



Funding Guides



FUNDING GUIDE 10 : Making Funding Applications

See also FG1 Funding: Overview and FG9 Funding Sources

Before actually making your application to funders there are a number of stages you need go through in preparation. These are described more fully in FG1 Funding: Overview. Once you have gone through these stages you are ready to make your application.

The application process itself has several stages:

- 1: Contact funders
- 2: Read the guidelines
- 3: Write the application
- 4: Provide additional information

1: Initial contact with funders:

Much time and effort can be saved if contact is initially made with funders by telephone to check the eligibility of your project for the funds. (Many of the larger funding bodies now ask interested applicants to complete a pre-application form so that they can advise on eligibility). Usually guidelines and application forms can also be requested by telephone. If no phone number is available and you have to make contact via letter enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope. At this early stage it is also advisable to check the funders' submission dates.

2: Read the Guidelines:

Check again that your organisation or project is eligible for the funds. Points to check are:

- Is the right group/organisation making the application. For Anglican churches, the PCC is the recognised charity.
- Can the funds be used for what you need to spend money on (buildings repairs, equipment, etc)?
- Is your organisation or activity in the list of exclusions?

Within the guidelines there are usually notes on what the funder particularly wants to fund and their aims/priorities. Some funders will provide some examples of projects that they have funded which can provide a helpful guide. You will need to discern exactly what work the funders are looking to support and pitch your application on that basis. 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 should list the points you have to address in your letter, so the following information still applies.

3: Writing the application form

Before beginning to write, read through the whole form or list of questions. This will give you an idea of what should go in each section and what supporting information you need. You are also likely to produce several drafts of your application before the final version is ready so make some additional copies before you start writing or write text on a separate sheet. Try to be succinct and do not include inappropriate or irrelevant information. It is always a good idea to show drafts to colleagues and/or advisers to get some feedback.

Sell Yourself - Before you begin to write, remind yourselves that throughout the application 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 and at every opportunity refer to the ways that you will meet them.

Sell success - Include information about your past achievements and successes and if possible any supportive letters from other organisations/individuals that have benefited.

Answer All Questions Fully - Each question asks for certain pieces of information, make sure you answer all the questions asked and don't add in anything that isn't necessary. Always be honest when answering questions whilst bearing in mind the need to always present yourself in a positive light.

Use Simple Language - Funding decisions are usually made by a group of people in a meeting. They will have a pile of applications in front of them and 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 by ensuring that there are no glaring grammatical errors or spelling mistakes.

4: Provide All Additional Information Requested:

One of the main reasons applications are turned down or held up is because additional information that was asked for has not been sent. Funders usually ask for:

- A constitution or set of rules : It is worth noting that the Charity Commission has approved The PCC Powers Measure (1956) and the Church Representation Rules as the governing documents for PCCs. These documents fulfil the function of a constitution and reference to them as such should be acceptable to funders. They are available on the Church of England website
- A budget
- A set of annual accounts
- Registered Charity Number. The charitable status of PCCs is recognised in law. They are currently excepted from registration with the Charity Commission by Statutory Instrument. It may be acceptable for you to quote your Gift Aid claim number provided that you make it clear that it is your reference number with HM Revenue & Customs as a charity, and not a Charity Commission number.

There may be more - read the guidelines and application form to check.

And Finally

Before sending your completed application think about who you are sending the application to and address them appropriately. You may well be sending your application directly to the person who decides on your grant, and the first impression will be crucial.

It is vital that you get right the name, title and address of the person and organisation you are applying to. Getting these details correct gives the impression that you are a well-organised group with good, basic communication skills - the kind of group funders like to support. Such attention to detail can improve your chances of success, before the funder even reads your application.

You may find the checklist on the following page helpful.

You may also benefit from asking someone else to read through your application, and give you some suggestions on how to improve it. They can do this using the Appendix given at the end of this funding guide. We are grateful to Funder Finder for their permission to use this questionnaire.

A Checklist for Funding Applications

PLANNING AND PREPARATION ARE ESSENTIAL:

- Make time
- Use your time effectively
- Clearly identify what you want to fund
- Target your funding sources
- Check deadlines carefully
- Check guidelines - are you eligible?
- Gather material to support your application

SELLING YOUR PROJECT:

- Be clear
- Be concise
- Clearly state the problem and the needs you want to address
- Describe how you will do this
- Give the funder confidence in your ability to manage a grant
- Demonstrate that you can monitor and evaluate the project while it is in operation
- Demonstrate that you've planned ahead - what will you do after the grant ends?
- Remember your 'plus points' - emphasise what's different, innovative and exciting about your project
- Include letters of support and any drawings/artists impressions of planned developments.

HAVE YOU TOLD THE FUNDER?

- Who your organisation is, and what your project does/will do
- Where you operate, and the people you are involved with
- Why your organisation was established
- What needs your organisation meets

HAVE YOU TOLD THE FUNDER?

- What problems and needs you want to address
- How your project/work will address these needs
- What the outcomes will be
- How you will monitor and evaluate the work

HAVE YOU TOLD THE FUNDER?

- How you put Equal Opportunities into practice
- How you manage your finances
- That you have an experienced and active management committee
- That you have a Constitution/Charitable status

REMEMBER TO ADD YOUR "PLUS POINTS"

- You've carried out successful pieces of work before
- That you give good value for money
- That you've successfully raised funds from other sources
- That your project involves users in its planning and running
- That you're working with other organisations
- That your work is innovative and exciting
- That you work in different ways

APPENDIX :



QUESTIONNAIRE TO IMPROVE A FUNDING APPLICATION

At the stage where a funding application has been drafted but not sent off, people who have not been directly involved in writing the application can be a great help. They should look critically at the document created and not be frightened to make suggestions. We are grateful to Funder Finder Ltd for their permission to use this questionnaire.

Q1 What were your general impressions?

Circle any of the words in the box that apply and add your own

positive interesting professional friendly credible clear
logical muddled confident well-argued reasonable boring
tired cynical opportunistic too long too short
too glossy sloppy type too small type too big pompous
has spelling mistakes apologetic depressing untidy vague
complacent full of emotional blackmail full of jargon too informal
inspiring has clear sections convincing too demanding
grovelling committed easy to read patronising comprehensive

Q2 Did you quickly understand what the application was about? Yes / No

Q3 Did you lose interest while reading it? Yes / No

Q4 On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you think the application:

1	made it clear what sort of organisation was applying?	1	2	3	4	5
2	made it clear what the organisation wanted to do?	1	2	3	4	5
3	made it clear why they wanted to do it?	1	2	3	4	5
4	explained how much money was needed?	1	2	3	4	5
5	dealt with the organisation's financial position?	1	2	3	4	5
6	showed how the organisation would know whether					
7	the work had made a difference?	1	2	3	4	5
8	made a convincing case?	1	2	3	4	5
9	handled any problem areas (if there were any)?	1	2	3	4	5

- Q5 **Did it leave out vital information?** If so, what?
- Q6 **What about the language it used?** Was there any you didn't understand? Any language you thought wasn't appropriate? If so, which bits?
- Q7 **Was there anything in the application that you didn't understand?** If so, what?
- Q8 **Were you able to find all the information you needed** in the application or the attached documents (if there were any)? If not, what couldn't you find?
- Q9 **If you were a funder, would you give the organisation money** on the basis of this application? If not, why not?
- Q10 **How might this application be improved?**