

Writing funding applications

When writing an application, you should consider the following:

Keep it short

An application letter should be no longer than two sides of A4. Keep the sentences short. Use active language, e.g. 'our scheme helped 200 users in six months' not 'in six months, 200 users were helped by our scheme'

Give them what they want

If the funder has a set format for applications, follow it. Make sure you provide every piece of information they ask for.

Tell them who you are

Briefly explain a bit about your organisation's background, aims and activities early on in the application. If you are new to the funder, show them they can trust you. Provide press clippings and endorsements. Tell them about notable members or supporters. Refer to the support you have received so far.

Describe the problem...and your solution

Offer enough information for someone completely new to the issue.

- What is the issue?
- Why is it a problem?
- What will you do to address it?
- What will you not be able to do?
- What difference will the donation make?
- How will you measure success?

Ask for funding for a project

Funders like to give money to something tangible and new. They are reluctant to fund vague 'administration costs'. Even if you are continuing existing work, try to present it as a specific project. Put it in a timeframe. This helps you set a deadline for results.

More from DSC

[Proposal Writing for Beginners \(Course\)](#)

[How to Raise Money from Trusts \(Course\)](#)

[Writing Better Fundraising Applications](#)

[The Worldwide Fundraiser's Handbook](#)

[Effective Fundraising](#)

[Complete Fundraising Handbook](#)

[Charitable Trusts – Developing and Increasing your Support \(Course\)](#)

What the experts say

Whoever your potential funder is – whether it's a Trust, company, local authority, or anyone else, you must DO YOUR RESEARCH.

Find out as much as you can about the potential funder before writing your proposal.

Find out what the potential funder wants from you – a short letter, a detailed proposal or completion of their own application form.

[Proposal Writing for Beginners \(course\)](#)

Be positive

Use positive language. Talk about what *will* happen when you get the money. This will help the funder feel confident that you can make a difference. It also helps you show that your project does not begin and end with this application.

Offer a human story

Try to include case studies of people you have helped or plan to help. This lets you show the impact of your work.

Avoid jargon

Keep the language simple so an outsider can understand the issues. Only use jargon if the funder has used the terms themselves.

Offer evidence

Support any claims you make with evidence. Provide enough to back up specific statements. You can send extra evidence, relevant promotional materials, annual reports etc. along with the application.

Ask for money

This is very important. When asking for money you could:

- Ask for a specific lump sum or an amount over a period of time
- Use the value of previous donations as an example
- State your overall target and how you are hoping to reach it
- Offer a shopping list explaining the cost of individual parts of the project

Provide a budget

The budget should explain how the money will be spent on the project. Include all the relevant costs. If possible show how you determined the costs.

Check, check and check

Get someone outside the project to read your application before sending it. They can look for errors and inconsistencies and ask for explanations.

If the problem is not widely recognised, refer to authoritative reports or obtain endorsements from prominent people.

[Complete Fundraising Handbook \(2007\) p319](#)

A good proposal may not get a bad project funded. But a poor proposal might considerably reduce your chances of success...

By improving your proposal you will improve your fundraising effectiveness. You are more likely to raise the money your organisation needs – and you will do this with greater confidence, with less effort and at lower cost.

[Writing Better Fundraising Applications \(2002\) p1-2](#)

Your budget should be based on your action plan. It needs to be well thought through, and not inflated. The figures should look sensible and cover all the costs. If you put in a sum for contingency you should say what sort of eventualities it might be needed for. Trusts are unlikely to give money away to fund 'the unknown'.

[Fundraising from Grant-making Trusts and Foundations \(2000\) p37](#)

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