DEVELOP
Knowledge Bank Factsheet

FUNDING:

Why Funding Applications Fail

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Why Funding Applications Fail

The following are based on feedback from funders:

Ineligible/do not fit criteria: Some 50% of applications are rejected outright because they do not fit the funders' criteria.

Bids to benefit organisations, not people: Make its clear how the funding will benefit your clients or improve your services.

Not clear enough/too much jargon: A funder should be able to understand easily what you want to do, when, why and how, and what difference their support will make.

Unrealistic budget: Make sure your budget is based on actual quotes where possible and that you can justify each amount.

No service user involvement: Increasingly, funders want evidence that your clients have a say in the services being delivered.

Form not filled in properly (or signed!): Double check to make sure you've completed every section, enclosed all the information asked for, and signed the form before sending off. Make sure it is the most current application form (not last year's).

No evidence of need: You must provide the funder with clear evidence the work you want to do is needed –and not just that you think it would be a good idea.

Inadequate monitoring and evaluation: How will you know that your project is on track, or that you achieved your outcomes? Funders want to know how you will monitor your work and measure success.

Not tailored to the funder's priorities: Blanket applications to many funders invariably fail. Make sure you cater each application to the funder's priorities, showing how supporting your project will help them achieve their aims.

Poor outcomes: Funders give money to change things. You must be clear how the work you are doing will address the need in your community and what will change for the better.

Project not thought through properly: Make sure there are no obvious questions in the funder's mind after reading your application. You are asking them to invest in your work so make sure you have covered all aspects of the project.

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Sustainability: Not enough thought has gone into how the project will continue after the funding ends. Is the work part of the organisation's funding strategy or will it end when the funding ceases and if so why and what is the exit strategy.

Ask for Feedback!

- If at first you don't succeed, ask for feedback. Contact the funder and find out why you failed. Funders will not change their mind (so don't try and get them to do so) but you can get useful feedback for future applications.
- You will also give the funder the impression that you are a strong organisation that would be worth supporting in the future.

About this factsheet

This is one in a series of fact sheets produced by DEVELOP on subjects of interest to Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations. It is intended for guidance only and is not a comprehensive statement of the law.

Factsheet produced by:

DEVELOP

DEVELOP is the support service for VCSE organisations in Wiltshire. It is also the NCVO accredited volunteer centre for the county.

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