

Quick Guide: Last Minute Grant Submission Checklist to Avoid Common Mistakes

Use this checklist the day before submission to catch last-minute problems. It focuses on alignment with the solicitation, internal consistency, required documents, budget accuracy, formatting, and final quality control.

1. Alignment with the Solicitation

- ☐ Proposal clearly responds to the funder's stated priorities, special focus areas, and required goals.
- ☐ Explicitly highlights how our project addresses any priority populations, geographic targets, or special emphasis areas named in the solicitation.
- ☐ Uses the funder's language and framing where appropriate rather than relying only on our internal terms for the same topic.
- ☐ Makes clear why our program is relevant to this specific opportunity, not just to the general issue area.
- ☐ Answers every required question or prompt in the order and format requested.
- ☐ If solicitation included review/scoring criteria, makes sure each one is clearly addressed.

2. Narrative Quality and Responsiveness

- ☐ Clearly explains the need, target population, program model, and expected outcomes.
- ☐ Narrative is specific and concrete, not generic or recycled from another proposal.
- ☐ Explains how the work will be carried out during the grant period and by whom.
- ☐ Reflects local context, community needs, and relevant partnerships.
- ☐ Clearly explains what is new, expanded, or strengthened with this funding.
- ☐ Removed drafting notes/comments, placeholder language, and sections that do not fully fit this application.

3. Consistency Across the Application

- ☐ Problem statement, goals, activities, timeline, staffing, outcomes, and budget all align with one another.
- ☐ Target population is described clearly and consistently throughout the narrative and attachments.
- ☐ Where relevant, the geography (target area/location) is described consistently throughout the application.
- ☐ The funding request amount matches across the narrative, forms, and budget.
- ☐ Proposal does not promise activities or outputs that are missing from the staffing plan or budget.

- ☐ Program names, partner names, acronyms, and key terms are used consistently throughout.

4. Budget and Allowable Costs

- ☐ Budget matches the narrative and work plan.
- ☐ Budget includes all required line items and all calculations are correct.
- ☐ Budget justification clearly explains each major expense and ties it to the proposed work.
- ☐ Checked whether any costs are unallowable or capped under this grant.
- ☐ If grant is reimbursement-based, confirmed we can manage the cash flow.
- ☐ If matching funds, indirect costs, or cost caps are required, we addressed them correctly.

5. Attachments and Required Documents

- ☐ All required attachments are included.
- ☐ Each attachment is the correct and final version.
- ☐ Letters of support are signed, dated, and tailored to this application.
- ☐ Résumés, bios, financials, board list, IRS letter, and other organizational documents are current.
- ☐ Attachment file names follow the funder's instructions.
- ☐ Checked whether attachments must be submitted in a specific file format.

6. Formatting and Submission Compliance

- ☐ Followed page limits, font size, margins, spacing, and other formatting rules exactly.
- ☐ Required headings and sections appear in the correct order.
- ☐ All hyperlinks work, if the funder allows them.
- ☐ Portal entry fields match the uploaded narrative and budget.
- ☐ Confirmed the final submission deadline, time zone, and method of submission.

7. Final Read-Through

- ☐ Someone outside the drafting team reviewed the application for clarity and completeness.
- ☐ Proofread for spelling, grammar, formatting issues, and incomplete sentences.
- ☐ Opening summary and closing section are clear and strong.
- ☐ Proposal sounds realistic, credible, and well organized.
- ☐ Confirmed that the final file uploaded is the correct final version.
- ☐ We are submitting early enough to catch upload or portal problems.