



Fundraising: getting started

Almost all volunteer groups or charities need money to operate. Even with lots of volunteer workers, a group will still need money to cover some or all of its costs. As there is only a limited amount of money available in grants and an ever-increasing numbers of charities competing for a share, fundraising will need to be a central and focussed activity of your group. Money is essential to your group to enable it to carry out its objectives. Planning how to raise this money needs to be done methodically and well in advance, if your group or charity is to survive.

Given the central importance of fundraising to the survival of your group, it is best to set up a sub group (your fundraisers) to deal specifically with fundraising. The most important factors in being successful in receiving funds are:

1. Planning ahead
2. Identifying the appropriate funders to apply to
3. Writing good applications.

Planning

Once your group has identified what project or projects you want to undertake, you need to think about what you need to do to achieve this and how much money will you need to fund these projects.

Currently, funders generally like to finance specific projects or services so you will probably find it useful to prioritise your objectives and divide your work into discrete projects. You will then find it easier to target your fundraising appropriately.

Once you have decided exactly what your projects are you will need to do two things for each project: write a proposal detailing how you intend to carry out your project and draw up a budget. For example, a domestic violence group wants to do some research with their clients. They want this research to guide their work over the coming 5 years so it's quite a detailed piece of work. They plan to undertake the work by holding focus groups, having on-line surveys, taking on staff to do the research and compile reports, and so on. The work is likely to take almost a year to complete fully. Having worked out how the project is going to run, they work out a budget itemising each bit of expenditure from stationery to staff costs.

Proposal

This should describe the problem or issue you are trying to address and explain why there is a real need for this work that is not being met by any other group. Sometimes the funders you apply to will have their own application forms to fill in, but they will usually ask similar questions so thinking about these in advance by drafting your own proposal will be useful no matter who you apply for. Try to get everything into the proposal and then edit appropriately for each funder.

ACTION	EVIDENCE
Explain what your organisation or group is all about	Show what your group wants to achieve and how you are organised.
Explain what your project is about and what it aims to achieve.	What outcomes does your project have? What do you want to achieve?
What is unique about your project?	Show how your work is different from any other groups'.
Is there a real need for your project?	Include details of any research you have done and show any facts and figures which back up the need for a group or service like yours. You can find local statistics or demographics via U.K statistics authority on http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ www.statistics.gov.uk/census
Show how you are going to meet that need	Explain the actual project or service you will provide.
Show who will benefit from your project / group	Give details of which group(s) will benefit and what geographical area(s) you will cover.
Has your idea been tried before? This is often called a 'pilot' project.	If so, explain whether it was successful or not. If not, show what lessons you learned and what you will do differently to succeed.
Explain how you will promote your group or service	Give examples of the strategies and methods you will use to attract your intended target group(s).
Outline your group's management and staff members and what they bring to the project	Outline the organisation's structure – confirm management committee in place and any relevant sub groups. Outline the staff structure including the roles of specific staff who will work on the project.
Show how you will manage the project finances	Outline process; role; and responsibility of relevant management committee and staff member.
Show how you are going to measure that the project is a success	Describe the periodic checks you will make to ensure that the project is working and how you are going to deal with any feedback you get.

Budget

This should detail ALL the costs for carrying out your proposed project. You should aim to recover all of your costs from funders – this is known as a full-cost recovery model. For example, if employing staff, you wouldn't just include their salary in a funding bid, you would include the national insurance and pension costs as well. Similarly, if you were budgeting to buy a computer, you wouldn't just include the initial cost of the machine. You'd also want to include the cost of software, maintenance and support, peripherals like printers, consumables like printer ink.....and so on.

You also need to be sure to include costs in your budget for things like electricity, gas, services and inflation. Don't 'guesstimate' them. Allocate a sensible percentage of the costs to cover these. Think about all of your core costs: management time, pay for staff like a finance worker or admin support, and so on. All of these costs need to be met.

Try to make your budget as accurate as possible by getting quotations for work, equipment, wage rates, rental – whatever work your project entails.

You might find the funders you are approaching won't fund all of your costs so you'll need to amend your budget for each particular funder, but at least you'll have the full cost of the project calculated.

Raising money takes time. Funders may only consider applications for grants once a year, or in some cases every 3 years, so it is very important to make your fundraising plans as far in advance as possible. In reality, you will need to start planning your funding strategy anything up to two years in advance.

Fundraising Strategy and Funders

The next thing to do is to work out how you will raise the money – what will your fundraising strategy be? Identifying the most appropriate funders to approach is essential to a successful outcome and your fundraisers will need to research thoroughly which funders are most likely to be receptive to your particular group's work.

Generally, you should also aim to spread your funding out as much as possible. Some funders will only want to fund specific projects or for a finite period of time and you need to take this into account when planning your fundraising strategy.

Set up a file detailing all the funders you have applied to and keep details of dates and outcomes.

Writing applications

Once you have identified which funders you are going to apply to you will need to start writing applications. Tailor each application for each funder. The personal touch is important. Having a well-written and researched proposal and an accurate budget will increase your chances of success.

Other documents you may need to help you write your application are:

- Your group's written constitution

- A mission statement
- Your equal opportunities policy
- Anything that enhances your credibility, for example, details of any media coverage, celebrity supporters, charitable status, funders who have supported you in the past or evidence of projects you have successfully managed in the past.

You MUST read the guidelines for the funders you are approaching. Writing applications takes time, so don't waste it by applying to funders that don't fund what you want to do. For example, some funders don't fund staff costs so don't ask for them.

Most funders will have application forms. The proposal you wrote for the project will help you fill these in but you may need to rephrase things to fit the funders' requirements. However you apply, ask a colleague, or even better someone from outside the organisation, to read over your application before you submit it.

Where you can get help

WRC runs training on Fundraising so have a look on our website for details of the next course.

www.wrc.org.uk – search for training courses

Read our factsheet on budgeting. www.wrc.org.uk – go to our members' area

Contact your local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) or the National Association of Councils for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) on 0114 278 6636 or search their site on

www.nacvs.org.uk.

Use networks e.g. journals, internet, interest groups.

Get your name on mailing lists such as Grants Net- <http://www.grantsnet.co.uk/>

Check out our fundraising database. www.wrc.org.uk

Books

These books are available in WRC's library. Contact us to make an appointment to come in and use them.

- The Complete Fundraising Handbook. Nina Botting & Michael Norton. Published by the Directory of Social Change. London. 2001, ISBN 900360 84 5.
- Writing Better Fundraising Applications – A Practical Guide, Mike Eastwood and Michael Norton. Published by the Directory of Social Change. London 2002, ISBN 1 903991 09 9.
- Fundraising from Grant-Making Trust and Foundations - How To Guide. Published by the Directory of Social Change. London 2000, ISBN 1 900360 77 2.
- Raising Money for Good Causes: a Starter guide, by Jane Sutherland & Mike Eastwood, pub. DSC in association with North Kent CVS, 1998, ISBN 1 900360 34 9.
- The Fundraisers Guide to the Law Bates, Wells & Braithwaite and the Centre for Voluntary Section Development, pub. In association with CAG, 2000, ISBN 1 900360 780

Or from the Directory of Social Change

- Effective Fundraising An informal guide to getting grants and donations by Luke FitzHerbert. Price £9.95
- Avoiding the Wastepaper Basket A Practical Guide for Applying to Grant-Making Trusts by Tim Cook. Price £5.50.

Websites

General

- www.acf.org.uk Association of Charitable Foundations
- www.fit4funding.org.uk Charities Information Bureau – an excellent site with lots of resources
- www.charitynet.org.uk Charity Net
- www.fundraising.co.uk UK fundraising
- www.dsc.org.uk The Directory of Social Change

Selection of Trusts

- www.tudortrust.org.uk The Tudor Trust
- www.baringfoundation.org.uk Baring Foundation
- www.ellerman.org.uk John Ellerman Trust
- www.comicrelief.com Comic Relief
- <http://www.allenlane.org.uk> Allen Lane
- <http://www.cuf.org.uk> Church Urban Fund
- www.kingsfund.org.uk Kings Fund
- www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk Lloyds TSB Foundation
- <http://www.youthbank.org.uk> Youth Bank
- www.nof.org.uk New Opportunities Fund
- www.princes-trust.org.uk Princes Trust
- <http://www.rdinfo.org.uk> Health-related research funding information