# Grants



## Getting fit for funding

Before beginning to apply for funding it is important to look at your organisation from an outside perspective and ask yourself some basic questions about the running of your organisation.

This is because funders need to know that they can trust you with their money, and that your project is likely to succeed.

The key questions that the funder will be interested in are:

- Are you a well-run organisation?
- Do you manage your money well?
- Are all governing documents up to date?
- Are all appropriate policies in place?

### Fit for Funding

Our information sheet Fit for Funding takes you through the areas that you will need to consider.

You can find more information to help you with these areas in our sections on Trustees and Governance, Managing money and budgets and Running your organisation.

Advice about getting fit for funding is available to voluntary organisations through the network of local voluntary councils (CVCs).

## Where to find grant funding?



ort

funding opportunities for your voluntary group, which lists hundreds of grant and loan finance opportunities from local, national and international sources. From small grants to large capital projects, Funding Wales can help you find the funding you need.

FUNDING WALES

# Writing your application

Before you start your application make sure that you do your research, and are certain that your project will met the funder's eligibility criteria. Double-check the criteria of the fund, even if you have applied to them before, as the criteria can change.

Do not just look at what they do fund; check what is ineligible – for example, do they only fund registered charities, perhaps they do not fund capital work, some exclude specific activities such as campaigning.

Also, check the deadline and ensure you submit within this time.

Here are some top tips for completing the application:

- Follow instructions, read any guidance information, then read it again. Highlight the key terms and what the funder is looking to support
- Address all points asked in any given question. Don't be tempted to write lots about the easy part to answer and gloss over any harder topics. If they have asked the question, it is because they want to know the answer
- Poorly structured responses are difficult to assess. Keep it simple; sometimes, it helps to start with bullet pointing your response and then elaborate on each one to give a little more information and facts. Keep all responses focused on the project outcomes and needs you are seeking to address. If the question is broken down into bullet points, respond to each bullet point with a new

paragraph/point

- Avoid using jargon and acronyms. The application needs to be understandable to someone with no prior knowledge of your work
- Pay attention to grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Ask a third party to read your application before you send it off. Fresh eyes will also help you to make sure the application makes sense and that you haven't repeated yourself unnecessarily
- Promote your unique selling points and innovation. Think about what sets your project aside from a similar project – is the approach new, have you had excellent results in the past, is there an overwhelming need or urgency? Why are you the right organisation, and this the right project, to achieve the outcomes that you or the funder have set out to achieve?
- Don't hand-write an application form unless it is completely unavoidable. Contact the funder if you need physical support to be able to use the form or application system

## Contents of your application

Funders all have different approaches to what they will require from you in support of your application, but you can expect that your application will need to include sections that cover the following:

**Title**

Can you think of a catchy project 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 the funder's priorities

**Problem statement**

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

- Talk about people – show that you are being led by need
- 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 is the change you are

seeking to create?

- 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 even if you only have to provide a basic outline, you should know the detail to make sure that the money you are applying for will truly cover the costs of delivering the project. If you are applying for a grant over several years, then show costs for each year and don't forget to factor in inflation. Without including inflationary rises, your funding will be worth less by the end of your project and you may need to find additional funds to cover your costs. Some funders have specific ways of dealing with this. Always use full cost recovery, unless the funder explicitly states they don't fund this.

Full cost recovery is a method of budgeting projects or services that allows organisations to recover all costs associated with the delivery of the project or service. It means that you take into account the share of general organisation support costs that are needed to deliver the project.

There are different ways that you can allocate support costs to a project budget and our information sheet Full Cost Recovery contains more information about how to approach this.

**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.

Your local CVC can also provide assistance with writing funding applications.



## Planning and writing a successful funding application

We have a free e-learning course ‘Planning and writing a successful funding application’ which will help you put together a stronger funding application with tools that you can use to support the project planning process.

# After the funding decision

**If your application is rejected**

Success rates for grant applications are low and you will need to prepare for disappointments. If your application is rejected:

- Ask for feedback and read it thoroughly if it is made available (not all funders have the capacity to provide this unfortunately). Look again at your application in light of the funder’s comments and think about how you can strengthen the application for the future. You could contact your local CVC and get their help to improve your application.
- Check your research and the funder’s eligibility criteria. Did you miss a reason why the fund might not be a good fit? Were you unlucky that there were other applications that the funder preferred?
- If you think the fund was a good fit, look for their rules about how long you need to wait before applying again. You may be able to apply straight away but most funders require you to wait a period of time before reapplying.
- Remember there are lots of factors that could lead to your application being rejected, including how many applications were received in that specific funding round, how much money was available, what similar projects might be being funded elsewhere, how many applications were received from your area. Learn from the experience and take that forward with you to the next application.

**If your application is successful**

If your grant application is successful then you can work to deliver your project and build a relationship with the funder. Here are some tips to help manage that funding relationship:

- Check the conditions on your grant confirmation and provide the funder with everything they ask for as soon as you can.
- Check the information about how the funder wants you to credit them for their grant (in publicity etc). Make sure everyone involved in the project knows what is needed, and check that the requirements are being followed.
- Check when the funder wants reports or information from you and make a plan to hit those deadlines. Even if the funder doesn't ask for reports, you should regularly monitor your progress to make sure you are hitting key project targets and review your performance shortly after the end of the project, so you learn from the experience.
- The funder should provide you with the contact details of the person in their organisation that will be managing your grant. Make sure that you send all of your communications to this person and try to build a positive relationship with them.
- You should communicate with your funder whenever needed. This is not just about meeting their deadlines; you should also let the funder know about any changes in circumstances or issues that arise with the project so that you can agree together how to deal with them. The funder wants you to succeed, and will seek to support you in this however they can.
- Remember about monitoring and evaluation requirements. You will need to evidence that your project has achieved its aims and objectives so you must get your monitoring in place at the start of the project so you don't miss out on any collecting vital information and evidence.