

How to...

...apply for Funding

The bad news is that when you apply for funding, your chances of success are about one in ten and falling as more organisations chase less money. The good news is that a well-written application that specifically answers the funder's needs will shorten the odds considerably.

Answer the questions Above all, be clear about what the funder wants to fund. This requires discipline. It is all too easy to spend time writing a lucid paragraph that encapsulates everything you believe, but if it doesn't relate to the funder's needs – press 'delete'.

Tell a story Try to construct an application that presents a clear narrative that describes who you are, where you're at and where you want to go. You will need to find the right balance between demonstrating past successes and demonstrating the need for funding in order to expand or develop. This might include words of support, market research and even pictures of happy, smiling faces at one of your events.

Inspire Some funders are on the look out for something innovative. When you read your application does it inspire you? It should. If it doesn't, go back to basics and try to fix on what excites you and motivates you to do what you are doing. (It is worth noting that filling out an application can also be a very useful way of helping you to define and explore what it is you are doing and want to achieve).

More than one If you apply to more than one funder, remember that each application should be directed uniquely at each funder. You will find that you can 'cut and paste' some sections but the key to a successful funding application is the same as with exam questions - answer the actual question and avoid the temptation to write too generally.

Life after the grant It will add enormously to the appeal of your application if you can demonstrate clear targets as well as some degree of sustainability after the grant has expired. Funders also look for some degree of monitoring and you should make some reference to how you intend to satisfy that requirement.