



Common Missteps in the Grant Application Process

Summary

Every grant application goes through a careful review process, and it's normal for some applications not to be approved. This guide highlights five common reasons applications are denied and offers helpful tips and resources to strengthen your submission and improve your chances of success.

Top Five Reasons for Denial

1. Applicant was not registered in the GATA Grantee Portal.
2. Applicant was not Pre-Qualified by the grant application deadline.
3. Grant Application package was missing required documents.
4. Grant Application contained inadequate information.
5. Grant Application was submitted after the deadline.

Ways to Strengthen Your Submission

1. GATA Grantee Portal

To apply for State of Illinois grants, applicants must register themselves and their organization in the GATA Grantee Portal. GATA stands for the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act, which adopted federal grant guidance and regulation codified at [2 CFR part 200](#). The GATA Portal is a secure on-line platform used to manage grant-related activities.

For more information on how to register:

[GATA New User Guide](#)

[Registering Your Organization in the GATA Grantee Portal](#)

2. Pre-Qualification

Applicants must obtain pre-qualified status by the grant application deadline. The State of Illinois has defined a set of requirements for all organizations seeking to receive grant funding. Pre-qualification demonstrates that an organization has met all legal requirements, obtained all the necessary registrations, and has a proven track record of compliance. Pre-qualification status must be obtained by an organization, but this status must then be maintained for the entire lifespan of the grant program, or if your organization wishes to continue to apply for and receive grant funds. Grantees can track and manage their pre-qualified status in the GATA Portal.

Pre-Qualification Requirements:

- Active and public registration in SAM.gov, including a valid UEI (Unique Entity Identifier) number
- Valid Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)
- Certificate of Good Standing from the [Illinois Secretary of State*](#)
- Not on the Federal Excluded Parties List
- Not on the Illinois Stop Payment List
- Not on the Illinois DHFS Sanctions List

For more information use this guide: [What Does Pre-qualification Mean](#)

*Certificates of Good Standing only apply to Corporations, Not-for-Profit Corporations, Limited Partnerships, Limited Liability Companies and Limited Liability Partnerships.

3. Application Documents

Grant applications often require additional documentation at the time of submission. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) will address these required documents in Part D, Section 2 Application and Submission Information: Content and Form of Application Submission. Required documents can include but are not limited to:

- Uniform Grant Application
- Uniform Budget Template
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure
- Mandatory Disclosures

It is important to note that not all grant applications will require the same set of additional documents. Grant applications must include all required documents, or the application package will not be reviewed. Applicants should be mindful and complete all required documents. It is also strongly recommended that the NOFO is used as a checklist to ensure that all required materials have been included with the submission.

4. **Detailed Application Information**

Applicants should develop a grant proposal that accurately captures the intent of their program, the potential impact of their project, and how this addresses a need within their community. Unsuccessful applicants fail to convey the importance of their project and leave reviewers with unanswered questions. Language should be clear and concise but detailed enough to provide a clear picture of the organization and the proposed project.

Use these tips to strengthen the application:

- Avoid jargon by explaining terms or acronyms associated with your project
- Assume reviewers know nothing about your organization or project
- Provide examples of similar programs or projects and their success
- Be descriptive but maintain objectivity
- Back up your proposal by citing statistics, research, facts and studies
- Proofread your submission
- Review the budget to ensure all costs are accurately calculated and provide copies of quotes or a clear explanation of how costs were calculated

5. Deadlines

Grant application deadlines are clearly stated within the NOFO in Part D.

Application and Submission Information, section 4. Here, potential applicants are given the exact date and time that the grant application window closes. This is a hard deadline. Applications are automatically timestamped upon submission.

The Euna grants management system used by ILETSB to collect applications does not permit submissions after the deadline.

Use these tips to ensure the application is submitted on time:

- Do not wait until the last minute to start completing the grant application.
- Prepare the application and supporting documentation well in advance of the application deadline.
- Obtain required signatures well in advance of the deadline.
- Do not submit applications or application materials via email, fax or US mail.
- If you have questions, contact the ILETSB Grant Team using the email or phone number provided Part F Award Administration Information, Section G