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Introduction to Making Funding Applications

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The application process has several stages:

1. Contact funders for details
2. Read the guidelines and criteria
3. Read the questions
4. Write the application
5. Provide all additional information
6. Address the application

1. Contact funders

Once you are “Fit for Funding” and you have identified appropriate sources of funding (*© See Introduction to Fundraising*) you are ready to begin making applications.

When applying for funding you will usually be required to complete the funder’s application form. However, some funders, particularly charitable trusts, request that you apply in writing.

Many funders have their own websites from which you can download guidelines and application forms. Others you may need to telephone for further information. Some funders encourage you to contact them before applying to make sure you are eligible to apply and meet their criteria.

It is advisable to telephone the funder before applying (unless the funder specifically asks you not to).

Make sure you know the deadlines for applications. Some funders only meet twice a year and may need your application a month before the meeting.

2. Read the guidelines

It is essential that you read the guidelines to check your eligibility **before** going any further. Things to check are:

- Do you have to be a registered charity?
- Do you need a constitution (set of rules), management committee etc?
- Can the funds be used for what you need (eg. equipment, salary, etc.)?
- Is your organisation or activity in the list of exclusions ie things that will not be funded?
- Does the work you do and the people who benefit meet the funder’s aims?
- Is it in the geographical area covered by the funder?

3. Read the questions

Make sure you read, and understand, what the funder wants and how they want it presented. Read every question on the application form and make sure you understand what the funder is asking. If applying in writing, the guidelines will list the points you have to put in your letter.

4. Write the application

i) Make drafts

Photocopy the blank application several times and do rough copies before your final version. The same applies to letters.

Make sure you answer ALL the questions in full (unless otherwise stated) Keep to the point, don't waffle and avoid using abbreviations or jargon! Ask colleagues or advisers to look at your drafts to get independent feedback.

ii) Sell yourself – Be Positive

Throughout the application be positive about your achievements and show yourself in a good light. Show the funder that:

- ⇒ Your organisation and project meet their funding aims
- ⇒ There is a clearly defined need & your project effectively meets this need.
- ⇒ You have links with other organisations and you don't work in isolation
- ⇒ You are capable of managing the money and project properly
- ⇒ You have thought about how you will measure the impact of your work

As you write, keep in mind the funders' priorities!

iii) Writing letters

When applying to Charitable Trusts that do not have an application form, your letter should include:

1. The name of your organisation/group, the type of organisation (e.g. registered charity and if so, give charitable number)
2. Background information:
Explain what your organisation does. Keep this brief and to the point: what you do (aims and objectives); who you do it for, where you work and

main achievements to-date. If you have had previous funding, mention who from.

3. What you want to do – the change or benefit you are wanting to develop.
4. Why it's needed – reasons and evidence of need?
5. Provide concrete evidence that the work is needed this might include that consultations, reports, research etc. Do not be emotive, funders do not want tears and sympathy, they want facts and figures.
6. How you will do it – specific objectives?
Be specific, show what you will do, how you will do it and when.
7. Who the work will benefit, who you will work with – target group?
8. What will be the result – outcomes?
9. How much it will cost – budget?
The budget needs to be shown, make this as realistic as possible and that any items mentioned are also included in the description of what you will do.
10. What will happen when the grant ends – exit strategy?
11. How you will keep a track of your progress – monitoring and evaluation?
12. Registers of attendance, photographs, surveys of users, notes from a visitor's book – anything that shows how successful you have been and that you have done what you set out to do.

In addition:

- keep your initial letter of application to two sides of A4 (unless the funder specifies otherwise – always check)
- use your group's headed paper
- use a standard font, it should be clear and easy to read

Refer to other information sheets on :

☺ *Introduction to planning information sheet*

☺ **Budgeting**

☺ *Introduction to Monitoring and evaluation information sheet*

5. Provide all information requested

A common reason for applications being turned down is because additional information that was asked for has not been sent. Funders usually ask for:

- A constitution or set of rules
- A budget
- Some kind of accounts and/or bank statement.

There may be more - read the guidelines and application form to check. Funders may reject your bid immediately if you do not send everything asked for.

However, you also need to keep in mind that if a trust states do not send enclosures (for example publicity materials, annual report) – Don't

6. Address the application – correctly

Last but not least. It is vital that you get the correct name, title and address of the person and organisation you are applying to and address your application to them. *First impressions count!* And by doing this you will be giving the impression that you are a well-organised group who pays attention to detail – the kind of group funders like to support.

(Adapted from Voluntary Action Leeds www.val.org.uk)

For further information:

www.financehub.org.uk

Introductory Pack on Funding and Finance:

Guide to fundraising

Guide to Trading

Guide to Procurement and Contracting

Guide to loans and other forms of finance

Guide to Sustainable funding

Disclaimer

The information provided in this sheet is intended for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss incurred as a result of any person acting on or refraining from acting upon it.