

## Guidance Notes

# *Making Better Funding Applications*

### **What do funders want to know ...?**

The best way to get an idea of what funders want to know when assessing a funding request, is by *'putting yourself in the funder's shoes'*. If you were the funder or a member of a grants panel, what would you want to find out about the organisation or project requesting funding?

Funding applications differ in format and content, however, in general, they are designed to obtain key information about your group or organisation and the project you want to implement. Funding applications are designed to find out information covering the following main issues:

- a) Who are you?
- b) What do you want to do?
- c) Why?
- d) How are you going to do it?
- e) Where will it be done, when and by whom?
- f) Who will benefit?
- g) How will people benefit?
- h) How will we know that people have benefited?
- i) How much does it cost?

#### **a) Who are you?**

Funders want to know what your organisation does, how long it has been in existence, its legal structure, and how many staff members and volunteers the organisation has.

#### **c) What do you want to do?**

*What will the project do?*

*What is the money for?*

*What activities will you run?*

*What makes these activities the best ones to address the issues affecting the community or people you are targeting?* Here you can explain why these activities will meet the specific cultural or physical needs of your target group (i.e. beneficiaries).

**b) Why?**

*Why is this project needed? What is the demand for such services?*

You will need to show that the project is the result of a real demand. Show that you are familiar with the issue you want to tackle and how relevant it is to the area where the project will be operating. For example, if your project wants to address poor school performance of children from refugee families, explain the scale of the problem and how it affects these communities and children. It is also important to show that you have consulted with the local community or the people your project is targeting and have used the information they have given you to decide how the project is going to run and to ensure it is relevant and accessible to them.

**d) How are you going to do it?**

*How will you implement the project?*

You will have to show that your organisation has the capacity and competence to implement the project. Provide information about the structure of your organisation and what roles the workers have. Evidence of the capacity of your organisation might include having run a similar project before.

**e) Where will it be done, when and by whom?**

Where will the project be based, when and by whom? Some funders prefer local projects, i.e. make full use of available local resources and often make special reference to the use of volunteers. Show that the people responsible for delivering a particular service are qualified to do so.

**f) Who will benefit?**

Funders want to know who will benefit directly from the project and those benefiting indirectly. For example, if the project provides play facilities for children, the children will be the direct beneficiaries. But the parents and the community as a whole will also benefit. The people implementing the project will also benefit, as they will learn and will gain more confidence to implement similar projects. Often proposals request the numbers of people benefiting from the project. Be sure that you clearly identify both the direct and indirect beneficiaries so that the true impact of your proposed project can be evaluated.

**g) How will people benefit?**

It is very important to show how the project will make a positive difference to the lives of people. Play facilities for children can contribute to happier and more sociable children. In the longer term, it may contribute to a reduction in anti-social behaviour, crime and have other long term benefits for the children, families and society.

### **h) How will we know that people have benefited?**

This is a very important question. Funders want to know how you will demonstrate that the project delivered what it was supposed to deliver. They want to know if the money was spent properly and if the project achieved the expected benefits. You will have to explain how the project will be monitored; i.e., how you are going to record the events as they occur. This will include where the activity was run, who attended and what they said about it. Also, you will need to say how you are going to assess the impact your project is having on the beneficiaries and how this information will be used to develop the project to provide the best possible outcomes from your work.

### **i) How much will it cost?**

You will need to prepare a detailed budget which relates directly to the project that is to be funded. For example, if you include the purchase of a computer, the need for this equipment must be explained in terms of how it will enhance the project activities and increase the effectiveness of the service delivery.

A detailed budget should explain how all the costs were arrived at and include quotes from different suppliers for the purchase of equipment. You might want to list all of the resources you will need to implement each activity and place a cost next to each item showing how it was calculated. This should include a cost for depreciation on any items that your group already owns as they may eventually need to be serviced or replaced, as well as the proportional cost of staff and administration time, particularly if you have staff paid for through another project. Don't forget items like insurance and health and safety training for staff and volunteers.

Although this is a lot of work it will provide you with a justification for your costs if your budget is challenged and give you a tool for monitoring expenditure when you begin work on your project.

## **Writing your funding application**

There is no 'one-size fits all' formula to writing funding applications. The suggestions below are intended to be only guidelines, which you might find useful to keep in mind when tasked with the duty of completing a funding application. Above all, what is important is to write an application *you feel satisfied with*, and *reflects the work of your organisation*, as well as *the benefits* it brings, while at the same time convincing the funder to support you.

### **Before beginning to write the application:**

- a) **Plan your project carefully** – you can use the Guidance Notes: '*Planning your project*'.
- b) **Read the guidelines carefully**– these will give you clues on what the funder wants to fund, their priorities and any other funding conditions or requirements.
- c) **First read the whole application form or list of questions** – this will give you an overall idea as to how the information you need to provide should flow and alert you to any gaps in your information.

**When filling in funding applications you should keep the following in mind:**

- a) What are the funder's priorities and how will the project meet them.
- b) You need to sell your project or service – i.e. you need to show how important it is and what benefits it will bring to the life of people - You need to give the impression that you are *businesslike* (professional and focused, not well-meaning but woolly!)
- c) Your application should be clear and to the point – avoid jargon

**After completing the application make sure of the following:**

**You answered all questions** - make sure you answered exactly what each question asks for. If a question does not apply to your organisation, explain why not; do not leave any blanks. Some questions ask for more than one piece of information, e.g. '*explain what activities will be implemented and how will you use the grant*'.

**You provide all the required additional information** – generally this includes your constitution, a financial report or accounts and the project's budget.

If you would like further information or advice on any of the issues in these Guidance Notes, contact the Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Development Agency (WVSDA) on 020 8875 2844/5/6 or e-mail: [smallgroups@wvsda.org.uk](mailto:smallgroups@wvsda.org.uk), [info@wvsda.org.uk](mailto:info@wvsda.org.uk).

More Guidance Notes can be found on our website, [www.wvsda.org.uk](http://www.wvsda.org.uk).

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