



T3SC Factsheet 8

making funding applications

This factsheet is part of a series of three. The other factsheets are: Factsheet 7: Funding Sources and Factsheet 6: Funding: Overview. Before making applications there are steps to go through in preparation. They are described in Factsheet 6: Funding: Overview. Once you have gone through these steps, you are ready to make applications.

Research is key to a successful funding application. Find out all you can about any funders you are applying to. Make sure you fit their criteria, find out what their priorities are and check details such as deadlines, exclusions, size of grants etc. Your application should be tailored to meet the funders interests.

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 telephoning a potential funder (though you might need to write, with a stamped self-addressed envelope) or you could try having a look at their website, if they have one. You should also check with the funder about submission dates for applications and check how they process applications so that you can fit in with them.

As well as checking you're eligible to apply within the guidelines, you will usually get notes on what the funder particularly wants to fund 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.

You also need to look at your group. Be sure what you are applying for, why you need it and how you can prove the need. What is special about your group? What difference will the money make to you and your community - make the funder feel good about their work and happy to give you cash!

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. They ask specific questions, and want answers to each question in the right section, not other, inappropriate information. Also, look for the key words that the funder uses and try to echo those in your application (for example, do they talk about combating social exclusion or promoting social inclusion. Both mean the same thing!)

When your research is complete it's time to start writing your application... Remember you need to sell yourself. 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. Keep saying how you meet them. Remember the following top tips:

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. Do not be vague, make wild claims or sound desperate : don't beg. Make a reasoned argument about why the funder should fund you

Answer all questions fully

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.

Keep it Simple

Avoid acronyms and do not assume the person reading the form knows anything about your group. 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 and make your application attractive to read.

Provide All Additional Information Requests

A prime reason why applications are turned down is because additional information that was asked for has not been sent. Funders usually ask for a constitution or set of rules, a budget and 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 asked for.

Respect the Deadline

Even the best application won't succeed if it arrives after the deadline!

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 ask someone at T3SC to get their feedback.

Address the Application correctly

Last but not least, a point that may seem small but which is very important - 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. 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.

Good luck with your application, and don't forget to contact T3SC who will be happy to help you maximise your chances of getting the funding your group needs.

**for more info please contact T3SC
tel 0161 339 4985 email info@t3sc.org**