

## **What makes a good funding application?**

(primarily relating to applications to charitable funders)

Fundraising is all about selling a good idea to someone who has the financial means to help make it happen. If you are successful at making your case and selling your idea you will succeed in getting funding and support.

There are many components in a successful fundraising approach. For example: a good project, an identifiable need, the impact of the work, the involvement of users and the track record of your organisation are all crucial factors.

It is also important to remember the importance of the approach and application process itself. You need to make the most of your opportunity to make a good case, state your need and ask for support.

### ➤ **The key ingredients of a good application are:**

- Your selling points - the importance of the work you do
- Facts and figures to support your proposal
- The track record of your organisation
- A well thought out project plan and budget
- Evidence that you can carry out the proposed work
- Good research into potential funders or donors
- Back up literature and good presentation

Who you approach and how you ask – by letter, by application form, in person, or over the phone – will need sound planning and preparation. The more information you have prepared in advance about your organisation and the project that needs funding, the easier it will be to write applications.

You will need to collect information about potential funders as well. Who should you contact? What are their funding policies and guidelines? What is their funding timetable? Make sure that you tailor applications to meet the requirements of particular funders. Remember, funders do not just look at your project and ideas, they also look at the your organisation and its track record.

### ➤ **Top tips for successful applications**

- Research the funder and make certain that your project fits their funding criteria
- Clearly explain your project and don't undersell your organisation and its work

- Describe how you will use the money and why the project represents 'value for money'
- Explain how the project is going to be evaluated and what the success criteria are
- Explain and evidence the need
- Set a realistic, accurate budget that includes all costs
- Make sure you include all the information required and don't leave questions unanswered.

### ➤ **Why funding applications fail**

- Bid did not meet the funders criteria or follow the guidelines
- Form was filled out incorrectly
- Application did not demonstrate long-term plan / sustainability
- Applicant was asking for an amount that cannot be given
- Missed deadline
- Funding ran out or oversubscribed
- Organisation did not show it had the capacity / governance to carry-out the project
- Need for project not adequately demonstrated and justified
- Correct policies (e.g. equal opportunities, insurance) not in place
- Inaccurate budgets and costings.

Have you written a good application? Get someone, preferably from outside your organisation, to read through and check your application to make sure it's clear, persuasive and complete.

### ➤ **Useful resources**

*Avoiding the Wastepaper Basket* by Tim Cook. London VSC, 1996

*The Complete Fundraising Handbook* by N. Botting & M. Norton, Directory of Social Change, 2001

*Writing Better Fundraising Applications* by M. Norton and M. Eastwood, Directory of Social Change, 2002

*Apply Yourself* - free software from FunderFinder ([www.funderfinder.org.uk](http://www.funderfinder.org.uk))

GrantFinder database - available at your local CVS or Local Authority.

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