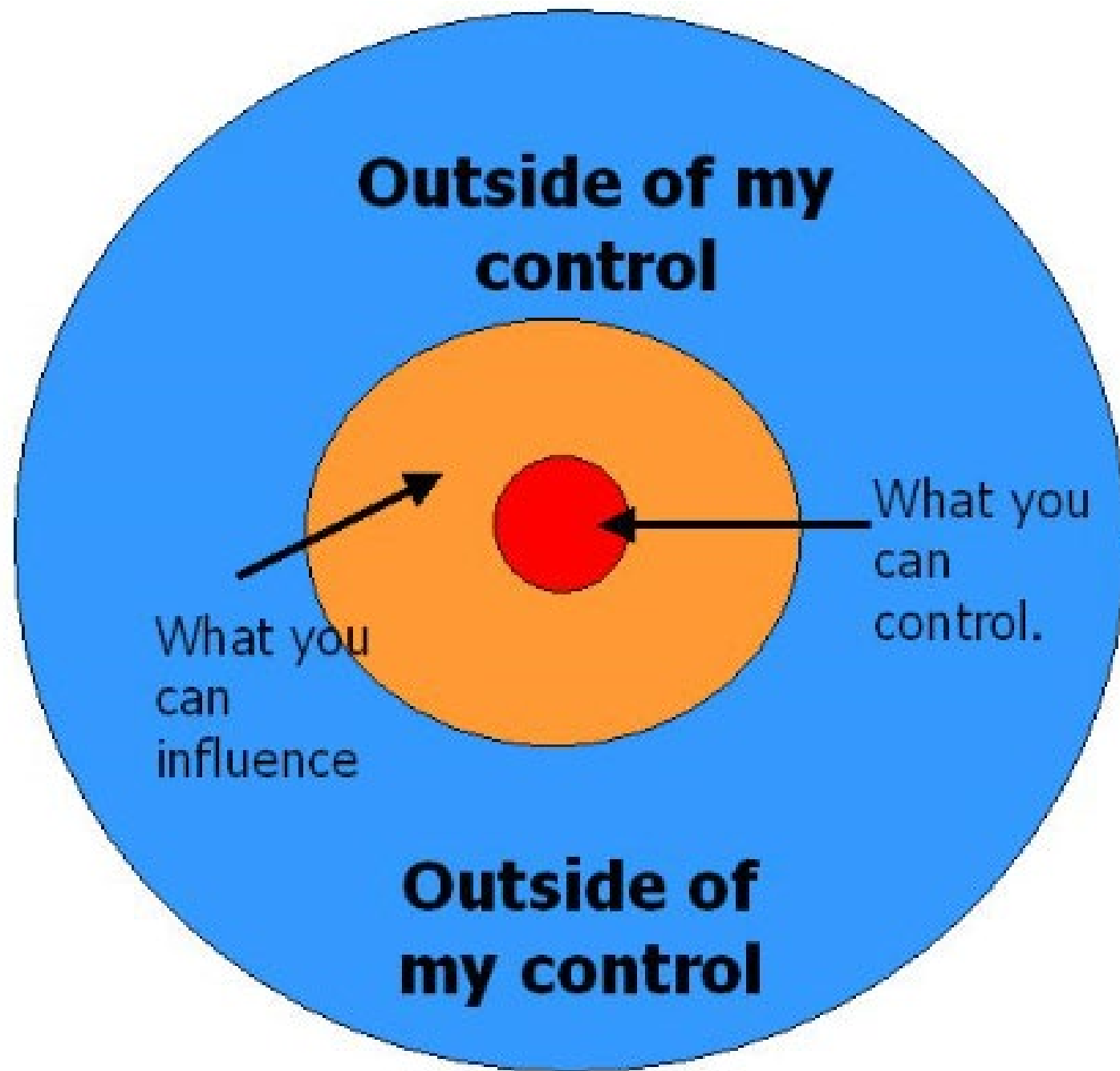


Grant Writing: Tips and Tricks for Putting Together an Effective Application

Julie Poirier Mensinga, OMAFA
March 22, 2025





BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

1. Read The Guidelines – Always read the program guidelines and application form to determine that your project is eligible and a strong fit for the program's objectives.

Know what costs are eligible or not.

Make sure you know the intake dates and what you need to submit (eg quotes).



BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

2. Contact Your Grants Officer – Discuss your application with the grant officer before applying. Write down all the questions you have and think through your project idea in preparation.



BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

3. Give Yourself Adequate Time – Successful grant writing is not done at the last minute. Research your project, develop your idea, get your quotes, and write a draft well in advance of the application deadline.



Return on Time Invested:
\$30,000 piece of equipment
50% funding (\$15,000 grant)
20 hours of time
= \$750/hour



BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

4. Write Clearly and Directly – Answer the questions as clearly as possible, outlining the steps that will be taken, and **using plain language**.



BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

5. Appeal to the main goals of the funding program

The main goals of economic development programs:

- Attract Investment
- Create and Retain Jobs
- Business Development
- Business Expansion
- Business Innovation
- Enhance Productivity
- Grow Exports
- Strengthen Regional Economies
- Strengthen Communities

EXAMPLE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

COMPANY INFORMATION:

Company Name: Boreal Peanut Butter

Applicants: Jane and John Doe

Address: 123 Peanut Butter Road, Sudbury, Ontario

Type of Legal Entity: Corporation

APPYING FOR: Equipment

COST SHARE: 50%

TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$100,000

APPLYING FOR: \$50,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

“At Boreal Peanut Butter we grow and process our own peanuts and sell them to the local market. We're applying for new processing and packaging equipment for our company so we can process peanut butter more quickly.”

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Provide context
 - What's your business and who are you?
 - Where is your business?
 - What size is your business (eg acres, herd size, employees)?
 - What do you produce?
 - How much do you produce?
 - What's your experience?

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- What's the purpose of your project?
 - Why are you purchasing new equipment, building, etc?
 - What issues are you trying to address or opportunities are you trying to capture?
- What are you applying for specifically?
 - What does the equipment do?
 - Briefly, how does this benefit your business? Or, what are you trying to achieve?

PROJECT DESCRIPTION - CONTEXT

“Boreal Peanut Butter was founded in 1970 and is located east of Sudbury. For nearly 50 years, our business has been growing high quality peanuts. When we first started our business, we farmed 7 acres of peanuts. In the early days, we sold 3 varieties of roasted peanut snacks to the Sudbury area through farmers’ markets and also to independent grocery stores. Over the years our business has grown several times over. Today, we farm 70 acres of peanuts, employ 5 people, and have expanded into locally processed peanut butter which we direct market and also wholesale to over 16 grocery stores in the Greater Sudbury Area.”

PROJECT DESCRIPTION – PROJECT PURPOSE

“Five years ago we decided to begin processing peanut butter. While peanut butter has slightly lower margins than roasted nuts, there is considerably higher demand for it and therefore greater opportunity for our business. We estimate that total market demand for peanut butter is 1,000,000g within the Greater Sudbury Area. We are currently supplying only 1% of that market. Since we began processing peanut butter in 2020, demand has soared. One of the key issues facing our business is that our processing equipment is not designed to roast, puree, or can large volumes. This means that processing nut butter is very labour intensive. Nuts have to be roasted and crushed in small batches. We also have to manually fill the jars of peanut butter and individually label each jar.”

PROJECT DESCRIPTION – PROJECT PURPOSE

“We are applying for four pieces of equipment that would drastically improve our efficiency and ultimately the ability of our business to grow and succeed. The *Max Roaster* is (...) that would allow us to increase the amount of peanuts roaster per hour. The *Max Crusher* is (...) (and benefit). The *Canner 200X* is (...) (and benefit). The *Max Labeler* is (...) (and benefit). By purchasing these four pieces of equipment, we will be able to continue growing our business and will be at a point where we can begin supplying neighbouring cities with our nut butter, such as North Bay.”

PROJECT PURPOSE / BENEFITS / OUTCOMES

- Describe how the project will:
 - Help the business grow and transition to new markets or lines of business
 - Enhance productivity and increase efficiency (please quantify)
 - Demonstrate innovation (introduction of new processes, new products, etc.)
 - Create and retain jobs
 - Contribute to the regional economy (ie other businesses)

PROJECT PURPOSE / BENEFITS / OUTCOMES

- How much more nut butter will you be able to process?
- Will it address the issue you laid out as having?
- Will your labour costs go down and your margins go up?
- Will you reach new markets? Increase sales?
- Will you hire new staff?
- Will you increase the amount of acres in production?
- Will it address gaps in the market?
- Will you have to purchase from other producers? Will it lead to new products or partnerships? (regional economic impact)

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION / KEY ACTIVITIES

“We will purchase a *Canner 200X*.”

- What’s involved in completing the project?
 - What are the activities?
 - What are the timelines?
 - Who is leading the project and what is their experience? (may be a separate project management question)
 - Are there any skills or services you have to hire?

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION / KEY ACTIVITIES

“There are four pieces of equipment we need to purchase to complete this project. The *Max Roaster, Crusher* and *Labeler* will be purchased in April 2018 from a European distributor. The equipment will arrive mid-May and will be installed by end of May. The *Canner 200X* will also be purchased in April 2018 and will arrive in May. All three pieces of *Max* equipment will be installed by John Doe, who has owned the business for the past 20 years and has recently trained as an equipment installer with *Max Enterprises*. The canner will be installed by a local dealer in early June. We anticipate that we should be fully switched over to our new processing equipment by end of June.”

RISK ANALYSIS

- What are the risk points for the project?
- How are you going to control for those risk points?
- What is the risk for your business if you don't undertake this project?

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT

- Make sure:
 - All the questions are answered (clearly, spell check)
 - Quotes and any supporting documentation is included (explain what you're including and where to find it)
 - Project budget is complete
 - Your numbers add up
 - Your answers are consistent

Like Most Things, Grant Writing Takes Practice



THANK YOU!

JULIE POIRIER MENSINGA

ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS ADVISOR

ONTARIO MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE FOOD AND AGRIBUSINESS

PHONE: (705) 471-3389

EMAIL: JULIE.POIRIERMENSINGA@ONTARIO.CA