

# **ACES Fundraising**

## **Grant Application Handbook**

**Version: 1.0**

**For ACES Grant Applicants**

**Last Updated:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Welcome to the ACES Grant Program**

Thank you for being a part of ACES Fundraising.

The ACES Grant Program is designed to support youth opportunities that provide enrichment, education, development, and meaningful experiences.

This handbook is designed to help applicants successfully complete their grant application and understand what happens after submission.

The goal of this handbook is to help you:

- Submit a complete application.
- Provide the information the Board needs to make a decision.
- Avoid delays caused by missing information.
- Understand how your application is reviewed.

### **Understanding the Grant Review Process**

Every grant request follows the same process.

#### **Step 1 — Applicant Submits Request**

You complete the grant application through the ACES App.

You provide:

- Applicant information.
- Youth participant information.
- Program details.

- Amount requested.
- Purpose of request.
- Supporting documentation.

## **Step 2 — ACES App Preliminary Review**

After submission, the ACES App reviews your request using established criteria.

The App checks:

- Application completeness.
- Required documentation.
- Eligibility requirements.
- Grant category.
- Previous grant history.
- Priority scoring factors.

The App creates a Priority Score to help the Board organize reviews.

The App does **not approve or deny grants**.

## **Step 3 — Board Review**

Every application is reviewed by the ACES Board of Directors.

The Board reviews:

- Your application.
- Your supporting documentation.
- Your Priority Score.
- Your stated purpose.
- Whether the request follows ACES grant guidelines.

The Board makes the final decision.

## **Before Starting Your Application**

Before opening the grant request form, gather:

- ☐ Registration information
- ☐ Invoice or quote
- ☐ Program information
- ☐ Cost breakdown
- ☐ Supporting documents
- ☐ Any required financial information

Having everything ready will make your application process faster.

## **Completing Your Application**

### **Applicant Information**

Make sure all information is accurate.

Verify:

- Name.
- Contact information.
- Family information.
- Participant information.

Incorrect information may delay review.

## **Writing a Strong Grant Request Explanation**

The grant request explanation is one of the most important parts of your application. It allows the ACES Board to understand your request, the impact of the opportunity, and why assistance is being requested.

The strongest applications provide enough detail for someone who does not personally know your family or situation to understand:

- What opportunity is being requested.
- Why this opportunity is important.
- How it benefits the youth participant.
- What costs are involved.
- Why assistance is needed.

A one-sentence response usually does not provide enough information for the Board to fully understand your request.

A detailed response helps the Board make a fair and informed decision.

## **Examples of Grant Request Explanations**

### **Example 1 — Limited Information**

#### **Response:**

"I need help paying for dance."

This response tells the Board what activity is involved but does not explain:

- What program or event is involved.
- What costs are needed.
- Why the opportunity matters.
- How assistance will help.

Additional information would be needed before review.

### **Example 2 — Good Information**

#### **Response:**

"My daughter has been selected to participate in a regional dance competition. The registration fee and required costume expenses total \$450. This opportunity will allow

her to continue developing her dance skills and participate with other dancers from across the region. Financial assistance would help our family manage the cost of this opportunity."

This response provides:

- ✓ Activity information
- ✓ Cost information
- ✓ Youth benefit
- ✓ Reason assistance is requested

### **Example 3 — Strong Detailed Response**

#### **Response:**

"My daughter has been invited to participate in the Midwest Regional Dance Competition after completing her competitive dance season. Participation requires a registration fee of \$300, a required costume costing \$125, and additional competition expenses totaling \$75. This experience provides her with the opportunity to develop confidence, discipline, teamwork, and performance skills while learning from dancers and instructors outside of her regular program. Our family values this opportunity but the combined costs create a financial challenge this year. Assistance from ACES would allow her to participate in an experience that supports both her personal growth and continued development in dance."

This response provides the Board with:

- ✓ Specific opportunity
- ✓ Detailed expenses
- ✓ Educational/development benefit
- ✓ Financial need explanation
- ✓ Clear connection to ACES mission

### **Recommended Response Length**

There is no required word count. Applicants should provide enough information for the Board to understand the request.

A general guideline:

### **One Sentence**

Usually not enough information.

### **One Paragraph**

Often appropriate for simple requests.

### **Two to Three Paragraphs**

Recommended for larger requests, competitions, travel, specialized programs, or situations involving financial need.

## **Remember**

The Board reviewing your application may not know your situation personally.

Your explanation should tell your story clearly and provide the information needed to make a fair decision.

A complete explanation does not guarantee approval, but it helps ensure your request receives a complete and accurate review.

## **Common Application Mistakes That Cause Delays**

Applications are often delayed because:

- Documents are missing.
- Costs do not match submitted documents.
- The purpose statement is too short.
- Required questions are skipped.

- Uploaded files cannot be read.
- The requested expense is unclear.

## Uploading Supporting Documents

### Required Upload Format

Whenever possible, all supporting documents should be combined into **one single PDF file** before uploading.

A single PDF helps:

- Keep documents organized.
- Prevent missing pages.
- Make Board review easier.
- Reduce processing delays.

### Recommended PDF Order

Organize your PDF in this order:

#### Page 1 — Optional Cover Page

Include:

- Applicant name.
- Participant name.
- Grant request purpose.

#### Page 2 — Registration or Acceptance Information

Examples:

- Event registration.
- Program acceptance.
- Team confirmation.

- Class enrollment.

### **Page 3 — Invoice or Quote**

Include:

- Vendor name.
- Description.
- Cost.
- Date.

### **Page 4 and Beyond — Additional Supporting Information**

Examples:

- Required equipment lists.
- Program schedules.
- Additional documentation.
- Financial need information if requested.

## **How to Create One PDF File**

### **Option 1 — Smartphone Scan**

Most phones can create a PDF.

#### **iPhone**

1. Open Notes.
2. Create a new note.
3. Select the camera option.
4. Choose "Scan Documents."
5. Scan each page.
6. Save as PDF.

## **Android**

1. Open Google Drive.
2. Select the "+" button.
3. Choose "Scan."
4. Scan each page.
5. Save the PDF.

## **Free PDF Tools**

Common free options include:

### **Adobe Scan**

Allows you to:

- Scan documents.
- Combine pages.
- Create PDFs.

### **Microsoft Lens**

Allows you to:

- Scan multiple pages.
- Improve readability.
- Save as one PDF.

## **Free Online PDF Services**

Examples:

- PDF24 Tools
- iLovePDF

- Smallpdf

These services allow you to combine multiple PDF files into one document.

Avoid uploading confidential information from public computers.

## **PDF Upload Checklist**

Before submitting:

- ☐ The PDF opens correctly.
- ☐ Every page is readable.
- ☐ Pages are in the correct order.
- ☐ All required documents are included.
- ☐ Costs match the application.
- ☐ The file is uploaded successfully.

## **Understanding Application Status**

### **Submitted**

Your application has been received.

No action is required.

### **Preliminary Review Complete**

The ACES App has reviewed your application and calculated your Priority Score.

Your application is waiting for Board review.

### **Needs More Information**

The Board or administrator needs additional information.

Examples:

- Missing invoice.

- Missing quote.
- Unclear expense.
- Additional explanation needed.

You will receive instructions on what to provide.

### **Board Review**

Your application is being reviewed by the ACES Board.

### **Approved**

Your request has been approved.

You will receive additional instructions regarding funding.

### **Approved with Conditions**

Your request has been approved, but additional requirements must be completed before funds are released.

### **Waitlisted**

Your request qualifies, but funds are not currently available.

### **Declined**

Your request does not meet grant requirements.

You will receive an explanation.

## **How to Avoid Losing Priority Points**

You can help your application receive the strongest possible review by:

- ✓ Submitting complete information.
- ✓ Uploading all required documents.

- ✓ Explaining the benefit clearly.
- ✓ Providing accurate costs.
- ✓ Applying before deadlines.
- ✓ Responding quickly to requests for additional information.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Can I submit more than one grant request?**

Yes, as long as requests follow ACES grant policies.

### **Can I update my application after submitting?**

If additional information is needed, the application may be returned for updates.

### **Does a high score guarantee approval?**

No.

The score helps prioritize Board review. The Board makes the final decision.

### **Can the Board ask for additional information?**

Yes.

The Board may request clarification or additional documentation before making a decision.

### **What happens if my request is denied?**

You will receive a notification explaining the decision and any available appeal options.

## **Applicant Responsibility**

By submitting a grant request, applicants confirm that:

- Information provided is accurate.

- Documents are authentic.
- Grant funds will be used only for approved purposes.
- Additional documentation may be requested.

Providing complete and accurate information helps ACES distribute funds fairly to all applicants.

## **Final Application Checklist**

Before selecting Submit:

- ☐ My information is accurate.
- ☐ My request clearly explains the opportunity.
- ☐ My costs are accurate.
- ☐ My documents are included.
- ☐ My PDF upload is complete.
- ☐ My request aligns with ACES goals.
- ☐ I have reviewed everything before submission.

Thank you for being part of ACES Fundraising and for helping us support youth opportunities through responsible and transparent grant management.