

Do's and don'ts when completing applications

This short guide has been compiled following feedback from our independent assessors for our local grant scheme 2011. It provides some top tips on do's and don't when completing an application.

DO

1. Read the eligibility criteria and the *Information for Applicants* 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 criteria.
2. Answer the question. Read the question, and any sub-questions. Check your answer is to all parts of the question.
3. Contact the funder and don't be afraid to ask questions. It is also a good opportunity to talk about your project and see if the funder would be interested to fund your organisation.
4. Get as many people involved as you need to develop a good application.... because it is a lot of work and also ensures that everyone has ownership of the project. Everyone that has been part of the decision making process from the start will be more likely to stick to the plan!
5. Ask an independent reader to proof your application to make sure everything makes sense and that someone that doesn't know the project can picture it.
6. Do think your budget through in detail because you'll have to stick to it! Use actual costs not guesses/ estimates.
7. Avoid jargon, particularly, 'management speak' or 'sector specific' language, if it does not help your application (which it very rarely does).
8. Include a sentence or two (at the most) which succinctly summarises your project, its target group, and its purpose. Something like this is helpful: "this project will enable 40 volunteers to make a difference to the lives of young people who are disabled by helping them to engage in mainstream community activities. Local

youth group leaders tell us this group is difficult to engage and would work with us to ensure that they are better able to provide access”.

9. Ensure that budget calculations and apportionment methods are fully explained.
10. When describing project activities and timetables, consider them as project milestones which can be designed to help you monitor progress.
11. When describing outcomes, be specific and realistic and provide us with something that can be measured.
12. When describing your quality and management standards discuss how these apply to the project, not in general terms.
13. Describe your 'exit strategy' (how to intend to carry on after the grant).
14. Have a back up copy in case of technical problem with uploading. We will accept this in cases of proven difficulty.

DON'Ts

1. Don't apply for the maximum funds available but build your budget based on needs.
2. Don't apply for a project beyond your capacity... (you can consider collaboration if you think you would be able to deliver this project with partners).
3. Don't leave completion of the bid to the last minute - you won't get an extension. IT hiccups can cause problems which can't be resolved in time.
4. Simply say you will add value; explain what that value is and how it will be added. E.g. this project will contribute towards improving young people's health indicators; particularly tooth decay, smoking and obesity. The ward in which we are based has been assessed by the NHS current standard of oral health indicates a strong need to provide oral health promotion services to raise awareness and aspirations and improve self care technique.
5. Simply say you will remove barriers; explain what the barriers are and how you will remove them. E.g. The project aims to tackle cultural stigma regarding mental health by empowering 16 Somali volunteers as cultural brokers and peer advocates. Through Information Workshops, volunteers will facilitate genuine dialogue between their peers and health professionals. This will help to reduce service-users isolation.

6. Assume that the assessor will understand your organisation or your work. Describe what you do and how, to give a picture of your organisation.
7. Have the finance director (or similar) input jargon in the financial section.
8. Make spelling mistakes!
9. Use abbreviations unless explained.
10. Say that, if funded, you will 'develop a project plan'. Assessors will expect that the project plan has been developed prior to application.

E.g of good project plan

Aim	Project Activities	Timetable	Deliverable
Recruit and train 290 volunteers to deliver project by end of Year 3.	Develop volunteer role descriptions	September 2011	90 volunteers recruited by year 1
	Develop volunteer management support framework	September 2011	90 volunteers recruited by Year 2
	Produce volunteer recruitment literature	September 2011	110 volunteers recruited by Year 3
	Develop volunteer training package	October 2011	Published volunteers training package on website and in paper form.
	Run first volunteer training	November 2011	15 volunteers trained
	Evaluate first course	December 2011	Improved volunteer training package
	Run 2 nd volunteer training	January 2012	15 volunteers trained
	Run 3 rd volunteer training	February 2012	15 volunteers trained

Useful resources and support

You may find the following events and resources helpful.

Courses for writing applications

- Grant Finder

<http://www.grantfinder.co.uk/index.php?t=1&p=fundingtraining>

<http://www.grantfinder.co.uk/index.php?t=1&p=bidwriting>

- Your local CVS provides free workshops on how to write successful bids.

To find your local CVS please see:

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Local+and+Regional/findoutaboutvolunteeringinyourarea>

Hints and Tips

- Know How Non Profit

<http://www.knowhownonprofit.org/funding/fundraising/grants-funds-and-corporate-fundraising/writing>

<http://www.knowhownonprofit.org/studyzone/write-a-winning-funding-bid>

- Funding Central

<http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/Page.aspx?SP=6282>

- Third Sector Magazine

http://thirdsectormagazine.com.au/news/seven_tips_for_successful_grant_writing/008060/

- Fit 4 Funding

<http://www.fit4funding.org.uk/help-and-advice/applications/good-applications/>

- NCVO

<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/advice-support/funding-finance/income-sources/advice-on-fundraising-applications>