

How to write a funding plan

Introduction

The key to effective, time efficient fundraising is in the planning work which goes on before you actually put pen to paper. Writing the application form should be the final step in the fundraising process.

Equate this planning stage to looking for a new job. When job hunting you would think about what your skills are, what you can offer the prospective employer and why they should employ you rather than anyone else with similar skills.

The key to successful job hunting is in the preparation of your CV and fundraising should be tackled in a similar way. Get your ideas down on paper, define and describe your project, gather together all the proof you need to convince funders that you know what you are doing and how it is going to help your users. **Keep the final plan in a folder and refer to it each time you apply for funding and be sure to keep it updated. Ensure that all your committee members have a copy as well as relevant staff.**

The information contained in this sheet will help you to write your funding plan. Use it like a tick-list to check that you have included everything you need.

Writing the Document:

What is it you are planning to do?

Get your project right first, then think about your funding bid. What is it you are trying to raise money for? Is it a whole project or individual items? Funders will want to know exactly what it is you are asking them to fund.

Name

If you are starting a new project is its name meaningful, memorable & pronounceable!

The Body of the Funding Plan

List Your Aims -

- What will be achieved?
- What will be the eventual outcome of the project?
- Who will benefit? Key target groups
- How will they benefit?

Write a key sentence / paragraph -

- Clear, concise, readable and grammatical
- Don't work alone, take time to write it, don't try to re-invent the wheel and don't be frightened to share information.

Background -

- Who are you? (Your organisation/partnership, what you do etc.)
- Describe the context of your work (relate them to government policies & programmes if possible i.e. Action on Child Poverty, The Rural White Paper etc)
- Why do this? Can you prove there is a need and hence justify funding? You will need to do your research and gather statistics to back-up your claims
- Why does the organisation want to do it?
- Who will benefit from your work (identify people, groups etc.)

- Who else is/might be interested in what you are planning to do?
- Identify who else is doing similar work (and can you justify doing it as well?)

Delivery

- Who will do the work? (management committee, staff, volunteers, users?)
- How will the work be managed (i.e. Line management structure, supervision etc)
- What methods, tools, equipment, buildings, etc. will be used?
- How will the project be structured? (main activities, milestones with dates)
- If appropriate, what's the content? (e.g. what will be taught?)
- Where will activities happen? (specific locations, geographic coverage)
- When will the work start and finish - and is this flexible? (produce a timetable)
- Who needs to know about your work & how will they be kept informed?
- How will the work be monitored and evaluated?
- Any significant risks/uncertainties? If so how can they be minimised?
- Are there Equal Opportunities implications i.e. accessibility etc

Outcomes

- What are the key objectives of your work (should be S.M.A.R.T i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timetabled)
- What are the key - quantitative and qualitative - targets?
- What's the end result? (Exit strategy?)

Resources

- People: have you got suitably qualified staff, consultants, trainees, volunteers etc
- What are the capital costs: equipment, computers, buildings, land, vehicles
- What are the revenue costs: salaries (don't forget NI, Tax etc), fees, overheads, expenses, admin, travel, training & project costs
- What funding do you need?: grants, donations, earned income, in-kind
- Budget - assumptions, VAT, inflation, contingency. (Budget realistically!)
- Draw up a cash flow

Appendixes

- Plans, pictures, charts, back-up documents, accounts, constitution, CVs, job descriptions, references etc.

Suggested Reading

Writing Better Fundraising Applications— Michael Norton

The Complete Fundraising Handbook—Sam Clarke

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