DEVELOP
Knowledge Bank Factsheet

FUNDING:

How to write successful applications

DEVELOP

How to write successful applications

Do your research

Don't waste time and money applying to the wrong funders: research prospective trusts to make sure they will fund your work --and organisation.

1. **Check the criteria:** 50% of applications fall at the first hurdle because they are ineligible. Read the trust's guidelines in full to make sure they will fund your area of work. Also note any exclusions around income, geographical coverage, etc.
2. **Check the funders' accounts:** Use the Charity Commission's web site to look at their accounts. Accounts contain information about their funding priorities and also who has been funded in the past and how much they received. You can guage whether they have funded similar work.
3. **How much does the funder give:** Check websites and annual accounts to see how much the funder gives on average. Don't ask a funder that normally gives £5,000 for £20,000 or request £500 from a trust that gives large awards.
4. **What are the funders' priorities:** Funders give money because they want to change things. Make sure you are clear on what the funder wants to achieve, and that your project has similar aims.
5. **Talk to the funder** if you are unsure. Larger trusts and community foundations often supply contact numbers and emails for queries –use them.

Filling in funding applications

Funding applications are designed to give funders the information they want, in the way they want it. Be sure to follow their instructions exactly.

1. **Read through all the questions** before you answer any of them. Be clear about what information the funder is asking for in each section. Answer every question, giving them the information they ask for, even if it means repeating yourself.
2. **Use plain language** not jargon. Be clear about what your organisation does, the need you are addressing, what your planned project is and what you will achieve. Be precise, use exact numbers. Do not waffle, use acronyms or buzz words.

How to write successful applications

3. **Check the funder's priorities** and make sure you show how your work fits in with these. Use similar language as the funder, but be careful not to just repeat phrases.
4. **Only send what they ask for.** Do not be tempted to include a 35 page report because it gives a "fuller picture" of your work. If the funder wants more detailed information, they will ask for it. Similarly, if they ask for annual accounts or other information, be sure to include it.
5. **Give it a final check** for errors or typos. Ask someone else to read the application through to make sure that what you have written is clear. Make sure the application has been signed before you send it.

If the trust has no funding application or guidelines for submission, write a 2 page letter on your organisation's letterhead. Be sure to include the key information listed above about your organisation, what you want the money for and what you hope to achieve. Keep it brief, clear and to the point. You are only offering a snapshot at this point –if the funder is interested in your work they will get back to you for more detailed information.

And finally

*   If you are unsuccessful, contact the funder to find out why. You can use this information to improve future applications.
*   If you are successful, be sure to thank the funder.
*   At the end of the grant, even if an end of grant report is not required, a letter thanking the donor and informing them of what you have achieved with their grant helps to build a positive relationship.

See other DEVELOP factsheets on:

*   How to use online tools to raise money
*   How to find funding

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.

Contact us

Website: www.wearedevelop.org.uk
Email: hello@wearedevelop.org.uk

Phone: 0845 034 5250