

Factsheet 8: Making Applications

This factsheet is part of a series of 3. The other factsheets are: *Factsheet 6: Funding: Overview* and *Factsheet 7: Funding: Sources*

Once you have identified appropriate sources of funding you are ready to begin making applications. The application process has several stages:

- Contact funders
- Read the guidelines
- Read the questions
- Write the application
- Provide all additional information
- Address the application

1: Contact funders

See *Factsheet 7: Funding: Sources* for advice on how best to contact funders.

2: Read the guidelines

Before you submit an application it's best to telephone a potential funder, to check that your organisation and project are eligible to apply to them. You can usually get hold of guidelines and application forms this way. If you already have a copy of the guidelines you should talk to funders about the eligibility of your project at this point.

Points to check are:

- Do you have to be a registered charity?
- Is your group organised in the right way (do you need a constitution, management committee etc.) ?
- Can the funds be used for what you need to spend money on (equipment, wages, etc.)?
- Is your organisation or activity in the list of exclusions?

With the guidelines, you will usually get notes on what the funder particularly wants to fund – their aims or priorities. You need to make sure that your project helps the funders to meet their stated aims in some way. Try to pitch your application on that basis.

This means that you highlight the aspects of your organisation that best meet the funder's aims.

3: Read the questions

Make sure you read, and understand, what the funder wants and how they want it presented. If you are applying to a Trust or Foundation, there may be no application form and you only need to write a letter. However, the guidelines will list the points you have to put in your letter, so the following information still applies.

Before beginning to write, read through the whole form or list of questions. This will give you an idea of what should go in what section. Information about your organisation should be presented as the funder wishes. They ask specific questions, and want answers to each question in the right section, not other, inappropriate information.

4: Write the application

Make drafts

Don't begin writing on the original application form until you have completed your final draft. You will need several drafts of your application before the final version is ready. It is a good idea to ask colleagues or advisers to look at your drafts to get independent feedback.

Sell yourself

Before you begin to write, remind yourselves that throughout the application you have to keep certain things in mind. In general, you have to show funders 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 properly
- You have thought in advance about how you will measure the impact of your work

As you write, keep in mind the funder's priorities. Keep saying how you meet them.

Sell success: be positive about your achievements, show yourself in a good light. Be honest about difficult issues, but show a positive side where you can.

Tips for a good application:

- Answer all questions fully
- Use simple language

- Do not use jargon
- Use short sentences

5: Provide all information requested

A common reason why applications are 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

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.

6: Address the application – correctly!

Last but not least. You may well be sending your application directly to the person who decides on your grant, and the first impression is crucial. It is vital that you get the name, title and address of the person and organisation you are applying to right.

Getting them wrong suggests that you do not care about your relationship with the funder, and are sending out lots of applications without taking the time to research funders properly.

Getting these details right gives the impression that you are a well-organised group who pays attention to detail – the kind of group funders like to support. You have already improved your chances of success, before the funder even reads your application.

7: Further help