



## FACT SHEET 9

# Making Applications

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Before making applications there are steps to go through in preparation, which are described in *Fact Sheet 7: Funding Overview*. Once you have gone through these steps, you are ready to make an application.

The application process itself has several stages:

### 1) Contact Funders

The first thing to do is to contact each potential funder for more information. If you have a phone number, use this first. You can save yourself time and effort by giving the potential funder a call to check that you are eligible for these funds. You can usually get hold of guidelines and application forms by phoning the funder, writing to the funder with a stamped self-addressed envelope, or by looking on their website where possible.

You should also check submission dates for applications with the funder, and check how applications are processed so that you can try, where possible, to fit in with them.

It is advisable to talk to funders on the phone (or at a Funding Fair) if you can – most of the major funders now encourage people to speak to them before they submit an application. They will be able to confirm whether your application is eligible for consideration, confirm any deadlines and let you know when you will hear the outcome. Building a relationship with funders is an essential part of the fundraising process and should be encouraged.

### 2) Read the Guidelines

You now have another chance to check that your organisation or project is eligible for these funds. Points to check are:

- Do you have to be a registered charity?
- Is your group organised in the right way i.e. do you need a constitution, management committee, and bank account 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 i.e. 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

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.
- Where a funder asks specific questions, they want answers to each question in the right section, and not other, inappropriate information.

### 4) Write the Application

- **Make Drafts**

You are likely to produce several versions of your application before the final version is ready. To do this, make copies of the application or write the text on a separate sheet. Show drafts to colleagues or advisers to get their 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 real **need**
- ❖ Your project effectively meets this need
- ❖ You are capable of managing the money properly
- ❖ You cannot do the project without financial assistance

As you write, keep in mind the funders priorities, and how you meet them. Each question asks for certain pieces of information, make sure you answer all the questions they ask and don't add in anything that isn't necessary. This point may seem obvious, but one of the top reasons for rejected applications is simply that the questions are not answered.

- **Use Simple Language**

Funding decisions are usually made by a group of people in a meeting. They will have a pile of applications, a lot of reading to do in a short time. So make your writing clear, simple and to the point. Do not use jargon where everyday words will do. Describe your work in your own terms. Use short sentences; make your application attractive to read.

### 5) Provide All Additional Information Requests

A prime reason for applications being turned down is because additional information that was asked for has not been sent. Funders usually ask for:

- 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 they have asked for.

## 6) Address the Application

Last but not least, a point that may seem small but which is vital – you must get right the name, title and address of the person and organisation you are applying to. 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 absolutely correct gives the impression that you are a well-organised group with good, basic communication skills - the kind of group funders like to support. You have already improved your chances of success, before the funder even reads your application.

### Top Tips:

- Do not assume that the funder already knows your organization;
- Ensure that you have sufficient evidence to support the **need** for your project / new service;
- Make it clear what the money is required for, and request a specific amount of money (perhaps include a shopping list so that they can choose what they would like their funds to be used for);
- 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.
- It is very important to establish who you send the application to and how you address them. You may well be sending your application directly to the person who decides on your grant, and the first impression is crucial;
- It is better to make a few carefully targeted applications to appropriate funders than to send out lots of circular letters;
- Answer **all** questions fully
- Remember to sign the application and always keep a copy on file in case the funder contacts you to discuss your application, and also as it may be used as a basis for other applications.

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A very useful websites which covers all aspects of funding and finance is The Finance Hub – ‘making sense of funding and finance in the Third Sector’  
Visit: [www.financehub.org.uk](http://www.financehub.org.uk)

### Further Support and Advice is available from Cumbria CVS Locality Offices:

**Cumbria CVS - Barrow:** 72-74 Scott Street, Barrow-in-Furness, LA14 1QE.  
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Visit:

**Cumbria CVS website**

[www.thirdsectorcumbria.org.uk/support\\_CumbriaCVS.html](http://www.thirdsectorcumbria.org.uk/support_CumbriaCVS.html)

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