

ADVICE ON GRANT WRITING

- Choose a project that is within the existing capabilities and resources of your archival institution and staff / volunteers.

- Ensure that your institution has fulfilled all requirements of past grant-funded projects before applying for additional funding.

- Review examples of past successful grant applications and use their formula for success – it isn't necessary to reinvent the wheel.

- Before starting the application, check for updated forms, instructions and terms and conditions **each year**. Most granting agencies make changes to their forms every year, if just to update the year that appears on the grant form itself, because changes are easy to make electronically. Use the most current form available.

- Answer all questions on the grants forms as completely as possible. Some questions that are not fully answered on the Access to Holdings application include: the descriptions of staff / volunteers involved in the project, historical importance of the records, and the project's impact on the institution.

- There is a fine balance between too brief and too verbose a project description. Stick to the basic, salient points of the project.

- Compare the project's description to the proposed timeline / budget to make sure that each one reflects the other. For example, if an application's project description states that no appraisal of the material is necessary, then there should be no request for funding for appraisal in the budget. If work has been done in one area of the project, it should form part of a matching contribution (if applicable) rather than a request for funding.

- Stick to timelines and allow enough time to complete the project as well as the project's administration. Time allotted to each segment of the project should be appropriate, realistic, and not excessive.

- Check the final formatting of the application to catch and correct any misspellings, math errors, or sentence fragments left over from working or draft versions. Typed rather than handwritten applications are better. All these elements create an overall impression that influences the Committee.

- Make sure to include all necessary documents with the application before it is sent to the ASA. The Committee may not be able to call you before the adjudication regarding forgotten items and information. An incomplete application will likely receive a lower score.

- Using adjudication score sheets, Grants Committee members evaluate the applications based on their experience with archival work. If project proposals are not realistic in the amount of time allotted or require excessive amounts of time or funding to complete certain components, then that will lower the application's overall score. The most cost-effective projects that provide the greatest return for the money are the most well-received.