

Organization Activation Projects Grant
December 1, 2021
General Expert Panel Comments

Comments made by the Expert Panel during its assessment of applications submitted to the December 1, 2021 deadline are outlined below. Please note that these comments provide a summary of the Expert Panel's assessment and do not necessarily relate to every unsuccessful application submitted to this deadline. **The Expert Panel does not provide personalized comments or feedback on individual applications.**

- The panel appreciated statements articulating why a project was important to the organization's mandate, development and capacity building needs.
- Timelines demonstrating completion of various stages of activity allowed the panel to better appreciate the project's viability.
- The panel had difficulty assessing proposals that did not adequately identify and/or describe the need or "gap" in their operations as it related to relaunch, inclusion or capacity building.
- The panel appreciated project descriptions that outlined a logical sequence of steps and it was evident that project components would lead to stated objectives, such as audience, sponsorship development or details of how a new community demographic would be engaged.
- The panel appreciated projects that sought out simple and cost-effective means to mitigate project expenses, while maximizing available resources and grant requests. For example, utilizing well-established low-cost or free board, staff and volunteer training provided by government and non-government agencies.
- The panel was better able to appreciate the viability of a project when the project description made evident the capacity of the organization to carry out project activities during and, if applicable, beyond project completion dates. Will the project enhance the organization sufficiently with staff, skills or other resources to carry out project objectives once the consultant contract has ended?
- Strong proposals included activity that led to long-term sustainability, either in the form of diversified revenue streams and/or through effectively reaching a broader community demographic.
- The panel found it helpful when a project explained in concrete terms how a "new brand and visual identity" would provide a benefit to the organization on par with the outlay of expenses and other resources. A clear cost/benefit analysis would strengthen project rationale.

Advice for Future Applications:

- Project goals should be clearly identified with well-defined outcomes that are appropriate and consistent with an organization's stated objectives.
- Applicants should provide a history of achievements to ensure panel members of the organization's ability, experience, and capacity to carry out the project.
- Projects descriptions should provide sufficient insight into how proposed activities is a departure from ongoing programming and business practices.
- Projects that identified key stakeholder(s) or partners should include letters of agreement, support and/or appropriate documentation clearly identifying all parties' roles and responsibilities.
- Website development projects are strengthened when accompanied by a marketing plan outlining how a new online presence helps realize marketing and other organizational needs and objectives.
- Projects that include increasing diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and/or combating racism should be strengthened by providing details on the process of engagement.

Budgets:

- Budgets should reflect realistic revenue and expenses. Provide quotes where and whenever possible.
- Provide a clear accounting breakdown of all expenses associated with your project.
- Demonstrate some level of contribution (or a rationale for the lack of) from the organization. Applicants that demonstrate a commitment to their projects by providing additional or internal resources are generally seen more favourably.
- Contract personnel should be clarified in the budget breakdown with appropriate budget notes.
- Larger scale projects relying on unconfirmed funding from multiple sources should provide a "Plan B" on how the project can be realized should such funding not be forthcoming.

Support Material:

- Provide support files in GATE Front Office, or emailed to the AFA as per the program guidelines on the website.
- The panel will not do additional research on an organization or project outside of the application materials. Ensure you provide all relevant material at the time of submission.