

Securing funding through grants can be a game-changer for community sports clubs by relieving the financial burden on members to be the main source of revenue.

To help your club navigate the grant-writing process and increase your chances of success, here are some useful tips:

Carefully Read the Eligibility Criteria

It may sound obvious, but before starting any application make sure you're eligible to apply and can meet all the conditions if successful. It's not only a waste of your valuable volunteer time to write an application that will be excluded from consideration, but it could cause reputational damage for your club with the grant body as an "unreliable applicant" and affect future applications.

Some common things to check are -

- Can a community sports club apply or is the grant only open to state or national sporting bodies or local Councils?
- Do you have to be incorporated? If so, can I access a copy of our Certificate of Incorporation to provide with an application?
- If this is an infrastructure grant, do I have land owner consent? Generally, the land owner is your local Council and regardless of whether you hire on a seasonal basis or have a Licence/Lease Agreement, you will likely be required to have their **written** consent for the project.
- If this is an infrastructure grant, does the project require a building or planning permit (e.g. a Development Application) or is it exempt? Make sure to confirm this with your Council. If the project does require a permit and you haven't already received this, then unfortunately you aren't "shovel-ready" and are likely to be ineligible to apply.
- Is there co-contribution funding required? If so, do we have the required funds and committee/member approval to expend them on this project?
- What is the application deadline and is it realistic for us to prepare a good grant application in time, including obtaining all required consents and accurate quotes, if applicable?
- What is the deadline for completing the project or activity if successful, and how does this align with our sports season or other relevant factors?
- What are the stated objectives for the program and does your application directly align with or achieve at least one of these objectives?

If you're in doubt about your eligibility for a grant, it's always best to reach out to the funding body directly to discuss your project and seek their advice before starting your application.

Plan Ahead, Be Shelf-Ready

Take time as a committee to define a set of short, medium and long term project goals for your club, using our Project Planning Template. This will give you several committee-approved, shelf-ready projects that you can then match to grants as they become available.

Being less reactive will ensure the club stays focussed on the projects that are strategically important rather than creating an application just to not miss an opportunity. Ultimately this may result in a lot of volunteer time being spent on a project that isn't widely supported or even important to the club as compared to the defined priority projects.

Clearly Define Your Project

Clearly articulate the problem or need your project addresses and how it aligns with the funding body's priorities. Your application should be tailored to fit the specific grant's criteria and ensure it stands out as a considered and well-matched submission.

It will also help to use clear and concise language and avoid using baseball-specific jargon that the assessor may not be familiar with.

Showcase Community Impact

Highlighting the benefits of your project for the community, such as increased participation, improved facilities, improved safety or enhanced health and well-being is the best way to present a compelling case for why your project deserves to be funded.

Provide evidence to support your claims such data, letters of support from local stakeholders or links to adopted strategies that your project would support.

Use Data

Using data is a great way to support and strengthen your application. There are many sources of data that might be relevant to support your case. Some of these are:

- **AusPlay** – [AusPlay | Clearinghouse for Sport](#)
- **Active Xchange** - [National Infrastructure Database | ActiveXchange APAC](#)
- **Profile.ID** - [profile.id](#)

Include Letters of Support

Letters of support help to demonstrate wide community acceptance of a project and can also show that more than one group may benefit from your project. People and organisations you could consider getting letters of support from include your local MP's, your local Council and other clubs or groups that also use your facility.

Make Links to Adopted Plans or Strategies

Linking your project to adopted Plans or Strategies will demonstrate a strong alignment with community and/or government priorities. This is done by demonstrating that your project will help to achieve one of the outcomes or priorities identified within one or more of these plans.

For example, your Council should have an adopted Disability Inclusion Action Plan that may have a specific action of making sports facilities more accessible. This means that a grant application to fund a level footpath from the carpark to the sports club building would align perfectly to this plan and should be referenced in your application. Any links such as this will help to reinforce that the project is of broad and important benefit to the community and would be widely supported.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of plans and strategies you can research to identify any of these links:

- **Australian Sports Commission** - strategies such as the current Play Well Strategy.
- **Baseball Australia** - 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, Participation Strategy
- **Local Council** - recreation plans or strategies, community plans or strategies, Operational Plans, Disability Inclusion Action Plans and so on.
- **State Baseball Organisation** – any relevant strategies that your own state body has published.
- **State Government** - Office of Sport strategies, Dept of Planning plans for growth corridors or regions that may be applicable to your club.

Have a Clear Budget

A detailed and realistic budget is crucial for demonstrating how the grant funds will be used. Break down the costs associated with your project, including any matching funds or in-kind contributions your club will provide. Ensure your budget aligns with the grant's funding limits and requirements and includes a contingency amount if it's an infrastructure project. Be transparent and justify each expense to show that the funding will be used efficiently and effectively.

Demonstrate that the Project is Sustainable

Most funding bodies will want to see that their investment will have lasting impact and/or is sustainable beyond the grant period. Generally, a Sustainability Plan will be a mandatory component of the application, but even where it isn't you can make your application stand out by including one.

- For an infrastructure project, sustainability might relate to managing ongoing repairs and maintenance meaning you should consider how this will be funded annually. Your local Council may be able to assist with this so reach out and ask them.
- For a participation project, strategies to ensure the program can continue running after the grant is expended might include fundraising, sponsorships or a participation fee being charged. Demonstrating that your project will continue to benefit the community in the long term will strengthen your application.

Build Relationships

Building relationships with funding bodies and decision makers will only strengthen your chances of success. When opportunities arise, make sure the right people from your committee are taking part in this networking to help build these relationships.

Many funding bodies run workshops or information sessions to walk potential applicants through the eligibility criteria and outcomes they expect to achieve through the grant program. Attending these sessions is a good way to make a connection with the funding body, show that you are a serious applicant and gain valuable insights into what the assessors are looking for in a strong application.

Proofread and Review

Before submitting your application, proofread it thoroughly to catch any errors or inconsistencies. It's also a good idea to have someone else review your application, preferably someone with experience in grant writing, for a fresh perspective. Constructive feedback can help refine your application and improve your chances of success.