

# Introduction to Funding Applications



Rural Community Network  
SUPPORTING RURAL COMMUNITIES

This fact sheet deals with information that may be required when a community group is making a funding application where there is *no* application form. If the funder has an application form, this must always be used.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What will we need when we are making a funding application?

Listed are a number of things that your group may need when making a funding application – certain things are essential and these are listed in the first section.

#### Essential Information

- Constitution (you will need a constitution if applying for public money)
- Charity number (if you have one)
- Costing/budget and quotations
- Bank details
- What the group proposes to do, ie project description, including aim, objectives and desired results (expected outcomes)
- Committee list naming office bearers
- Contact names and numbers

*Additional Information* – you may also like to include these if available if they support the application or if they are specifically requested.

- Community audit
- Business plan
- Exit strategy (what will happen at the end of the funding period)
- Accounts (if your group has had money before)
- Letters of support

- Annual Reports
- Minutes of previous meetings/Annual General Meetings (only if specifically requested)
- Technical Information - Economic Appraisal/surveyor's Report/Architect's Designs
- Bank Statement
- Commitment to raising additional funding

### 2. Where will we go to seek funding?

Here are some places that you could check for funding opportunities (you may have a contact or you may just phone up and make an enquiry).

- Borough/District Council
- Government Departments or special Government Initiatives
- Trusts or Foundations
- Community Foundation for Northern Ireland book 'Funding for Voluntary Action – A Guide to Local Trusts for Northern Ireland'
- Local Strategic Partnerships
- Other community groups who have received funding or run projects
- Local, regional and national newspapers
- Internet
- Library books, 'Directory of Grant Making Trusts' or the 'Complete Fundraising Handbook'
- Funder Finder, Grant Tracker or Grantnet software packages to assist in sourcing funding. RCN, NICVA, RSNs and other regional, voluntary organisations have these packages for use by their members.

Note: Also don't forget the community /community group may wish to do some fundraising.

### 3. How will we decide what's best for us?

Here is a list of some things to consider when deciding if the funding body is the appropriate one for you to apply to. These things will help you to decide if your application is reasonable or inappropriate. Ask your group members all of these questions before you send in the application, otherwise it might be a waste of time.

- How much does the group need? What amount of money is available? What size of grants are normally given out?
- When is the closing date for applications? Will the group be able to meet this deadline?
- What type of projects will the funding body support? Are the project aims/objectives appropriate to the causes they will support?
- Does our group meet **all** of their stated criteria? For example, a charity registered with the Inland Revenue, a cross community project?
- Is the group within the funder's catchment area?
- Is there any particular reason why the organisation would be especially keen to support this project? (particularly good when seeking sponsorship).
- Is there any reason why the community group would not accept this funding? (Some groups object to National Lottery funding because they consider it promotes gambling).

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## 4. What are the issues for consideration when making a funding application?

- Is there an action plan that shows all aspects of the project and its implementation have been considered?
- What is the group trying to do? How will the project outcomes impact upon the group/ community or other people?
- Are there other local groups or agencies trying to achieve the same objectives? Can the group link up with them to make a stronger case? Will there be unnecessary duplication?
- Can the group put together a package of funding to achieve the total cost (sometimes called match funding)?
- Can the group agree a timescale with the funders for the project, ie does it take two or three years to complete different phases?
- Can the group afford to pay any professionals who might be needed to carry out work in preparing the application, for example, a consultant to write the business plan.
- How will the group manage the project if it is funded? Does the group have the necessary skills/resources/people to undertake all the tasks that will be required?

Don't forget the Plus/Minus Exercise. The group can always do the plus/minus exercise to help clarify people's thinking on a particular issue. For example, can the group put together a package of funding to achieve the total cost?

### Funding Application – Draft Format

The following is a draft format for making funding applications (where the funding body does not have an application form to be completed).

- Group information – give the name of the group and two or three sentences outlining why the group came into being and what it does in general (perhaps quote the group's purpose as written in the constitution).
- Project description – describe what it is the group wants to do, how it fits in with the group's overall purpose and how it fits in with the funder's priorities.
- Aim and objectives of the project – state these clearly.
- Results – describe the proposed outcomes of the project, what will happen if it takes place, how it will impact and on whom it will impact. Outline how the group will know that the project has made a difference to the community and how the group will monitor and evaluate the project.
- Budget/Costings/Cash Flow – detail the budget required for the project, how much the group is requesting in the application and how it will meet any shortfall (match funding).
- Bank details – give the name and address of the bank, account number, sort code, type of account and the names of all signatories.
- Include a list of all committee members, noting the office bearers. Explain the structure of the committee/membership. Is it representative of the community?
- Contact details – the name, address and telephone number of the person who is taking responsibility for this application and who will be able to answer any questions about the application.
- If the group is a charity registered with the Inland Revenue, make sure to include the reference number.

Funding bodies receive large numbers of applications on a regular basis. The community group's application has to stand out from the crowd. First impressions do count. The application should give relevant information in a concise manner.

### Assessment Visits/Telephone Interviews

A community group preparing for an assessment visit/telephone interview by a funding body should not feel threatened. An assessment visit/telephone interview is an opportunity for community group members to confidently present their project, expand on the information in the application and give the funder a sense of the wider community.

### Plus/Minus Exercise - example

Plus (positives)	Minus (negatives)
All costs met	Different funders have different requirements, timescales and ways of reporting which might be difficult to co-ordinate
Project can go ahead	Increased work load/time consuming
No debts	Might have to phase a project as opposed to completing altogether.