

Funding Tips

Research Funding Opportunities:

- Personal knowledge and contacts (most useful form of research is personal knowledge and understanding of funders)
- Directories - printed/CD-Rom/internet
- Support/Info services - e.g. Winchester Area Community Action

Prioritise Your Applications:

- Current key issues & priorities
- Limitations: geographic, legal status, beneficiaries (make sure your project & beneficiaries etc are appropriate)

Contact the Funder:

- Send for more information & forms - read them!
- If possible, call and talk to someone
- Deadlines - when do they need the proposal by?

Decide if your project is eligible

- Is your organisation/partnership eligible? Is your project eligible?
- How likely is the funder to support it?
- Will they fund all or part? Matching funding? Resources to apply?
- Do you need to "tweak" the project to fit the funding? (Be clear about the costs/benefits of doing this.)
- Pick the best 3 options. Don't send circular letters, concentrate on putting in a good bid to a few rather than too many. (The "machine gun" approach is a waste of (everyone's) time and resources.)
- Remember funders do talk to each other and will soon compare notes on double funding.

Make Your Application

- Apply *exactly* as specified - do not send other information unless asked for.
- Answer *all* the questions. If you can't, either wait until you can or explain why you can't and when you'll be able to provide the information.
- Fill forms out carefully. Check them, check them again, get someone else to check them - especially figures!
- Make sure enclosures and additional sheets are clearly labelled and referenced.
- Take at least 1 hard copy of the *finalised* bid!, (many don't!!).
- Make sure the forms are signed by the right people.
- Post in good time - or deliver personally. Get an acknowledgement of receipt.

Choose Your Referees

- Work out in advance who they will be and ensure they will be around when the application form needs to be signed, (and not on holiday for 3 weeks!)

Follow-up

- Don't hassle, but do check on progress, (& get names). Make sure they've got everything they need.
- Ask how long a decision takes to be made.
- Some funders (esp. Lottery) will ask for alternative contact names in case you are away when they call, (and they will call!)
- Be prepared to clarify or give more detail if required. (Try to avoid off-the-cuff responses over the 'phone and make notes of what you have said.) Ensure everyone is briefed in case they call when you are out.
- If you are to be assessed, try to find out in advance what the assessor wants to discuss.
- Try to build a relationship with the funder's staff.

Success !

- Make sure that the offer letter is accurate - are you getting what you asked for and check that you can meet the terms and conditions.
- Getting the money should not be the end of the relationship - keep funders informed. If you have problems tell them. Need to adjust the budget? Ask first!
- Celebrate!

Failure

- Look at the explanation. (Have they given a real reason?)
- Ask for feedback. (Was the project flawed in some way? Was there a problem with the bid itself? How can it be improved? Can you re-apply? Will they help improve the application? - some will help you, particularly the Lottery)
- Challenge if you feel the assessment process was genuinely unfair - and you can prove it.

Archive the bid

- Don't throw away all that work! There is a lot of useful info in a bid that could be used in a different context. i.e. for project management.
- Remember - work on a bid, even if unsuccessful, is never wasted.
- Also some funders will want to know if you've applied to them before (you'd look a little silly if you don't know!)
- Remember: *90% of funding applications fail.* Time spent preparing your funding bid will help to ensure you are in the successful 10%!

Suggested Reading/resources

- www.trustfunding.org.uk - subscription only (available free at WACA)
- *Avoiding the Wastepaper Basket* - Tim Cook
- *The Complete Fundraising Handbook* - Sam Clarke Michael Norton
- *Writing Better Fundraising Applications* - Michael Norton

All the above can be borrowed from the Development Support Officer.

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