



Foundation Derbyshire's Top Three Tips!

1: Pick up the phone!

Where possible it is always preferable to speak to the funder directly before you start writing out the application. This way you can quickly gauge whether it is worth progressing with a full bid and you might be given some extra guidance or support on what the funder is looking for.

Alternatively if it's a large funder like the lottery you may want to run your idea past a community development worker like Sandra from Links, as they are aware of what kind of projects Lottery programmes are looking for.

2: Show a need

The funder will want to know that the project / funding request is actually something that is needed rather than an idea thought up by one or two people that hasn't been tested. If we give you funding for an activity or a piece of equipment we want to know it will be used, valued and have an impact locally.

So how do you show the funder that there is a need??

Think about the following ideas and then explain them on the application form:

- 1) You might have carried out a pilot or a taster session(s) to let people experience the activity to see how people found it and whether they would want to continue. If so tell us about it! How many people came along? How did you capture peoples feelings about the activity, did you have a questionnaire or a sheet of paper for people to write down comments?
- 2) If your asking for funding for an existing activity let us know how well your group or project is currently being used. How many members do you have at the moment Do you have a waiting list? How often do you get new members? Get some feedback from your members about what the group / activity means to them and let the funder know
- 3) What other groups around you are delivering similar things? If any? What does your group provide that your members need that other groups cannot give them?
- 4) Who else do you work with? Listing who you work alongside can show how you fit in with the local community sector and show you are valued by other partners and not duplicating what other groups are doing. Maybe you work with local schools, the police, other community groups etc

3: Don't Assume!!!

The funder will often not know the first thing about your group or know what you're trying to achieve with your funding application. They know nothing about you!

You must try to explain simply and clearly about what you do, and what you need.

A tried and tested method (an oldie but a goodie!) is giving your completed funding application to someone you know who has absolutely nothing to do with your community group. If they can follow the application and understand what the bid is about there is a good chance the funder will too! If your friend is confused and asks you questions about the group or project then note these queries down and try to add the answers into the application form.

Try and put the funder in the room – if they can clearly understand how you operate and what you want the money for the easier it will be for them.

e.g. read the following two answers

1: We would like some money for our rent, we are an elderly persons group and we like to meet regularly.

2: We are a group for elderly residents in Sinfin. We meet every Monday morning (10 to 12.30) at a local community centre. We offer refreshments and have regular speakers on different subjects. We provide friendship and support to help our members feel less isolated. We are struggling financially to meet the rent costs, which have increased over the years.

If it's an event or set of workshops include an itinerary. Provide details of what you have done in the past and what your plans for the future are. If you have a website, provide us with the web address.