



Writing Funding Applications

Before Applying

Identify the need	It's all right having a good idea but is there a genuine need for it and can that be proven.
Make your case	Can you as an organisation justify going for the idea, are you the best and most cost effective answer to the identified need.
Analyse your strengths and weaknesses	Do you need to work on these are there opportunities to grasp, or threats to mitigate.
Have all necessary information ready	Constitution, Business Plan, Budget, Planning Permission, Research/Proof of Need etc.
Identify the potential funder/s	Who will fund the idea/project, how do you find out about them, are you going to have to develop a 'funding portfolio'?
Check eligibility in funders information	Often the initial information makes the funder sound perfect for your project, but on further investigation they don't cover your area of interest or just your area (geographically).
Contact funder (if possible)	Will not say 'yes', but will say 'no' (which saves wasting time)
Understand how the funder's assessment policy operates	Is grant assessment ongoing or does it only occur when the Trustees meet – do these link into your project timeframe?

Types of Applications

Letter	Usually for smaller grants, can be difficult to cover the necessary points to be successful.
Application Form	Normally for bigger grants, should be easier as information is asked for – as long as what is asked for is what is given!

Writing an Application Letter

Up to two sides of A4 – single sided, stapled

No longer, easier to read, less likely to get separated – consider the assessor.

Headed Paper – if available

Looks more professional.

Your Organisation's contact details at the top

Again more professional and easier for the assessor to know who it's from.

If you have a contact name, address the letter to them

Small trusts often use a solicitors as the contact address so if you have the name of the relevant person within the practice - use it!

What you need

Too many applicants write an essay on what they have already achieved and then almost as an afterthought state why they are applying – the first paragraph should state why and how much you are asking for.

Who you are

Then you move on to your organisation and it's aims – state if you're a charity etc. and give your registration number – don't expect the assessor to find it on your headed paper.

Background information – costs, other funders etc.

Cover other relevant information including proof of need, costs, partners other funders etc.

Say again what is needed

At the end it is worth saying, again, how much you're applying for – don't just say any donation will be appreciated; this doesn't help the funder's administration etc.

Sign it!

Might sound obvious but a large number of applications are sent unsigned, then depending on the Trust they maybe returned or just ignored.

Completing the Application Form

Do not 'cut and paste' information

Unless it is something like your Mission Statement – make all applications unique – very easy to spot a cut and paste job.

Answer the question/s

Don't write what you wish to say – answer the questions asked.

Stick to Word Counts

This doesn't mean to the exact number, but as close as necessary, don't exceed and don't fill because you've already stated everything needed.

Make it as readable as possible

As much as possible break up the text with spaces, bullet points etc. – not a block of text filling a whole side of A4.

Before Submitting**Get it checked**

Ask someone independent of the project/organisation to read through it – and be willing to accept their feedback.

Make copies

Just in case! Plus very useful as reference copies.

Submit

Do it the requested way – e.g. Cumbria Community Foundation wants the application emailed, but need the final sheet signed and sent by post.

The Result**You receive a grant**

Congratulations – now the hard work starts – acknowledge the grant and be aware of all the requirements that are connected to it.

You're turned down

If you've covered all the previous steps - See if the funder will give you feedback – this will be of benefit when you complete your next application to another trust