

## Voluntary Sector Support

## How to write a funding application



## Things you'll need:

- A specific project
- Facts and/or statistics
- Case studies

**Trust fundraising is not rocket science, yet there is a certain degree of skill and knowledge involved, and certain tried and tested methods can be employed to enhance your chances of success. Although not an exhaustive list, here are some important tips to get you going, using the acronym TRUST to help you remember them easily!**

## T - Tell a story

Everyone likes a good yarn, not least trustees. Tug on those heartstrings and make the message you are trying to get across more personal. Case studies are vital in trust fundraising so keep a constantly updated supply to hand, with quotes if possible. Look at the rhythm of your proposal – does it come together well and flow as an entire document, or is it a bit disjointed? It should be easy to read, just like a story, with a beginning, middle and end. However, do make sure that there are some hard facts along with the emotional side of things (see the section on Specifics).

## R - Research and relationships

Always do your research. An enormous number of worthy bids end up in the trustees' bins because the applicant has not done their research properly. Read the guidelines or giving criteria closely and do not apply to trusts that will not fund your particular type of project. Build relationships where possible with the administrators and trustees. If any of your major donors or Board members know the trustees, make contact and develop their interest in your organisation and project. Remember, relationships are not a short-term undertaking and take careful planning and cultivation.

## U - USP

What is your organisation's (or project's) Unique Selling Point (USP)? Are you the only one to do what you do in your local area/region/country? Do you do something differently to others? Can you offer better or wider-reaching services? What will be the consequences of not receiving a grant? Learn to really sell your organisation and its work.



## S Specifics

Trustees do not appreciate vague applications. Be specific with facts and figures when writing about why your project needs their money, and be specific again about exactly how much money you are asking for. Finally, be specific when you are telling them what you will do with their money, how many people/animals etc will benefit, what the intended aims and outcomes of your project are, and in what timescale.

## T Timing

Linked in with undertaking proper research, find out wherever possible when the trustees' next meeting is and when the cut off date is for you to send in your bid. Ensure you leave yourself plenty of time to write the bid, obtain any signatures or referees' details required, and allow time for others to critique your bid and make amendments. Also, thank any trust that gives you a grant immediately and do not forget to diarise the date by which you need to submit a grant report, allowing plenty of time for you to collate the relevant information from all parties.

## Writing a Funding Application Checklist

### THE ISSUE/NEED

Explain the problem(s) or issue(s) you exist to solve.

Is this a very local problem, or is it part of a wider (maybe even national) issue?

What statistics do you have that back up your claims?

How have people/organisations attempted to tackle these problem(s) or issue(s) before? If they have been unsuccessful, why would you say that is? [this is where you begin to explain why your approach is the right approach]

### ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION

- History of the organisation.

- Your Charity Registration number should be included if they have not asked for it elsewhere in the application process.

- Your purpose: why you are needed.

- What it is that you do to address the needs you identified in the first section [overview followed by detail - include things like how you identify your beneficiaries or how they find you]

- Results and outcomes [last year, or even better, last 3 to 5 years]

- Describe what life would be like for your beneficiaries if you did not do what you do

- Information on staffing (roles and number of staff), Board of Trustees and any sub-committees.

### WHAT MAKES YOUR ORGANISATION DIFFERENT?

Going back to the final point in the first section, this is your chance to explain why what you do works.

How have you developed your approach to meeting the need identified in the first section? Explain how you have refined your offer with your beneficiaries in mind – maybe your beneficiaries co-designed what you do.

How do you know what you do is the 'right' thing for your beneficiaries?

Has your work been recognised i.e. have you been accredited in any way/won or been nominated for any awards/attracted new supporters/gained media coverage/etc

What is it about you that is different?



## OUR FUTURE PLANS

What does the future look like in terms of the need you identified? (i.e. if the problem is likely to get worse, explain why and remember, the chances are you are talking about people here, so try to convey the human cost/impact of doing nothing.

What does the future look like for your organisation? Sum it up in one punchy sentence, then expand and give the detail:

- Be clear on your numbers i.e. how many people you will work with over what time-frame
- Define your outcomes – what does success look like
- Give the detail of how you are going to achieve this – as much detail as you can

## FUNDING

How much money do you need to achieve what you have stated you will achieve in the previous section? Ask for what you NEED, not what you think you might get.

What legacy will a funder help you to create? This is the big picture stuff.

Explain what will happen if you don't raise this money i.e. the impact on your beneficiaries or the need you exist to meet.

Explain how you have been funded in the past and describe your funding model (what % do you get from what sources).

## APPENDICES

As many of the following as possible would be helpful:

- Latest set of audited accounts
- Most recent annual report/impact statement
- Relevant images including of your work in action
- Plans/diagrams/photos of repairs needed (capital projects)
- Statistics (you may have used some in the opening section but may have more that might be relevant, so store them here
- Client/beneficiary feedback
- Case studies
- Feedback from volunteers
- Testimonials for supporters/donors