



Fact Sheet 7: Making Funding Applications

This fact sheet is part of a series of three. The others are: **Fact Sheet 7: Funding Sources** and **Fact Sheet 6: Funding: Overview**.

Before making applications there are steps to go through in preparation. They are described in **Fact Sheet 6: Funding: Overview**. Once you have gone through these steps, you are ready to make applications.

The application process itself has several stages:

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| 1: Contact funders | 4: Write the application |
| 2: Read the guidelines | 5: Provide all additional information |
| 3: Read the questions | 6: Address the application |

1: Contact funders

The first thing to do is contact each potential funder for more information. If you have a phone number, use this first. You can save yourself time and effort by checking out the website of the potential funder or making a call to check you are eligible for these funds.

You should also check with the funder about submission dates for applications and check how they process applications so that you can try, as much as possible, to fit in with them.

2: Read the Guidelines

You now have another chance to check that your organisation or project is eligible for these funds. Points to check are:

- **Do you have to be a registered charity?**
- **Is your group organised in the right way (do you need a constitution, management committee etc?)**
- **Can the funds be used for what you need to spend money on (equipment, wages, etc)?**
- **Is your organisation or activity in the list of exclusions?**

With the guidelines, you will usually get notes on what the funder's their aims or priorities. You need to make sure that your project helps the funders to meet them in some way. Try to pitch your application on that basis. This means you highlight the aspects of your organisation that best meet the funder's aims.

3: Read the Questions

If you are applying to a Trust or Foundation, there may be no application form and you only need to write a letter. However, the guidelines will list the points you have to put in your letter, so the following information still applies.

Before beginning to write, read through the whole form or list of questions. This will give you an idea of what should go in what section. Information about your organisation should be presented as the funder wishes. Specific questions require answers in the correct section, not other, inappropriate information.

4: Write the Application

Make Drafts

You are likely to produce several versions of your application before the final version is ready. To do this, make copies of the application or write the text on a separate sheet. Show drafts to colleagues or advisers to get their feedback.

Sell Yourself

Before you begin to write, remind yourselves that throughout the application you have to keep certain things in mind. In general, you have to show funders that:

- Your organisation and project meet the funding aims
- There is a real need
- Your project effectively meets this need
- You are capable of managing the money properly
- You cannot do the project without financial assistance

As you write, keep in mind the funder's priorities and keep saying how you meet them.

Sell success: be positive about your achievements, show yourself in a good light. Be honest about difficult issues, but show a positive side where you can.

Answer All Questions Fully

Each question asks for certain pieces of information. Make sure you answer all the questions and don't add anything that isn't necessary. This point may seem obvious, but one of the top reasons for rejected applications is simply that the questions are not answered or are answered inappropriately.

Use Simple Language

Funding decisions are usually made by a group of people in a meeting. They will have a pile of applications, a lot of reading to do in a short time. So make your writing clear, simple and to the point. Do not use jargon where everyday words will do. Describe your work in your own terms. Use short sentences and make your application attractive to read.

5: Provide All Additional Information Requested

A prime reason why applications are turned down is because additional information that was asked for has not been sent. Funders usually ask for:

- A constitution or set of rules
- A budget
- Some kind of accounts

There may be more - read the guidelines and application form to check. Funders may reject your bid immediately if you do not send everything asked for.

6: Address the Application - Correctly!

Last but not least, a point that may seem small but which is very important: who you send the application to and how you address him or her. You may well be sending your application directly to the person who decides on your grant, and the first impression is crucial.

It is vital you get right the name, title and address of the person and organisation you are applying to. Getting them wrong suggests you do not care about your relationship with the funder, and are sending out lots of applications without taking the time to research funders properly. Getting these details absolutely correct gives the impression that you are a well-organised group with good, basic communication skills, the kind of group funders like to support. You have already improved your chances of success, before the funder even reads your application.

VASA can provide a personalised service to assist you with matters relating to funding and fundraising. Please contact Dominic Momcilovic for advice on 01789 298102 or by email dominic.momcilovic@vasa.org.uk