

A. APPLICATION TIPS & SUGGESTIONS

1. Be as specific as possible.

- Provide quantifiable data and information. Examples:
 - Current Need: recent, reputable data sources (e.g. Current Population Survey) – Section I, Question 2
 - Program Objectives and Outcomes: should be measurable and specific; consistent with your needs statement – Section II
 - Evaluation: how you will determine whether the program was successful? – Section II
 - Not just the method (e.g. survey), but how the results will help you determine whether you reached your program objectives.
 - Resources: [Nonprofits and Data: A How-To Series](http://cridata.org/tutorials.aspx) (cridata.org/tutorials.aspx)

2. Write in a simple, direct and persuasive style.

- Outline your programs to avoid textual “black holes.”
 - Programs sometimes have sub-components, which are simple to explain verbally, but difficult to understand in text.
 - Express your passion and excitement about your work or project. However, be concise so momentum is not lost.

3. Provide a strong and accurate budget.

- Have a non-agency member review the budget. Ask them for feedback on unclear/glaring items or noteworthy changes, which may warrant additional explanation.
 - Use the Comprehensive Agency and Program Budget pages, in the MS Word file, to provide any explanations.
 - Example: requested funding increase (total agency request), significant line item increases/decreases

4. Do your homework.

- Understand how the Town and County budget processes’ work.
 - Annual Operating Budgets
 - Manager’s Recommended Budget: Includes a Budget Message (Manager’s Comments to Boards/Council), Department Initiatives (avoid program duplication)
 - Approved Budget: Final Budget for Upcoming Fiscal Year (July 1 - June 30)
 - Resources: Local Government Budget Websites
 - [Carrboro](http://www.ci.carrboro.nc.us/ms/default.htm) (www.ci.carrboro.nc.us/ms/default.htm)
 - [Chapel Hill](http://www.ci.chapel-hill.nc.us/index.aspx?page=1321) (www.ci.chapel-hill.nc.us/index.aspx?page=1321)
 - [Orange County](http://www.orangecountync.gov/finance/budget.asp) (www.orangecountync.gov/finance/budget.asp)
 - Economic conditions and policies that could affect agency funding.
- Use this information to match your request to your potential funders’ needs and priorities.

**Tips adapted from The Maine Community Foundation’s handout “Tips for Creating a Strong Grant Application.”*

B. EVALUATIONS AND REVIEW PROCESS

Note: Each jurisdiction's governing board will make all final funding decisions, in June.

Town of Carrboro

1. Human Service Advisory Board
 - Human Service Advisory Board members and Carrboro Human Services Advisory Board members hold joint hearings with non-profit agencies to review funding applications, for program content and viability (March-May)
 - Human Service Advisory Board members meet and formulate a recommendation that goes directly to the Board of Aldermen.
2. Board of Aldermen
 - Receives recommendations from the HSAB.
 - Makes final individual funding decisions in June after the official budget is adopted.

Town of Chapel Hill

1. Human Services Advisory Board
 - Human Service Advisory Board members and Carrboro Human Services Advisory Board members hold joint hearings with non-profit agencies to review funding applications, for program content and viability (March-May)
 - Human Service Advisory Board members meet and discuss recommendation to the Town Manager and Town Council (June)
2. Town Manger
 - Receives and reviews recommendation from the Human Service Advisory Board
 - Makes final recommendation to the Town Council
3. Town Council
 - The Town Council is a nine member board the makes the final funding decision, during the Operating Budget Process (June)
 - Approved funding awards may or may not be at the level requested, in the application.

Orange County

1. Advisory Board and Committee Evaluation
 - About 10 Advisory Boards and Committees review funding applications, for program content and viability (February-April)
 - Finance and Administrative Services reviews select programs, all agencies' required Supplemental Materials and prior agency performance (if applicable)
2. County Manager Evaluation
 - Receives applications; reviews Advisory Board feedback and funding request rationales (April)
 - Funding recommendations included in the Manager's Recommended Budget (Mid-May). Recommendations may or may not funded at the level requested, in the application.
3. Board of County Commissioners
 - The BOCC is seven-member board that makes the final funding decisions, during the Operating Budget Process (late-May-June)
 - Two Budget Public Hearings (May) provide direct engagement opportunities for agency staff and supporters. The BOCC will also discuss funding during a June Budget Work Session.
 - Approved awards may or may not at the funding level requested, in the application.