

Section 9
Funding and Investment

9.1 Tips and Techniques when completing funding applications

1. Before identifying potential sources and methods of fundraising, review the expenditure you have identified and consider:
 - could it be met in some other way?
 - could it be saved by doing something in a different way?
 - could you get the work done free?
2. Next consider the sources that may be relevant for your project. These might include:
 - Statutory Bodies
 - Trusts/Foundation
 - Corporate
 - Individuals
3. Then consider in what form the financial support might be made available. What would work for your project? Some approaches include:
 - Grant (Criteria/timescales)
 - Loan
 - Service Level Agreement
 - Contract
 - Sale of goods/services
 - Sponsorship

There is no right or wrong way to make a grant application, but it is possible to increase your chances of successfully securing a grant by taking the following aspects into account:

1. Demonstrate a need for your project.
2. Show that your project is well planned.
3. Accurately cost your project.
4. Provide evidence of good management.
5. Illustrate how the project will make a difference.

Demonstrate a need for your project

In a lot of cases, applications are rejected because funders do not believe that there is a need for the project, or because they are not persuaded that your idea will solve a particular problem or is what people want. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What needs do your target group have?
- How do you know that they have such needs?
- Why is it important that these needs are met?
- How will your proposed project fulfil those needs?

'Need' can cover a number of aspects such as unemployment levels, a lack of educational achievement, crime levels etc. To demonstrate the extent of your target group's 'need', you must have facts and figures to support your case. You could use statistics from a recognised source or conduct your own survey/ questionnaire asking people about their views - this can be particularly useful if you are seeking funding for

a smaller project. If you are looking for finance for a large project, you may need to carry out a fully costed appraisal and show that you have researched the various ways you can meet the need, indicating which option you have chosen and why.

It is important, however, not to rely solely on statistics to paint a picture of your project. Bring

in the human aspect wherever possible to communicate to the awarding body what the situation is like for your target group, such as including quotes from clients. Overall, make sure it is clear to the funder that you have done your homework and researched your project!

Show that your project is well planned

Funders will always want to see evidence that your project is well planned. To do this, you must specify the main aspects that will help to achieve your aims and make your project possible. You must tell the sponsor:

- what it is you are going to do;
- what difference your project will make in terms of benefits to your target group;
- when and where your project is going to happen;
- how you are going to carry out your project and what you need to do it (i.e. equipment, premises, staff);
- who will be responsible for conducting the project; and
- how you are going to measure whether your project has achieved its aims and made a difference.

From the funder's point of view, it is essential that applicants show that they are serious and will be able to successfully deliver projects, no matter how good a proposal it appears to be on paper.

Most sponsoring bodies will not give out grants simply for a good cause. They will want evidence of relevant research and forward planning in accordance with the amount of money being requested and the type of work. For example, a group looking for money to buy a few pieces of equipment may only need to supply a couple of quotes, while an organisation wanting new premises or additional staff may need to provide cash-flow projections, a business plan, job descriptions, planning consents etc. Essentially, the more money you want and the more risky your activity, the more work, planning and evidence you will need!

3. Accurately cost your project

Once you have devised your project plan you will need to calculate how much money you require to enable you to carry it out, justifying the amount you have requested. It may be that you draw up a budget for your organisation's work as a whole, a separate budget for a particular activity, or a single figure for a one-off item of equipment. Whatever you require funding for, when drawing up a budget you should include all aspects of your project - even the hidden costs like salaries/cost of the staff involved in the administration of your project, premises and related expenditure (rates/rent/fuel), communications (telephone/postage), and any travel or training. Make sure that you do not guess what the costs may be, but get estimates or quotes to illustrate how you have worked the costs out. You could even review

what you have spent in previous years or look at the accounts of other organisations that have carried out similar activities in the past to give you an idea of the value.

Always remember - don't over or under-estimate your project costs. Be as realistic as possible!

And, at the same time as telling the funder how much you need and what the funding will be used for, make sure that you tell them over what period of time the project is likely to run

Provide evidence of good management

Funding bodies will always want to see evidence of good management and that your organisation is capable of delivering the project. It is extremely important that you have efficient procedures for the handling of finances within your organisation (i.e. a good bookkeeping system and properly prepared accounts) and that you can provide evidence that you will be able to account for the money that is given to you.

In addition, funders will also look at the policies that an organisation has in place, including Health and Safety, employment, child protection and equal opportunities.

Illustrate how the project will make a difference.

With any grant application, funders will always want to know that the grant they have provided is making a long-term difference to the lives of the people benefiting from the activity. They need to be sure that the money they are giving is being spent wisely. As such, the awarding body is interested in the positive outcomes derived from the assistance they are offering, and its significance to the beneficiaries rather than to the applying organisation. The grant schemes prevalent in today's funding world strongly highlight this point. For example, funding for a new sports centre will not be offered simply to provide better facilities for its members; it must lead to further benefits for the community as a whole, such as opening up facilities to the general public and integrating the disadvantaged into the community. It is essential that you emphasise you are working 'with' the community and that their views and needs are taken into account within your project plans.

When approaching the subject of how your project will make a difference within your application, think laterally. Take a step back from what your project is actually doing and look at what impact it might have on the community, environment and/or local economy as a whole.

This way you are more likely to meet the aims and objectives of the funder, and thus increase your chances of securing the funding you desire. Once you have been awarded a grant, a large number of funding bodies will wish to see information illustrating how you are achieving your aims and how your project is progressing.

Most funders will expect to see project monitoring and a number of measurable outputs to enable them to assess how successful their investment has been, and to judge whether a group/project is really making a difference. Again, monitoring is very time-consuming but very important. It may require a worker to keep a record of what has been achieved against what was planned, such as a record of how many people attended an event, how many phone calls were received, how many jobs were created etc. Monitoring can even include methods such as interviews, questionnaires or surveys to determine how people or their views have changed since the implementation of your project.

You must think about monitoring at the planning stages of your project and try not to leave it until you get your grant. Set specific targets that you want to measure or milestones that you want to reach, and make a decision about how you are going to measure whether you have achieved them. This will also show funders that you really do care about your project and the difference it will make.

Presentation

As well as the content of your application, the layout and presentation is vital. Make the structure stand out by using clearly defined titles and subtitles, with consistent use of capital letters, bold and underlined text etc, and select a font that is easy to read and makes the best use of space. This way the reader can follow where they are in an application immediately from the appearance on the page. Also, always be aware that information can often be presented in a more helpful and easy to understand manner in tables, graphics or figures rather than in text.

If an application form specifies how you must complete it, make sure you double check that you have obeyed all rules and instructions with regard to format, headings, enclosures, signatures etc, as you will get a lot of credit for simply following instructions! In addition, try to pay attention to detail. Get the name of the individual and the funding body right (including the spelling) by ringing to enquire who you should address your application to. By avoiding statements like 'To whom it may concern' or 'Dear sir/madam', you are letting the funder know that you have made the effort to find out about them.

9.2 Developing a fundraising strategy

Once you have your written proposal and a budget, you need to plan how you will actually raise the money - this is your 'fundraising strategy'.

There are lots of different funding sources and many ways of raising money. Try to limit yourselves to things you can do well rather than spreading your efforts too widely.

You need to consider:

- Which funders are most likely to be interested in your work?
- What is the timeframe for the project? When do you need to have raised the money?
- Does the funder have a deadline for applications?
- Have you got people in your group with the skills, contacts, and time to do the work? Do you need some training?
- Have other groups done similar work? If so, find out how they raised their money
- Could you raise all or some of the money yourselves?
- Is there anyone in your area who could help you i.e. Support Network etc?

A-Z of Fundraising Ideas

A

Aerobic Events
Antiques Show
Assault Course
Athletic Races
Auctions

B

Baby Picture Quiz
Baby Show
Badminton Competition
Ball (Fancy Dress; Halloween)
Balloon Race
Barn Dance
BBQ
Beach Party
Bed Push
Beer Festival
Bike Race
Bingo
Book Sale
Bowling Competition
Bridge Evening
Bring and Buy Sale
Busking

C

Cake day (bake a cake)
Calendar (design and sell your own)
Car Boot Sale
Car Wash
Carol Concert

Charity T-shirt Day (perhaps designed by a celebrity?)
Cheese and Wine Evening
Children's Party
Christmas Card Sales
Coffee Morning
Cooking Competition
Craft Show
Cycle Ride

D

Dance Marathon
Darts Evening
Dinner Dance
Dog Show
Dress Down Day

E

Easter Egg Raffle
Essay Writing Competition
Exercise Bike Race
Exhibition
Expedition

F

Fancy Dress Party
Fashion Show
Fete
Fishing Competition
Football Match
Fun Run

G

Garden Party
Go-karting
Golf Tournament
Gym Challenge
Gymnastics Display

H

Halloween Party
Horse Show
House-to-House Collection

I

Indoor Games
It's a Knockout

J

Jail Break
Jam Making
Juggling Competition
Jumble Sale

K

Karaoke
Kite Flying Competition
Knitting Competition
Knobbly Knees Competition (guess your partner competition)

L

Lawn Mowing Competition/Sponsored Event
Log Throwing
Lottery

M

Mastermind Event
Midsummer Party
Mini Marathon
Murder Mystery night

N

Netball Competition
Nice to Your Neighbour Day

O

Old Time Music Hall Evening
Opera Evening

P

Pancake Race
Pantomime
Parachute Jump
Pet Show
Photography Competition
Plant Sale
Pub Crawl

Q

Quiz

R

Race Night
Raffle
Rag Week
Riding Competition
Rowing Competition (your gym/local river)
Running Competition

S

School Play
School Quiz
Selling Refreshments (at any do)
Sponsored Anything-a-thon
Sports Match
Squash Tournament
St Patrick's Day Event
Stars in Their Eyes Competition
Street Collection

Swear Box
Swim-a-thon
Swimming Gala

T

Tea Dance
Teddy Bear Raffle
Tennis Competition
Tombola
Toy Fair
Treasure Hunt
Tug of War

U

University Challenge
Unwanted Gifts Sale
Used Stamps

V

Valentine's Day event
Vintage Car Day
Volley Ball competition

W

Waxing Event (wax your hairy chest!)
Weight - Guess the Weight Competition
Window Cleaning
Wine Tasting Evening

X

Xmas Grotto

Y

Youth Club Disco

Z

Z Zzzz. Sponsored Sleep Over

9.3 Application Checklist

The following seven-stage checklist is designed to guide you through an effective approach to completing funding applications. It is based upon the experience of:

- groups which were successful in attracting funding
- good and bad applications received by funders
- consultants who specialise in preparing funding applications.

Stage 1	Obtain and examine in detail the criteria of the target funder.
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- does your group meet the criteria?
- does your project meet the criteria?

Stage 2	Note the closing date and plan the completion of the application.
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- list all information which must be sourced
- delegate responsibilities to group members
- be aware of statutory responsibilities e.g. planning
- hold regular meetings to check progress.

Stage 3	Don't be afraid to seek clarification.
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- make contact with the funders representative and clarify issues raised by your group
- test your group's proposed approach with him/her.

Stage 4	Prepare a draft and seek second opinions.
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- discuss with group
- discuss with:
 - funder's representative
 - experienced community workers

Stage 5	Professional presentation always helps!
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- Printed/ typewritten application
- maps, diagrams, colour.

Stage 6	Have you included everything the funder asks for?
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Constitution of Group

Accounts

References

Planning Permission

Sketch/Architect's Drawings

Additional Copies of the Application

Letters of Intent.

Stage 7	Remember the deadline!!
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- don't leave it all to the last day, hour or minute!

You should always start by examining the funder's criteria in detail so you know what the Funder is looking for. Grants Officers consistently say the same things about funding applications - the applicant clearly hasn't read the instructions given to them. While it is true that many funding application forms are often very long and very complicated it is an absolute necessity that the whole form and any accompanying notes are read fully several times to ensure that nothing is missed.

Normally funding criteria are contained within the funder's strategy or in other literature relating to the work of the funder.