Grantwriting tips

DO

Show respect for the community in which you'll be working by getting to know it *before* writing your proposal. If you have deep roots in your proposed site, make that clear.

Respond attentively to the prompts.

For CC and other grants to individual artists, write about yourself in the first person.

Write in clear, simple sentences. Be thorough, concise, detailed, and specific.

Write in a journalistic vs. academic or overly informal style. Think: matter-of-fact storytelling supported with evidence.

Write in active, not passive tense wherever possible.

Let your writing communicate a sense of who you are as a person and artist while still sounding polished and professional.

Proofread for grammar, mechanics, structure, readability, and accuracy.

Leave yourself time to edit and revise. Read your narrative out loud to help you. Find a partner who will proof your draft and double-check your budget numbers for you.

Prepare partner letters, attachments and support materials early! Approach potential partners no less than 2-3 weeks before deadline and farther in advance if possible.

DON'T…

…"carpetbomb" or blindly cut and paste from other proposals. Do create a boilerplate or master proposal, but adapt it to the particular requirements of each funder.

…write mega-long, wordy or run-on sentences.

…stack prepositional phrases.

…write the max word count just because. Try to say more with less.

…bluster or exaggerate proposed activities or the potential impact of your work.

…communicate carelessness or worse by, for example, including assumptions ("we know X organization will be happy to partner with us") or inaccuracies about the neighborhood or community you propose working with.

…try to prepare the whole application in less than a day or two.

…neglect to share your proposal with your community partner(s). Even if they are not directly involved with building support for the project, sharing information early on builds a mutual sense of commitment and shows respect for their involvement with the project.

…assume any flexibility at all around the deadline. 95% of the time funders can't accept your application the week after, the day after, or even at 12:05am if it was due at 11:59pm. Shoot to submit *before* the deadline if you can.