Guidelines for Grant Applicants

We are conscious that many worthy applications to the Trust come from individuals who are inexperienced at preparing applications for financial grants. We do not wish to unfairly prejudice applicants just because they lack such experience. At the same time our need to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to our care requires us, as Trustees, to be satisfied that grants are going to worthy projects.

These notes are prepared as a guideline for applicants and we encourage all applicants to review their applications in the light of these observations. Our intention is not to demand uniformity in applications to the Trust (applications may be for projects of vastly different nature and scope) but to seek a certain consistency of quality.

The process generally followed by the Reid Trust is that applications received are circulated to all of the Trustees. Therefore, when we meet we come prepared to share our individual responses to each of these applications. However, Trust meetings must operate under certain constraints of time. At each meeting of the Trust we receive reports on all grants presently in progress and then we discuss and make decisions about all of the new applications that are before us. If the Trustees are able to navigate through a complex and even detailed application easily it definitely creates a favourable impression.

Your objective in preparing a grant application to the Reid Trust ought to be twofold:
a) You need to share your vision and plan in a clear, comprehensive and compelling manner, and
b) you need to present your material in a form and style that is facilitating rather than frustrating.

Some of these suggestions may seem rather elementary but our experience suggests that they are not unnecessary.

Headings:

First, there is the simple matter of headings. The top of the first page of your application should clearly indicate the name of the applicant and the date that the application was submitted. If you are using a word processing program to prepare your application we would suggest that you use the "header" feature of the program to generate some basic information which would then appear on the top of each page of your submission (as it does on this document). A suggested format for that header would resemble this illustration;

Applicant's Name   Date   Page # of #

(Such a format allows the reader to quickly distinguish your application from all other submissions, makes it possible to refer to page references in discussion, and confirms that the copy of the application is complete.)

Introduction:

If your application is the resubmission of a previously submitted application it is helpful if you identify the history of the application at the outset.

Identify who you are. This is particularly important for individual applicants and institutions and organizations that may not be nationally recognized. The identifying information in the body of the report should be concise. (Applicants may want to include a more detailed curriculum vitae or a statement of the organization's aims and objectives as an appendix to their application.)

Your Vision:

What is your vision? What is your dream? What do you hope to accomplish? Who do you hope will benefit or be enriched as a consequence?

Visions are often very personal. It is important that you describe your vision with sufficient clarity that someone who is unfamiliar with it is made aware of both your objectives and your passion to accomplish them.

Your Plan:

An application to the Trust must be based on more than just a vision or a noble objective. Even a great vision is undeserving of a grant from the Trust unless there is a carefully designed plan as to how you hope to achieve the objectives. Your application to the Trust must demonstrate that you have a coherent plan to accomplish your vision.

The description of your project ought to be both comprehensive and yet concise. It ought to be comprehensive in the sense that it includes all significant steps in the plan. It ought to be concise in that it should be free from extraneous detail. (If there are features of the plan that need to be described in substantial detail it may be the preferred choice to include those details in an appendix to the application and simply make a reference to that appended material in the body of the application.)

Your Budget:

We understand that preparing a budget for a project requires making some approximations. However, part of making a plan involves doing sufficient basic research to allow you to know approximately what the various steps in the plan will cost. In preparing a budget to accompany your application itemize the costs according to the anticipated steps in the plan with sufficient detail for the Trust to understand what the amounts are intended to cover.

Also, if the project is expected to take place over a significant period of time then it would be helpful for the Trust to be given some sort of timeline for the various stages.

Sometimes the Trust approves a grant with the condition that funding for subsequent stages of the project will only be released upon the receipt of assurances that earlier objectives in the plan have been achieved. If you think that such conditions might be applied to your request you may want to suggest how the Trust might choose to stage in the funding that it might be providing.

Your Funding:

An adequate application not only specifies the costs related to a project but identifies the various funding resources that are already in place or that are being sought from other sources.

The Trust is generally reluctant simply to make an undesignated contribution to a large global budget. Our choice would normally be to isolate some portion of the plan that we could agree to fully or partially fund and concerning which we could therefore expect accountability.

Therefore, if you anticipate that the Trust may be one of several funding sources for your project it would be helpful if you would isolate one or more stages of the project that you are asking the Trust to fund and breakdown the financial aspects of those stages in particular detail.

Do you have a contingency plan? If you are unable to secure sufficient funding for all of your plan to be achieved is there some lesser objective that would still be worth accomplishing?

We realize that co-coordinating funding from a variety of sources can be complex. Consequently, the Trust has on occasion approved funding for a project with the provision that the amount granted would remain available for a designated period of time and would be released upon the Trust receiving assurances that sufficient

additional funding had been secured from other sources for the whole project to proceed.

Accountability:

We expect applicants to the Trust not only to have a vision but, if possible, to define some quantifiable objectives. How do you propose to gauge the success of the project when it is completed? Even projects of a spiritual nature can usually have some measurable results.

The Trust generally requires applicants to provide some final report to the Trust. In addition to a financial accounting this final report needs to attempt honestly to measure what has been achieved. Stewardship is not simply related to finances.

Acknowledgement of the Trust's funding:

With the exception of individuals receiving academic scholarships we generally ask grant recipients to make some public acknowledgement of the Reid Trust's support. In making an application to the Trust you may wish to consider acknowledging if and how that recognition may apply to your proposal. Such an acknowledgement helps the Trust to fulfill a two-fold objective. It invites those who are impacted by the project to acknowledge this ongoing contribution that Priscilla and Stanford Reid are still making to theological education in Canada. Such acknowledgement may also alert other prospective applicants to the existence of the Trust and thus open the way for the Trust's contribution to be even greater.

Contact Information:

Your application to the Trust should include detailed contact information. This should include (as applicable) the applicants name, address, telephone number, Fax number, and E-mail address. It may also include the URL for a web site.

In the case of an application from an individual on their own behalf the application should include personal references with adequate current contact information for those individuals.

In the case of an application from an institution or organization the application should clearly identify the name and title/office of the applicant, the organizational endorsement for the application, and the names and contact information for other key administrative personnel.

The Trust makes extensive use of E-mail communication. This is especially useful when it is necessary to secure clarifying or supportive information concerning an application prior to a Trust meeting. It is also a useful channel for working out the specific details of a "Covenant Agreement" once a grant has been approved.

Concluding Comments:

It is to the applicant's advantage to make sure that the content of the application is as clear and self explanatory as possible.

It is a useful device to divide the application into sections with clearly distinguished topical headings.

Key concepts or objectives may be printed in bold type for emphasis.

If the application is of necessity lengthy then it may be a wise choice to insert into the introduction to the application a simple "Table of Contents" that identifies the major headings within the application and the page numbers on which each commences along with a similar list of appended supporting documents or detailed information.

Before submitting your application try to read it as through the eyes of someone who is unfamiliar with the project or concept being proposed. Does the application anticipate and address the questions that someone hearing about this project for the first time would be likely to ask? Does the application give a reader sufficient information upon which to decide to commit what may be a substantial sum of money to the project?

No application will receive a favourable response from the Trust simply because it is well written. However, even a deserving proposal may be passed over for consideration if it is not effectively and coherently presented.

A carefully presented application is the first step in persuading the Trust that the applicant has a well thought out plan and the capability to carry it to completion.