

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Supporting charities, volunteers and communities

7. Finding and getting money

7.3 Applying to funders



Applying to funders

Many grant making trusts do not use forms, or even give guidance on what they want to know - they just tell you to 'apply in writing'. There are no absolute rules, but this is a proposed structure for an application.

General points

- Keep it brief –letter and proposal should run to no more than 3 – 4 pages.
- Do your research first – find out as much as you can about the donor, their interests and their pattern of giving before you write.
- Your application should be addressed to a named individual – check that your source is up to date.
- Use simple, clear, understandable language – avoid jargon or rhetoric.
- If you attach supporting information, remember that there is no guarantee anyone will look at it. Everything **essential** needs to be in the main body of your proposal.

Proposal contents

Title

Can you think of a catchy title that puts across what you want to do?

Project summary

This should be the last thing that you write. It needs to get across the key points of your project, and show how it fits in with their interests. This may be the only part of the application that they read. The summary may go in the main body of the proposal, or in the accompanying letter.

Introduction

A simple sentence describing who you are and what you do should be followed up with any information that will help build your credibility, and convince funders of your competence to run a project. What is your track record, what have been your major successes?

Problem statement

You need to explain the problems that you are trying to address.

- Talk about people – show that you are being led by demand.
- Make the problem concrete, not abstract, outline the bad effects, but in every day terms. Try stating the problem, then asking 'so what?' to drill down to the long-term effects.
- Indicate the urgency, the case for immediate intervention.
- Show that the problem is solvable.

- Give evidence to support what you are saying. One way of doing this is by using statistics, but there are alternatives – what about case studies, or quotes from former clients?

Programme and methods

What are you going to do, and how are you going to do it? Having defined the problem, you need to explain how you intend to make a difference.

- What are your objectives – can you identify specific, measurable outcomes? Be precise in describing who you are helping, the extent of the service, and the anticipated impact.
- What activities will you carry out to accomplish the objectives? Can you justify your approach? Can you demonstrate that your activities will address the problem that you have identified?

Evaluation

How will you know if you have been successful? What will you measure or record? How will you find out if the service has made a difference?

Budget

You may need to attach a detailed breakdown of costs, but your project proposal will include a summary. If you are applying for a grant over several years, then show costs for each year. Don't forget inflation – some funders have specific ways of dealing with this and if applicable, fully explain the necessity for full cost recovery.

Budgets will comprise two main elements, core costs and project costs. Core costs typically include: staffing; premises; office and professional fees. Project costs will be specific to the service provision. These are related to the nature of your organisation and its activities.

When producing your budget, don't forget to include time given freely by volunteers. This can often be used to provide 'match funding' and show potential funders that you can provide the necessary resources. In costing volunteers' time, you'll need to provide a suitable hourly rate that reflects the services they are providing.

Funding plan

If you are not asking for the full amount, then you need to show where you plan to raise the balance. If the project is ongoing, you need to explain where you plan to find funding to continue after the initial period. Otherwise, funders will increasingly expect a fully developed and well structured exit strategy.

Request and rationale

Do not be shy about asking for a specific amount – make sure it is reasonable compared with what you know from the trust's guidelines or other grants. If you are not going to do so in your covering letter, explain why you think the funder should be interested in your project – how does it link in with their areas of interest?

How to identify funding

Having followed the above guidance it is essential that you readily identify those sources of funding that are most relevant to your aims and objectives. The following resources offer further practical advice and guidance.

Your local county voluntary council

Welsh Funding Guide

This excellent book contains details of funding from a wealth of sources, brought together in one comprehensive, bilingual, easy-to-use guide. It includes: grant-making trusts; companies; the National Lottery; government sources; the European Union; WCVA.

Each section includes advice on how to approach the funder for the best chance of winning their support. This guide is ideal for anyone fundraising for their charity or community group in Wales.

A Guide to the Major Trusts

Published in two volumes this is an essential aid for all those seeking to raise money for charity from grant-making trusts and foundations. The Volume 1 covers the top 400 trusts while Volume 2 covers a further 1,200.

The Directory of Grant Making Trusts

Produced by DSC in association with CAF, it covers the largest grant making trusts and foundations in the UK.

The Grant-making Trusts CD-ROM

The CD-ROM contains over 4,500 trusts from both the DSC and CAF databases. www.trustfunding.org.uk

This subscription website allows access a similar range of information as the above CD-ROM but also provides regular update alerts.

A Guide to Grants for Individuals in Need and The Educational Grants Directory

These publications cover funding for individuals opposed to groups. More detailed information can be obtained from the following website www.grantsforindividuals.org.uk

The Guide to UK Company Giving

Details of over 500m companies throughout the UK that give a combined total of £290m in cash donations.

All of the above publications are available, at cost from:

Directory of Social Change,
24 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2DP
Tel: 08450 777707
Fax: 020 73914804
books@dsc.org.uk
www.dsc.org.uk

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Produced by WCVA, County Voluntary Councils and Volunteer Centres.
Last Updated: 06/05/2009



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