



Guide to Common Desk Rejection Errors

Thank you for your interest in APF funding opportunities and for investing your time and energy in the application process. We truly appreciate your passion and effort.

While we're unable to provide individual feedback, we've compiled a list of common mistakes made by applicants that often result in applications not being selected for funding.

Incorrect Budget

Be SURE your total budget matches the award amount.

Please carefully review all budget items and totals. Make sure the total amount matches what you are requesting in the application form. If you are using different currencies, please convert them to U.S. dollars and ensure that the amount in U.S. dollars matches the budget amount.

Use of AI Tools

It's okay to use AI tools to help draft or organize your ideas! However, it's essential that the final content genuinely reflects your own voice, ideas, and experience.

We've seen some submissions that appear to be copied and pasted directly, including the prompts or queries used. Please ensure there are no traces indicating that AI generated the content for you. Your work should feel personal, thoughtful, and authentic.

View APF's full AI policy [here](#) in section 6.2.6.

Meeting Eligibility

Please ensure that both you and your letter writers meet all eligibility criteria before submitting your application.

Budget Impact

We want to ensure that the funding opportunity meaningfully contributes to the success and impact of your project. The majority of the funding should be allocated directly toward the implementation and execution of the project itself. Please review the

questions related to APF's policy on institutional indirect/administrative/overhead costs and/or fees and examples of direct costs via APF's [Program FAQs](#) webpage.

Updated Supporting Materials

When submitting supporting materials, please ensure that they are up-to-date and relevant to your application.

Quality of Supporting Materials

We understand that supporting materials may come in various formats, such as screenshots. However, please ensure that all important information is clearly visible—especially your name and any details relevant to your application.

Aligned with Program Goal and Purpose

One of the most common reasons applications are not selected is a lack of clear alignment with the program's goal or purpose. Make sure your project directly supports the goals outlined in the program description. Clearly explain how your work fits the purpose of the program and how it contributes to the intended impact. Proposals that are only loosely related or fail to convincingly demonstrate this alignment are less likely to move forward.

International Materials

If you are submitting materials from outside the U.S., please convert them to U.S. standards whenever possible. This includes translating transcripts into English and converting grading systems to a 4.0 scale or providing a clear explanation of the grading equivalency. This helps reviewers better understand and evaluate your application.

CV and Cover letter are different

If we request a CV (Curriculum Vitae) please make sure you submit the correct document.

Last but not least, you may not have made any of these mistakes! Your application could be one of the strongest we received. However, the opportunities are limited, and in some cases, another submission may have simply aligned more closely with the program's goals or demonstrated a slightly stronger fit.

Please know that this is not a reflection of your worth or potential. We strongly encourage you to keep trying; refining your ideas, and applying again in the future. Your work is valuable, and we truly appreciate your dedication and effort!