Funding applications

Every funder's application form is different. The first step is to get a copy of the form and any guidelines. Read the guidelines carefully, paying special attention to any information about the criteria the funder uses to make decisions. Some funders don't use application forms but ask you to write a letter to them

Check the deadline for returning the form.

Read the form carefully. Make a note of any extra information you need to find or any questions that seem particularly unclear or difficult so that you can tackle them separately or seek clarification.

Take a copy of the application form before you fill anything in and fill in the copy in rough first. You can then copy or type your answers on to the original form when you are satisfied with your rough copy.

Remember:-

- Answer every question on the form. If you can't then explain why not. It is better than leaving a question blank.

- Use black ink or type your answers as the form may have to be photocopied.

- Don't answer by saying 'see attached' and attaching lots of extra documents - they might not get read.

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- The application form is all that will be considered. Don't send a letter when there is an application form, and be careful too about sending a covering letter which contains information that should be in the form.

- If you get really stuck with a question, try and think about why the funder is asking it, or ring them up to seek clarification.

- Take a photocopy of your completed form before you send it off.

- Keep to the funder's deadlines for returning the form. Late applications will be ignored.

- Be clear, positive and precise about your group and proposed project.

Assessing your application

Have you written a good application? Get someone, preferably from outside your group, to read it through and check it is clear and that you haven't missed out any obvious points.

Checklist for applications

- Are you applying to an appropriate funder?
- Does what you are applying for fit into their funding policies and criteria?
- Is the amount of money you are seeking in line with normal range of grants?
- Is the timing right? What is the funder's deadline?
- Is it addressed to the right person? Have you spelt their name correctly?

Style and Presentation

- Is it easy to read?
- Have you taken out any jargon or abbreviations?
- If it is a letter, is it typed on your letterhead and signed?
- Is the tone positive rather than grovelling or apologetic?
- Is it the right length or can you make it shorter? **Remember**, keep letters to 2 sides of A4 paper maximum.

Content

- Does it say clearly who you are and what you do - the nature of your group and how long you have been going?
- Have you included your group's name, address, phone number and status of the contact person?
- Have you clearly spelt out your project proposal - what you need the money for and why?
- Have you backed up your request with facts and figures to prove the need you are identifying?
- Have you described how you will use the money and who will benefit?
- Have you stated exactly how much you need and when you need it by?
- Have you shown how you will evaluate the grant (if appropriate)?

Budget

- Do your figures add up?
- Have you included all the costs, and are they realistic?
- Have you costed in a contribution to overheads where appropriate?
- Does it represent 'value for money'?

Supporting Materials

Have you included accounts, annual reports, leaflets, etc?

Records

Don't forget to take a photocopy for your file!

What will they expect of us?

Always write to funders and thank them if your application is successful. You never know when you will want to apply to them again.

Your funder(s) will want you to show that you are using the money effectively, and that your project is achieving its aims.

Therefore you will need to have a system for monitoring and evaluating your project. Some funders will be very specific about the information they want, and the way they want it to be presented. You will need to start monitoring right at the start of your project.

RCVDA has information sheets on monitoring and evaluation.

Even if you are not asked for information, it is worth writing to funders to let them know how your project is doing, and highlighting any particular successes.

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