



## **The Top Ten Funding Applications ‘Pitfalls’**

### **1: Poor Budgets – lack of detail, unrealistic, doesn’t add up**

Provide quotes for pieces of equipment if asked for – use internet, catalogues and ring companies (we ask if item over £500)

Always double check your calculations

Provide clear costings so the funder can see what they are getting for their money e.g.

Rent = £500

Leaflets = £150

Crockery = £320

Rent (ten 2hour sessions at a rate of £25 per hour) = £500

Leaflets (100 A5 colour folded leaflets) = £150

Crockery (8 16x piece dinner services at £40) = £320

### **2: Project does not match the fund criteria**

You’ll be surprised how often this happens even with well known established charities. Always read the fund criteria carefully and make sure your project ideas fit with what the fund was set up to achieve.

We would ALWAYS recommend trying to talk to the funder about your project first to double check they feel it is appropriate.

### **3: Incorrect or lack of contact details / no alternative contact**

Funders will often need to contact you during the application process. At Foundation Derbyshire we speak to the majority of applicants as we assess the application ready for a panel meeting (where decisions are made). Not being able to talk to the contact or even leave a message can be frustrating and you could miss out on an opportunity to improve / enhance your bid.

- Ensure that telephone numbers have been written down correctly and include an area code.
- Put down more than one number – best to include a land line and a mobile
- If there is the opportunity include contact details for another person in the group in case you are on annual leave or are unavailable for another reason
- If you have put down an e-mail address make sure it is one you check regularly in case the funder has contacted you via this method.

#### **4: Applications with 'see attached' all the way through**

Check with a funder if you want to include additional sheets. Usually the space available on an application is a guide to how much they feel is required. If you can and want to use additional sheets then start the answer on the form provided and continue on a clearly marked blank sheet of paper.

#### **5: One word answers or use of jargon**

A funder will often have to read through a high volume of applications so whilst they prefer not to read a lot of pages equally a one word answer is not a good move! It can give the impression that the application has been rushed or that no thought has gone into it – it will mean the funder has to ask you many more questions to try and understand your group and project.

Using too much jargon for small grant streams can lead some funders to think the application has been written by a professional fundraiser or community development worker – often funders want groups to develop themselves, and completing smaller application forms is a good way to learn new fundraising skills - see number 10.

#### **6: Questions missed out**

Every single question on an application form has been designed to provide the funder with essential information they need to help reach a decision on your application. Missing questions will often prevent the funder being able to reach that decision – always ensure you have not missed anything out and have answered each question properly

#### **7: Ineligible handwriting**

We will always try and decipher your handwriting – but obviously if we can read it clearly it allows us to understand your project a whole lot better! Most funders allow you to download applications from a website, which you type into. If you do not have access to a computer then try and block print your application or pass on the content to a member of your committee with clear handwriting!

#### **8: Not sending in requested supporting documentation**

Funders will often ask for extra pieces of information from you to sit alongside your application form. These will include items like your group's constitution, bank statements or accounts. There will often be a list of items to provide. The funder will have a reason to ask for each piece and each offers the funder vital information about your group, missing pieces will often prevent a full assessment of your bid.

## **9: Project start date is imminent or items / costs already paid for**

Most funders will not make retrospective awards (they won't supply money for events, activities that have already happened or for items that you have already purchased). Therefore it is vital that you get a written decision before you proceed with any spend on the application budget. It is becoming more common for this to happen, with groups supplying invoices relating to their project spend dated well before the panel met and agreed to the grant – in these cases money has had to be returned to the funder.

Most funders will have a lead in time from when they get an application to when they will be able to give you a decision. Check what this is before applying. At Foundation Derbyshire we always suggest getting an application into us 3 months before the project is planned to start. Often we will be able to get you a decision before this usually around 6 weeks – but ALWAYS CHECK especially if you have a firm date in mind.

## **10: Applications not completed by the group but an external agency or person**

At Foundation Derbyshire we specialise in small grant funding usually up to £2,000. Application forms are relatively easy and we encourage groups to complete the application and work through the funding process themselves as opposed to utilising an external person or agency. Working through the application and grant making process can build confidence, understanding of funding and develop skills to take the group further.

Support from community development workers is often needed but we would not expect somebody from outside the group to develop the project and write the bid. On occasion we have contacted the main applicant from a group and they have known nothing about the project so removed from the bid as they were!