Explore and Create: Application Tips

Application Assistance

Application Assistance | Canada Council for the Arts contributes to costs for services to help applicants with the application process.

Who can request assistance:

Individuals (or the lead applicant for a group) who self-identify as:

- Deaf, hard of hearing, having a disability or living with a mental illness
- First Nations, Inuit or Métis facing language, geographic and/or cultural barriers.

General Application Tips

- **Consult** Deadlines | Canada Council for the Arts.

- **Consult** Annual Application Limits | Canada Council for the Arts

- **Choose your component.** Explore and Create.

- **Review the application form** and take note of the word count limits that will apply when you complete your grant application in the portal.

  Research and Creation - Guidelines and application form
  Concept to Realization - Guidelines and application form

- **Address your application to the peer assessors** – who are also artists, arts professionals, and subject matter experts from a diversity of professional specializations; artistic practice; demographics (age, gender, ethnicity); and region – they are the ones you need to persuade of your proposal's viability, not the program officer.

- **Provide context** – The assessment committee:
  - Needs to understand you, your work, your artistic approach, and/or your communities.
  - Will only assess what is included with the application and will not make assumptions, nor assess based on your reputation.
  - Responses to questions in the application form, need to be relevant and accurate.
  - Canada Council Context Briefs.

- **Be as concrete as possible**:
  - Dates and location
  - Who will be part of the project and why?
  - Why here?
  - Why now?
  - Why that much (if applicable)

- **Clarity is key –** be specific and limit topics to improve understanding of what it is you hope to do. Be concise and precise.

- **Adopt a realistic tone -** ideally write in the first person that avoids superlatives and hyperbole.

- **Be realistic with your budget and work plan –** be sure it reflects your project needs and description. Make sure it adds up and matches the request in your application form.

- **Consult a colleague –** ask someone to read your application and give you constructive criticism taking the assessment criteria into consideration.

- Are the answers to your questions responding to the assessment criteria? The assessment criteria are the lens through which the peers assess your application, make sure that your answers connect with the assessment criteria.

- **Project collaborators** - You may include support material about key collaborators if relevant to the project. This will support the understanding of their specific involvement.

- **Confirmation of support letters**: Include letters that go beyond basic confirmation of participation in a project: effective collaborator letters are ones that include detailed and specific reasons as to why the collaborator supports this project and thinks it is worthy of their time and effort. Screengrabs of emails and texts are acceptable. Ideally, letters that confirm availability, commitment, other revenues, and enthusiasm may be effective in convincing peers of the feasibility of a project. Brief bios that includes the roles that collaborators will be playing rather than resumes are helpful.

- **Applicant CV's** - The profile information that you uploaded in the Portal is automatically included with your application (a CV if you are an individual applicant, the group description, and CVs of group members if you are a group applicant, and the mandate, mission, history, and board members if you are an organization applicant). Make sure to review your CV and it is up to date. Preparing an arts and cultural CV (or resume) for the Canada Council for the Arts.

- **Provide assurances** - A committee will appreciate information about your safety plans particularly when working with difficult or dangerous apparatus.

- **Check the quality and relevance of your support material –** Avoid promotional videos that might only highlight your marketability.

- **Test your support material before you submit i**t - ensure that it is formatted correctly. Make sure to keep video or audio links active until after you receive the grant result notification.

- **Questions for your program officer** - As you work through a draft of your grant application, make notes of specific questions you have for the Explore and Create team to speed up the process of getting answers to the questions you have.

Cultural Appropriation

Cultural appropriation applies when cultural borrowings or adaptations from a minoritized culture reflect, reinforce, or amplify inequalities, stereotypes, and historically exploitative relationships that have direct negative consequences on equity-seeking communities in Canada.

Obtain permissions and/or observe protocols if working with culture(s) other than your own, where relevant.
- Do elements of your project perpetuate stereotypes?
- How will you address knowledge gaps, biases, or blind spots?
- Have you negotiated compensation with the communities involved?

For more information on this subject, please see Cultural Appropriation | Canada Council for the Arts.