

COMMON MISTAKES

Real corrections from real IMAG applications, so you can catch them before we do.



The patterns behind almost every returned application.

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Every mistake on this page is one we've actually sent back, some more than once, on the same application. Fix these three first: together they account for the vast majority of corrections we ask for.

1 LEGAL NAME DOESN'T MATCH

By far the #1 reason applications bounce back

THE MISTAKE

Your legal name has to match your W-9 and DFI registration **exactly**, punctuation included, in **two** separate places: Applicant Information *and* the Attestation section at the end. Trade names, missing commas, and blank fields are the most common culprits. NOTE: every time you edit and resubmit, the certification checkbox un-checks itself.

THE FIX

Copy your legal name straight from your W-9 or DFI record into **both** fields, character for character. Before you resubmit, re-check **every** certification and attestation box. Don't assume they carried over.

2 THE BUDGET DOESN'T BALANCE

Second most common return reason

THE MISTAKE

Match isn't exactly 30% of the grant, line items aren't rounded, or match funds are sitting somewhere they can't be spent, like travel/lodging match on a project with no travel. Even a few dollars off, or one line in the wrong category, sends the whole application back. Expenses must also stay within your specified project contract to be reimbursable; program expenses as a whole are not eligible.

THE FIX

Round every line to the nearest \$100. Confirm match = **exactly** 30% of your grant request. Only budget travel/lodging match if you're actually traveling for this specific project. Otherwise, move it to an eligible line.

3 NARRATIVE & BUDGET DON'T MATCH

The most common narrative return

THE MISTAKE

Reviewers can only evaluate what's written down. A budget line with no matching explanation in Activities Supported, or a country mentioned in the narrative but missing from Countries Targeted, reads as inconsistent, even when the actual plan is solid.

THE FIX

Walk through your budget line by line inside the narrative: what it is, where, when, how it grows sales, and why this spend is critical for your plans. Every market you mention anywhere must also appear in Countries Targeted.

ALSO WATCH FOR

Smaller mistakes, but each one is a guaranteed round trip back to you.

The details that trip up otherwise strong applications.

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✗ Ownership left incomplete

Owner list only adds up to 40%? Add the rest. Every owner of 20%+ needs their **full legal name, including full middle name**, not just an initial. No middle name? Write N/A rather than leaving it blank.

✗ Legal proceedings box mischecked

If none apply, leave it **unchecked**. If it's checked, you must add a written explanation. Don't leave it checked by accident.

✗ Ineligible costs included

Product trials, sample creation, internal awards programs, unrelated education conferences, and speaker travel for internal operations are **never** reimbursable. Remove them before you submit.

✗ Chartering document missing

Articles of Incorporation (or equivalent) is sometimes just... not attached. Double-check it uploaded before you submit.

✗ Same trade show, no explanation

Re-attending a show from a past IMAG? Say what's different this time: new booth location, new markets, new materials. IMAG funds new or different activities each year.

✗ Financials don't reconcile

Equity must equal assets minus liabilities. Include export sales projections for **future** years too, not just the current one, and explain any decline in the notes.

✗ Expenses paid too early

Nothing, not even a deposit, can be paid or invoiced before your official project start date. "Already secured" isn't allowed if it happened early.

✗ Small typos that stop everything

Fiscal Year End Date must be a real end-of-month date (not a typo like "12/12"). NAICS code must be a code that actually exists; check it against WEDC's tool.

✗ Certification boxes left unchecked

Editing your application unchecks these automatically. Recheck **all** certification and attestation boxes every time you resubmit.

✗ Past lapsed funds unexplained

Had unused or lapsed funds on a prior IMAG? Add a short summary of what happened; reviewers need the context before approving another award.

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT

Read your application once, start to finish, as if you were the reviewer. Does every dollar in the budget show up in the narrative? Does every legal name match, exactly, everywhere it appears? That single pass catches most of what's on this page.

Questions? We're happy to help.

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**LOOK
FORWARD »**