling your story through:
    - workshops
    - conferences
    - magazines
    - websites
    - newsletters
    - professional journals.

Also put your story out to the community through your local newspaper, radio station or even TV station. It's a chance to take on a leadership role within your local community and to lift and improve other not-for-profit groups in your local area, so your entire community will benefit. Projects that can demonstrate that they have the potential to work in more than one place and can make a valuable contribution to existing bodies of knowledge on the topic become more attractive to funders.

Don't forget to include dissemination costs as part of your project budget.

Giving punch to the conclusion

Finish with a conclusion at the end summing up the problem, your solution, its anticipated impact, its cost, your request, and the projected benefits.

The principle is

1. Tell them what you're going to tell them (cover letter)
2. Tell it to them (body of the submission)
3. Tell them what you've told them (conclusion)
4. Appendices – providing relevant background

The purpose of appendices is to provide further useful, but not essential, information in support of your application. Some grantmaking bodies specifically request that no attachments be submitted; even where they're permitted, keep them to the bare minimum. Make sure that all key information about your organisation and the project is clearly spelled out in the main body of the project.

Rather than bulking up your proposal with videos, previous project reports, and other supplementary material, attach a list of what is available. Funders can then request the appropriate documentation if and when it's required.

Appendices can include:

- One or two recent media articles endorsing your organisation
- Verification of your tax exempt status
- A copy of your annual report
- Names and brief CVs of your board or management committee members
- A list of recent major projects undertaken by your organisation
- Financial statements for the last financial year.

The Final Checklist

Some of these you can fix even at this late stage, some of them you can just do better on next time.

Final Checklist	YES	NO
Is the proposal a one-off, tailored to the specific mission and goals of the grantmaker, and not a generic lowest-common-denominator proposal that has been sent to twenty foundations (and sounds like it)		
Does the proposal addresses every single item or criterion in the grantmaker's guidelines [even if only to say Not applicable or See item 2.3. (ii)] in the order and under the headings that they appear in the guidelines?		
Is it a lively read? Does the whole proposal communicate your enthusiasm, your energy, and your commitment?		

Final Checklist	YES	NO
Has everybody who's got to sign it signed it, and in the right spaces?		
Have you read the guidelines carefully and made a list of all the main points or aims the grants program is trying to achieve? Check that you've mentioned every one and shown how your project does achieve this.		
Have you got proper names, and the names of organisations, and the names of government departments, right?		
If you're cutting and pasting parts out of another grant application and tweaking it to suit the new application, check that you don't leave the old name in on one page.		
Have you told the grantmaker the amount of money you're seeking in funding?		
Check you haven't exceeded the specified page limit		
Check your page numbering so there's no confusion over missing pages or attachments.		
Check that your application is legible (and don't use a tiny type size to squeeze more information in). Is it easy to read?		
Run through the checklist of attachments or supporting evidence: Compile a list of all the documents or extras the grantmaker has requested and tick them all off to ensure that everything that is asked for is attached.		

Final Checklist	YES	NO
If you've said that something is attached, or said 'See appendix vi', check to make sure they are attached.		
If anyone else has contributed to the application, check their bit.		
Ensure the application remains true to your original idea and you're not promising something you can't deliver.		
Read it again. Go through and read your application from cover to cover. Check the spelling, make sure you have made all the points that you think the grantmaker considers important.		
Get someone outside the organisation to read it. • Have you have made a sound argument? • Do they understand it? • Do they understand the benefits? • Do they think it's a good project? • What other questions do they have after reading it? • How would they improve it?		

Have you left plenty of time to lodge the application? There's no point going through all that hard work and then missing the deadline for applications. Put it in early. Don't leave it to chance to see if it makes the last mail run. Some grantmakers will be quite forgiving for late entries; many others will automatically dump you.

Aftercare

Managing the relationship

If you're successful in securing a grant for your project, remember there may be a next time. So make sure that you're very clear about your funder's needs and expectations.

- Set up a schedule of activities to remind yourself of contract specific tasks and project and financial reporting deadlines.
- Invite NDIS reps to all your special events and functions, even if they are not directly related to the funded project.
- Send regular reports of the project to the funders, with real examples of how their funding has made a difference to the community.
- Acknowledge funders on all project print and electronic publicity and on other appropriate materials.
- Invite them to speak at the project launch.
- Invite them to spend time with you and the project team on site.
- Communicate with your funders through emails, newsletters and annual reports even after the funding period has expired.

It's all about maintaining meaningful relationships. You've put a lot of work into making the NDIA aware of your existence, and if you're able to hang on to them it will lessen the pressure to have to go and do it all over again somewhere else.

You want to create strong bonds. You want to grapple them to your heart with hoops of steel.

You want to make it easier to get funding next time because you have a strong record and also because you have a strong relationship. They know you can deliver and they know you'll provide the information that will enable them to deliver to their stakeholders.

Relationship building is not about official reports. Most of the successful relationships between grants provider and recipient are those where there has been constant communication through the life of the project and where funders feel they have experienced the project and its highs – and lows – through:

- an occasional phone call
- emails
- your regular newsletter
- project updates
- on-site visits

- copies of letters or responses from people who've benefited from the project.

You need to stay in touch to meet grant requirements, but there's more to it than that. Recognise the funding body as a partner and stakeholder in your project. When things go well, everyone gets a buzz out of it, and next time you apply, there's something to build on.

Reporting to the grantmaker

You've made your application, they've given you the money, and you've launched into the project. So – you're clear, right? You can forget all these forms and paperwork? Not for a second. Most grantmakers in these tough times insist on clear objectives and regular monitoring, and you need to satisfy their wishes.

Whatever you do, don't let the pressures of work shove you off your reporting schedule. Even if you don't expect another grant – and if you don't, you're probably giving up way too easily – you want everything to run smoothly without the possibility of a time wasting dispute.

Funders want:

1. measurable outcomes in your target population or target area of operation.
2. to know what you have managed to achieve with their money.

Your report writer has to tell them all they want to know – and also to go beyond that and provide them with as much information as possible to show that your organisation was deserving of support and has run a project that can have benefits beyond your organisation.

The ideal is to be able to craft a report that both gives the information necessary to fill the boxes on their spreadsheet and links the project to your goals and your vision – something that:

- reminds them of the work still to be done
- sets the project in a context
- shows your funder how important their support is
- plants the seed of your next proposal
- clarifies the areas of unmet need.

Work backwards from that next proposal. If you want that next grant, what would you have to show in your submission? Is there anything in your present project that could be made to show that? What will you need to prove? Put it into your report.

Meeting your deadlines

Most funders ask for reports either after six months or a year. Some funders are very good about late reports – some even mail out reminders – but the responsibility for preparing and sending in accurate reports on time rests with you, not the funder.

Even if you think their questions are vague, or unnecessary, or time-wasting, smile and comply – they're paying you, and you agreed to the tune.

If you find you're going to miss a deadline, get on to them, apologise, explain (very briefly) why, and say when the late report will be in.

Always submit grant reports in the proper format.

If your funder asks for a three-page letter (only), don't send a 20-page document accompanied by DVD.

If the funder leaves the format up to you, keep it concise and to the point, but also make sure your report is engaging and informative.

Don't rule out video content – they don't have to watch it if they don't want to, and it may give them a closer bond with your client group.

Even if there isn't space for case studies, include quotes. You want your funder to see that you've changed the quality of human lives.

Problems

Sometimes, as we all know, things change between the time you get the grant money and the time the first report is due. For late reporting you need an excuse; for changes in the program or changes in the allocation of the funds you need good reasons – and good communication with the funder. If they only discover that your project looks nothing like your proposal when they read the final report, then you're in trouble. Honesty is the best policy.

Little problems

If you received a grant for a schools activity training program and it took you three months longer than you budgeted for to find and hire an instructor, just tell your grantmaker. They may have no problem with this kind of delay, and you'll probably be allowed to roll over the funds into the next year.

Large problems

If you raised funds for a program that just doesn't seem to work, however, and needs a total redesign, then you have a harder sell than the one it took to get the money in the first place. Some funders may allow you to keep the unspent grant money because they still want to support your cause; others may cut you off without a cent. Even that, though, would be better than going double-or-quits and hiding the problem in the hope that it will work itself through before the next report.

The absolutely-no-exceptions worst approach is to mislead or lie. If your projects are going badly wrong your whole organisation needs to reconsider its approach, and you're going to need all the friends you can get. Don't annoy them.

TIP: Check out the Our Community book "How to Manage Your Grant After Winning It!" for more tips on post-grant work.

Learning and Trying Again

If you're successful in accessing grants funding, congratulate yourself.

Celebrate your achievement and let others in your group celebrate it as well, but don't celebrate for too long. Get your project team together and work out how you're going to deliver what you have promised on time and on budget.

If you're unsuccessful, ask why? You can only learn to be better if you find out what it was about your proposal that could have been presented better. Ask the grantmaker for feedback on your application and thank them for taking the time to do so. Ask:

- Should you have included additional information?
- What other things could you have done?
- Would they be interested in considering your application at a future date?

Apply that learning when writing your next application (and also keep an eye on the groups that did receive funding, and ask yourself if there was something they did that you didn't).

As one grantseeker told us:

> "If you're applying for grants continuously and not receiving funding take a step back and ask yourself why. I realised that if I changed the focus and promoted the solution rather than the problem it would be more applicable to the grants I applied for."

Either way, don't forget there will be a next time, and a next. Whatever the outcome, put the NDIA on your mailing list so that they can become better acquainted with your organisation and its projects.

Don't take it to heart. You make it to the short list through having a very good case and a very good presentation. You get from the short list to the funded list by having a very good case and a very good presentation and being, in addition, very lucky. This time there was an application in the pile that on the day the committee liked better than yours. Next time, there may not be.

Don't give up. Keep trying. If you have achieved success at your first attempt you're in the minority. Keep at it and keep improving your presentation, your grantwriting and your support pack until it's a professional package that will give you a better chance of success.

Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Try to have a fall-back position or alternative sources of funding, either running in parallel or in reserve (but do be open with your grantmaker about any alternative sources).

Action List

- Develop a strategy to manage your relationship with your new funder.
- If your proposal has been unsuccessful, try to find ways to improve it for the next round of funding.