



Advice for Grants

Standard Requirements

- A Governing Document. For example, this may be a constitution, memorandum and articles of association, trust deed or other formal document
- Set of accounts (income/expenditure forecast)
- Copy of recent bank statement
- Independent referee
- Photocopy of Affiliation to NGB sport where required
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults policy (for projects involving vulnerable adults)
- Child Protection Policy (for all projects involving children)

Preparing the Proposal

Before you start

- Approach your application like a job application – everything must be completed correctly, in full and signed.
- Read the guidance notes several times to make sure you fully understand what they will fund and their eligibility criteria.
- Does the time it will take to complete the application warrant the amount of funding you are requesting?
- Can you make a reasonable assessment whether your application is likely to be successful? Are you sure the project fits the criteria well enough and the donor has a significant amount of overall funding to warrant an application.
- Are the claiming and monitoring requirements reasonable for the amount of funding you are requesting?
- Have a project in mind – don't just go after the money!

Which format do I use?

- Does the funder have an application form? Make sure you complete every section of the form - don't leave an answer blank and think it won't matter. Some application forms will only allow a certain number of words or characters which makes a big difference to the way you complete the application and what information you provide. Establish this before you start. Some online forms can be difficult to use so try downloading a dummy form for practise.
- If there is no application form, it is likely the funder will have a specific structure they need you to follow. Be clear what this is and be sure to follow it. Layout and presentation are crucial and your proposal must be easy to read and you must provide all the information funders request.
- What information or supporting documentation does the funder require? e.g. bank statements, constitution, budget, project plan. Don't leave this until the last minute – build it into your timetable.

Writing a Proposal

When you've found a potential funder, you might find it useful to consider the following:

Is your project eligible?

- What are the funder's strategies, priorities and organisational values? How well does your project fit these? Be honest and realistic and don't try and fit your project to a funder if there isn't a good match.
- Investigate what kind of projects the donor has funded in the past, as this will give you a good indication of what they might fund in the future.
- Some funders are keen to fund activities in areas or communities that are disadvantaged in some way e.g. Leek where there are rural isolation and health inequalities.
- Some funder's like to focus on particular types of communities e.g. girls and women / BME
- Some funder's will only fund particular types of organisations (although most will fund charities) or small organisations so check if there are rules on the size of organisation (usually judged by annual income).

Is there time to make an application?

- Are there submission deadlines or is it a rolling programme? Be clear on any deadlines and make sure you leave sufficient time to complete your project planning, draft the proposal, consult with colleagues and partners, and collate additional information before the deadline. Find out who needs to sign the proposal and will they be available to sign the proposal?
- What is their decision making process? How long will they take to make a decision and how does this fit with your project plan? Build in extra time in case their decision is delayed and allow time for confirming contracts, receipt of offer letters and final details.
- Try to produce a project plan/timetable – ensure that you submit at the right time, when do you want your project to start and finish. Consider different stages – application development, assessment and outcome. Consider lead in tie for planning and project commencement (school holidays, sporting seasons, weather and lighting conditions).

Financial issues

- What is the maximum amount of money the funder will give?
- Do they require match funding? At what rate will they provide support e.g. 100%, 75% of costs. Can you use volunteer or staff time, or gifts in kind, as match funding?
- Include some match funding – unlikely to obtain 100% grant aid. Match funding will demonstrate commitment and strengthen your bid, place a value on in kind support time.
- Are there costs that the donor will not fund? e.g. salaries, training, personal equipment. If not, how will these costs be covered?
- Clearly present your project costs – how much will it cost to deliver project? Back up all costs with a breakdown and quotations, also remember to include non-recoverable VAT, contingency, inflation, professional fees, planning/building regulation fees and insurance.

- Always mention '**sustainability**'. Funders might ask how the project will be sustained once funding ends. Try to build into your project 1) new partnerships (makes you stronger for the future), and 2) new training (you are stronger because your people are more competent).

What to Include in your Proposal

- This is your opportunity to sell your project to the funder and show them why they should support your project rather than the hundreds of others they receive.
- Clearly describe the problem that needs addressing and your solution.
- Try to be innovative and creative with your project ideas – try to make application stand out from the crowd – competitive process – e.g. use of different sports / technology / partnerships and priority groups
- Make it easy for the person assessing your application to judge if your project fits their criteria. Assessors don't have long to review your application. For example, Sport England staff have 40 minutes to review applications so make it easy for them to understand your project.
- Make it clear which specific elements of the project you require funding. Copy the words they use to describe their criteria when you are explaining how your project fits their requirements.
- Clearly evidence the need for the project – use different sources, demonstrate you understand your sport and community needs – use your community profile / statistics / surveys and reports / community consultation / evaluation of existing services / current provision.
- Be clear on your project's fit with national, regional and local strategies and make this clear. Demonstrating how your project will contribute to others work is critical. This also gives the funder confidence that your project is based on need and acts as a third party endorsement.
- It's always good to include some outreach community work in the bid! – develop partnerships etc
- Give the funder confidence you know what you're doing. Demonstrate the project will be successful and make it clear what the project will achieve, its outcomes and the benefits it will bring.
- Objectives = something worked towards e.g. to increase participation in adult rowing. Outputs = amount produced / timescale – e.g. 2x2 hour coaching sessions per week over 8 weeks. Outcomes = end result – e.g. increased participation in rowing.
- Provide evidence of your organisation's credibility by mentioning previous successful projects and partners with whom you work.
- Be realistic about what you will achieve. Don't include high targets, which you are unlikely to meet.
- Ask a colleague to proof read your application to check for spelling mistakes or poor grammar. An application full of mistakes is hard work for an assessor to read.
- Remember to enclose all the supporting material as required.

Apply to several funders at the same time to increase your chance of success. Once you have the basic information it is easy to cut and paste text, however, it's crucial to tailor your document for each funder. If you find you are having to significantly change your project to meet a funder's criteria it's likely the funder isn't a good fit for your project and if successful, you will end up delivering a project which doesn't fit your need. Always take a copy of the application documents and any supporting information. If a funder calls you want to know exactly what they received. In summary make sure you:

- Demonstrate the need for your project
- Show your project is well planned
- Accurately cost the project
- Show how the project will make a difference.

Contacting the Funder

Building a relationship with a funder is very important in fundraising. Some funders don't encourage contact, however, many are happy to meet, receive emails or phone calls. Where possible contact a funder before you submit your proposal.

Contacting a funder is an opportunity to ask for clarifications on their criteria or information they require. However, the most important aspect is to introduce your organisation and sell your project. This will help you clarify if it's the type of project they want to fund, if there is a particular element of the project they suggest you highlight or address a concern they know the assessors may have. Talking to a funder before you submit your proposal can significantly increase your chance of success.

It is good practice to contact the funder a short time, a few days, after you submitted the application to check the documents have been received and all the information needed is attached. This is another opportunity to continue building a relationship with the funders. Find excuses to contact the funder during the assessment period, for example, perhaps some match funding has been secured, a partner has confirmed their involvement, to check if they have any queries or concerns that they may not have pro-actively contacted you about, but they may welcome an informal conversation to allay their fears and feel they are reducing their risk.

Tips and Tactics

Write in their language, for example:

Question: What activities will take place if you receive a grant?

Answer A (bad practice): Buy footballs, bibs, cones. Hire a pitch. Go on the Man Utd tour. Do some cricket.

Answer B (good practice): Attract 20 girls aged 11 to 15 for a new weekly football session; Qualify 5 new level 1 football coaches and 3 new level 1 cricket coaches, mainly from existing parents; Qualify 20 young people as young sports leaders; Organise Kwik cricket festival to attract new participants aged 8 to 12; Provide information on youth lifestyle issues in partnership with youth service.

- Prove It ! – Any sort of proof that there is a need for the new activity is better than just your word. Evidence of a public meeting, a survey, waiting lists are all simple but effective.
- Don't write it alone – even if you think you are JK Rowling, your application will be much, much better if at least 3 other people read it and comment on it. It has to be clearly understood by everyone who might read it.
- Always be **clear** and **concise** – waffle is a disaster. You have less than one minute to impress the officer or panel member reading your application.
- Give your project a clear and descriptive title. For example, don't call it a 'Youth Project', call it a 'Youth Mentoring Project'.
- Check to make sure you have told them clearly who you are, what you do, what your project is, how much it will cost, and why they should give you a grant.
- Have you got any quality assurance awards? (e.g. Clubmark accreditation).

- Have you received grants before. Who from? When?
- Use **bullet points** – they are not classic English grammar, but they are very effective at giving a clear, concise, and professional message.
- Get **quotes** or **estimates**. It is no good just saying that some new sporting equipment costs £3000. How do they know that? It significantly improves your chances of getting a grant if you go to the trouble of getting quotes or estimates.
- Always mention '**monitoring**' and '**evaluation**'. They need to know there is a checking system to stop things going wrong. Use phrases like 'rigorous monitoring' and 'systematic evaluation'.