



Links Funding Workshop

Top Tips for Funding Applications

1. Top Tips for Funding Applications

This guide is designed to give you our top tips on winning funding.

It has been written for any group applying for funding via a defined application process. By this we mean that the funder is supplying a form or list of questions that you need to fill out.

If your funding process doesn't have a defined application process, this guide will still be useful for you, but not all sections will apply to your application.

Get support

If your group needs help securing the funding you need to thrive, Links CVS is here to help. Contact us on:
01246 274 844 linkscvs@btconnect.com

2. Plan for Success

Applying for funding is just like applying for a job. There will be lots of competition and you will have to argue your case.

Below are some key points to consider in making your application:

Research your project thoroughly

Whilst it is often tempting to just get on and fill out a form, a project which has been planned carefully and with consideration stands out very clearly from those that have been rushed.

Research can take weeks or even months but knowing that the project is what people want and is the best possible way to deliver a benefit will make sure that the project runs for a long time into the future.

Research the funder

You need to know your funder before you write your application. At a minimum you should:

- Check the funder's website
- Read the funder's annual report and other published documents
- Find a contact name at the funder and double check the spelling
- Check the funder's current address
- Look at how much money they've given previously. This will guide how much funding you ask for

You should use the information you find to tailor your application to that particular funder's interests.

Leave enough time

You need to leave at least six months between applying for funding and hearing an outcome.

3. Focus on Outcomes

You need to be clear on what outcomes your project will deliver and how it will help.

Ask yourself:

- What do you want to do?
- Why?
- Who will benefit?
- How will they benefit?
- How do you know that your project is the best way of accomplishing your aims?
- Are there any other similar projects in the area?

Until you can answer these questions clearly and concisely you're not ready to submit a funding application.

Identifying the outcomes of your project, how they will be achieved and what evidence you will need to prove that you've delivered the outcomes you aimed for is vital to winning funding.

4. Identify your Selling Points

Funders tend to be attracted to:

- Your use of volunteers. If people willingly give you some of their time this shows their commitment and that it is a good cause. You may also give volunteers transferable skills and training opportunities.

- The involvement of users in planning or running your project. Involving users shows that your project is needed and wanted by the people who have first-hand knowledge of the problem you're trying to solve.
- Your ability to mobilise support in kind. Gathering in-kind support, like pro-bono support from businesses, donated furniture and other non-monetary items, shows that you can get practical support from people and are not relying only on your funders.
- Your ability to attract support from other sources. Support and recognition from the statutory sector and other providers is important.
- Your financial security and sustainability in the medium and long term. Funders will want to be reassured that you are a safe bet.
- The proportion of funds you generate for yourselves. Being self-supporting is very attractive to funders at every level.
- The support you get in membership or donations from the local community. Support from the local community is a strong point. This kind of support also enhances your financial sustainability.
- Collaboration with other groups. Working with other groups shows that you're ensuring that your group doesn't duplicate efforts.
- Wider Significance. Could your project have wider reaching significance? Could it be seen as a pilot which would either impact on work in other areas or pave the way to attracting more money for a larger project? This is often a selling point for funders.

Other selling points

Of course, this list is not exhaustive. You should research your funder and see if they have any other interests or particular aims. You can then emphasise how your project meets their particular requirements.

5. Budget for Success

An accurate, realistic budget can make or break your funding application.

Your budget needs to include everything that you need so that you can run your project. It also needs to make sense to the funder and show them that you're capable of handling the funding you're asking for.

We recommend reading about project budgeting. You can access Links information sheet on Budgeting & Budgetary Control by

<http://linkscvs.org.uk/sites/default/files/NEW%20Budgeting%20%26%20Control.pdf>

6. Writing Applications

Our top tips for writing your funding application include:

- Remember application writing is 80% preparation, 20% writing.
- Research funders. You need to find out as much as you can about the funder and then tailor your application accordingly. Check their websites, look at their annual reports, Google them and pursue any other avenues you can think of to learn about the funder.

- Ensure you have the funder's current address.
- Ask for a specific amount of money. Check what they have given in the past and ask for a realistic sum.
- Ensure that your main contact can answer questions about your project confidently.
- Allow at least six months between sending applications and the start of the project.
- Include salaries and running costs when you budget. Only ask the funder for this if it is something that they fund.
- Use facts and figures instead of generalisation. You need to provide hard evidence of need.
- Convey your key points as briefly as possible and keep your language simple.
- Make sure you answer the questions asked on application forms.
- Get someone not connected to your group to look at your application critically before sending it in.
- Mention if you've previously applied whether or not you were successful.
- Show how service users have been involved in your project.
- Include a realistic budget. Avoid round figures.
- Include a project plan.

Get Support

If you need help putting together your funding application, Links CVS is here to support you.

7. How to Complete and Submit Applications

Once you've planned your project and done your research you're ready to complete and submit your application.

Here's the process you should go through:

1. Download the guidelines as well as the application form from the website if applying online.
2. Read through the all of the information that comes with the form before deciding whether to apply. It is important to check whether your organisation is eligible and whether your planned activities fit the funder's criteria. Funding applications often fail because the organisation or planned activities do not fit the criteria.
3. Read through the whole application form before filling any part of it in and make sure you understand all of it. If you don't, ask for help. Links CVS can support you.
4. Answer the question they ask you. Do not put in any information that is not relevant to the question.
5. Fill in a photocopy of the form and have someone from outside your group comment on the draft copy first.

6. Use the amount of space allowed for each answer as a guide to how much detail is required. Do not continue on extra paper unless asked to do so.
7. Use bullet points wherever possible and do not waffle.
8. Make sure the writing is legible. You should complete the application in neat handwriting or at least point 10 in an easy to read font (e.g. Ariel). Links can help with completing forms on a computer and submitting online.
9. Make sure that you send in any extra information that is requested. Leaving this information out can delay your application.
10. Make a copy of the form and keep a record of the date you sent it.
11. Make sure that the main contact named on the form has access to a copy of the application form and is available during the day in case the funder wants to get in touch.
12. Respond promptly if you are asked for more information after submitting your application.

Get Support

If you need help putting together your funding application, Links CVS is here to support you.

8. Don't go it Alone

If your group needs support researching, preparing or submitting a funding application, Links CVS is here to help.

We can:

- Help you identify the best funder for your project
- Work with you to develop a strong application
- Review your application before you submit it

Contact us to discuss your needs

Find out more

To learn more or get support for your group contact Links CVS

01246 274 844 linkscvs@btconnect.com

www.linkscvs.org.uk

Complete our funding questionnaire: <http://www.linkscvs.org.uk/node/98>