



Dos and don'ts of grant funding applications

Do:

1. Read the eligibility criteria and the guidance before starting the application. Then read them again! You don't want to waste time writing an application if you don't meet the funder's criteria.
2. Contact the funder and don't be afraid to ask questions. It is a good opportunity to talk about your project and find out whether it is the type of project that the funder would be interested in.
3. Get other people involved. It can be a lot of work to pull together the information necessary for a funding application and to write it effectively. Involving others ensures that everyone is happy with the application and that all involved feel ownership of the project.
4. Be concise and make sure you answer the questions!
5. Ask an external reader to proof-read your application to make sure everything makes sense. Think about whether someone who doesn't know your organisation can understand the project and see the value of it.
6. Do think your budget through in detail because you'll have to stick to it!
7. Collect evidence to back up the need for your project. Quote reports, studies and statistics, and also views that you might have from stakeholders through consultations and focus groups.
8. Communicate the difference your project will make! It is easy to get bogged down in what the project will do, but what funders are mostly interested in is how it will make a difference to people so it is important that this message is communicated well.
9. Start putting together a folder full of useful information for funding applications.



Don't:



1. Don't apply without reading any of the guidance notes.
2. Don't try to force your project/organisation to fit criteria – sometimes its just not the right fund for you!
3. Don't apply for the maximum funds available and make your budget fit that total - build your budget based on researched and realistic needs.
4. Don't start until you have all important documents ready: Governing document (constitution, rules or memorandum and articles), accounts, policies (safeguarding children or vulnerable adult, environment, volunteer), business plan/project plan, insurance etc...
5. Don't apply for a project beyond your capacity... (consider collaborating with other organisations if you think you would be able to deliver this project with partners)
6. Don't leave it to the last minute!
7. Don't assume that the funder knows your organisation or understands the need for your work as well as you do – remember you are the expert and need to communicate to them very clearly why your project is needed and the difference it will make!
8. Don't just use national or general statistics – compare them to local and try to gather as such relevant, local evidence as possible.
9. Don't forget grants are not the only way to bring in money. There are many other means to generate income and it is wise to have a good diversity of income streams in your organisation. Examples include fundraising events, donations from supporters, membership fees, local businesses, philanthropy, trading/selling services, partnerships/collaboration, contracts etc...