



# YB·S

YOUTHBANK  
SCOTLAND

## 'How To' Guide

# Contents Page

<b>Write a Funding Letter</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Secure Grant Funding</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Get Corporate Sponsorship</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Self Generate Funds</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Build Your Capacity to Fundraise</b>	<b>12</b>

**YB·S**

**YOUTHBANK  
SCOTLAND**

**involve • invest • inspire**



# How to... *Write a Funding Letter*

Some funding bodies, especially trusts and foundations do not produce application forms but request an application letter, which outlines details of the organisation and project which requires funding. Getting the content and structure of your letter right is essential but it can be time consuming. Constructing a well-thought-out letter can make the difference between success and failure.

## Before you Write the Letter

### Ensure you have the concept of the project right.

It can be difficult to get funding for very innovative ideas (funders can be conservative). YouthBank has an established track record so while youth-led grant making is still innovative and new to some, it is established good practice with over a 10 year track record.

### Are you happy with the name of the group/project?

Is it meaningful, memorable and pronounceable?

### Know who you are writing to

Funders dislike obvious speculation letters that have been sent to several funding bodies. They want to see that you have made a particular effort to write to them. Adapt the letter as much as possible to meet the interests of the particular funder. Find out as much as you can about the funder and make sure you know what they fund. **Most funding applications fail because they do not meet the basic criteria of the funder!** If possible, ensure the letter is addressed to a specific person.

## The Letter

- Clear, concise, readable and grammatically correct
- Two sides of A4 only

Don't work alone, take time to write it, don't try to reinvent the wheel and don't be frightened to share information.

### The Content

Take the reader through the organisation's/project's aims, background, outcomes, delivery methods and available resources. Keep the content as straightforward as possible and remember you may understand the work of the organisation and the jargon it uses, but will the funder?

### Aims

- What will be achieved?

- Who will benefit? Define your key target group(s)/geographical areas
- How will they benefit?
- How much do you need and for what purpose? Be specific

## **Background**

Give context. Set the scene. Highlight your project's work in relation to government and local policies, priorities and well researched needs (if it is relevant to do so). **Why do this?**

- Prove there is a need. No need = no funding
- Define your research – state how you know, how you found out and specify who will use/partner the project
- Highlight why you need to develop the project, particularly if you are filling a current gap, solving a problem or taking a fresh approach
- Identify competitors but define your similarities and differences. Is there a need for all of you to be doing it? If yes, make the case. If no, define your unique approach or it could be seen as duplication.

## **Outcomes**

Be clear about the change/difference you will make and set the objectives that will get you there. These should be SMART objectives: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound.

What are the key quantitative (numbers) and qualitative (difference made, impact) targets?

What's the end result? State whether there is a next step or an exit strategy.

## **Delivery**

Build a strong picture of your project.

Who will do the work? Be clear on the role of the management committee, staff, how many volunteers are involved, how many users expected and how they are going to be involved.

How will the project be structured? Specify your main activities and milestones with dates.

Where will activities happen? Give specific locations, geographic coverage.

When will the project start and finish. Is this flexible? Produce a timetable or draft action plan.

How will the work be monitored and evaluated? Specify clear mechanisms if you have them or define your approach if not.

## **Resources**

People, things (equipment), money raised and need. Be prepared to provide the potential funder with a budget. This gives them the confidence that you know what you are talking about, that the project proposal has been well thought through and offers value for money.

## **And finally for your letter...**

- Ask someone not involved in the project to read the letter – do they understand everything you are saying?
- Provide the funder with further information if they require it
- Make sure you meet the application deadline



# How to... *Secure Grant Funding*

## **What are grants?**

Grants are no interest payments to provide a particular service or activity around a shared priority between you and a funder. You will complete a grants agreement which sets out the terms and conditions of the grant – what you need to do and what you mustn't. Grants are generally non-returnable except in exceptional circumstances where grant terms and condition are not met.

It is important to find the right grant before starting work on your application as you may be wasting your time and that of the awarding body. Grants are provided by many sources; from central, regional and local government, or various other national and local bodies such as charities and community foundations.

## **Are you ready to make an application?**

Make sure that you give details and background information about your organisation. Funders often decide whether to award grant aid not just on the proposed project, but also on the credibility of an organisation. A project may be approved, but funders often decline applications if there appears to be a risk where the organisation is concerned. To prevent this from happening:

- Give a brief account of how and why your group was started
- How it is run – does it have a constitution?
- What area it covers
- What ethos it is based on
- What additional support it has in place etc

Basically, give the funder an insight into the type and breadth of work that you are currently capable of. It is essential to emphasise the fact that your organisation is well run. If you are applying for public or charitable money, funders will require evidence that there are sufficient systems in place to prevent grants from being used for private gain.

## **Five steps to making a successful application**

1. Demonstrate a need for your project
2. Show that your project is well planned
3. Accurately cost your project
4. Provide evidence of good management
5. Illustrate how the project will make a difference

## **1. Demonstrate a NEED for your project**

Many applications are rejected because funders do not believe that there is a need for the project, or because they are not persuaded that your idea will solve a particular problem or is what the target group actually want. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What needs do your target group have?
- How do you know that they have such needs?
- Why is it important that these needs are met?
- How will your proposed project meet those needs?

‘Need’ can cover a number of aspects such as unemployment levels, a lack of educational achievement, crime levels etc. To demonstrate your target group’s ‘need’, you must have facts and figures to support your case. You could use statistics from a recognised source or conduct your own survey asking people about their view. It is important not to rely solely on stats to paint a picture of your project. Bring in the human aspect by including quotes from your targeted group.

## **2. Show that your project is well planned**

Funders will always want to see evidence that your project is well planned. Specify the main aspects that will help to achieve your aims and make your projected possible. You must tell the sponsor:

- What it is you are going to do
- What difference your project will make in terms of benefits to your targeted group
- When and where your project is going to happen
- How you are going to carry out your project and what you need to do it (eg equipment, premises, staff)
- Who will be responsible for conducting the project
- How you are going to measure whether your project has achieved its aims and made a difference

Most sponsoring bodies will not give out grants simply for a good cause.

## **3. Accurately cost your project**

You will need to calculate how much money you require to enable you to carry out the project, justifying the amount you have requested. Draw up a budget for your organisation’s work as a whole and a separate budget for a particular activity or a single figure for a one-off item of equipment. When drawing up a budget, you should include all aspects of your project – like salaries/cost of the staff involved in the administration of your project; premises and related expenditure; communications; and any travel or training. Get estimates or quotes to illustrate how you have worked the costs out – do not guess – don’t over or underestimate your project costs. Be as realistic as possible! Make sure that you tell them over what period of time the project is likely to run.

## **4. Provide evidence of good management**

Funding bodies will always want to see evidence of good management and that your organisation can deliver the project. It is extremely important that you have efficient procedures for the handling

of finances within your organisation (i.e. a good bookkeeping system and properly prepared accounts) and that you can provide evidence that you will be able to account for the money that is given to you.

## **5. Illustrate how the project will make a difference**

With any grant application, funders will always want to know that the grant they have provided is making a long-term difference to the lives of the people benefiting from the activity. They need to be sure that the money they are giving is being spent wisely. As such, the awarding body is interested in the positive outcomes derived from the assistance they are offering, and its significance to the beneficiaries rather than to the applying organisation. The grant schemes prevalent in today's funding world strongly highlight this point. It is essential that you emphasise you are working 'with' the community and that their views and needs are considered within your project plans.

When defining the difference your project will make, look back at what impact it might have on the community, environmental and/or local economy as a whole. You are more likely to meet the aims and objectives of the funder and increase your chances of securing the funds you desire.

It doesn't stop when you are awarded the funds! When you are awarded a grant, most funding bodies want to see information illustrating how you are achieving your aims and how your project is progressing. They will expect to see project monitoring and a number of measurable outputs to enable them to assess how successful their investment has been, and to judge whether a group/project is really making a difference. Monitoring can be very time consuming but very important. You must think about monitoring at the planning stages of your project and build it into your daily work. Set specific targets that you want to measure or milestones that you want to reach, and make a decision about how you are going to measure whether you have achieved them. This will also show funders that you really do care about your project and the difference it will make.

### **Presentation**

The layout and presentation of your application is vital. Make the structure stand out by using clearly defined titles and subtitles, with consistent use of capital letters, bold and underlined text etc, and select a font that is easy to read and makes best use of space. Always be aware that information can often be presented in a more helpful and easy to understand manner in tables, graphics or figures rather than in text. If an application form specifies how you must complete it, make sure you double check that you have obeyed all the rules and instructions with regard to format, headings, enclosures, signatures etc. Pay attention to detail!

Get the name of the individual and the funding body correct by ringing to enquire who you should address your application to. By avoiding statements like 'To whom it may concern' or 'Der sir/madam', you are letting the funder know that you have made the effort to find out about them.

### **Meeting the Funders' Objectives**

It is important to be clear about why you are seeking funding. This must meet the objectives of the funder. When you receive the guidelines/criteria from the funding body, read them very carefully. It is always better to contact them to discuss your project – in fact, some funders prefer this approach. This can save you a lot of time and effort. When writing an application, try to see it from the funder's perspective.

- Answer every question

- Write as concisely and as accurately as possible
- Do not make assumptions about what the funding body may or may not know about your project or organisation
- Paint a simple and understandable picture of your project
- Keep it free from technical terms and jargon but if you do have to use such terms, ensure that you define them first

### **Why are applications unsuccessful?**

One of the main reasons proposals are unsuccessful is because they have been submitted to the wrong funding scheme in the first place. It is common for people to spend too much time on writing the proposal and not enough time analysing the key features of a funder's programme. Do not shoehorn or squeeze your proposal to fit into the format and eligibility criteria required. Identify the most appropriate scheme and spend time producing a well-structured proposal with key aims that are aligned with programme's funding objectives.

The most common reasons why applications are rejected:

- Failure to illustrate why the project is needed
- Plans are not explicit and concise on the application form
- The project is poorly planned
- There is no indication of what the money will be spent on
- Funder's guidelines have not been followed
- Failure to demonstrate they fulfil the fund criteria
- Budget is inaccurate or there is little evidence of good financial management
- Applicant is incapable of successfully running the project, including effective monitoring and evaluation of the activity.

### **And finally...**

Be clear, be concise and demonstrate that there is a need for your project. Demonstrate that you are capable, skilled and equipped to fulfil this need and that you have the ability to capture evidence of the difference that you make.

Don't send your application immediately after writing. Ask a critical friend to read over it to see if it makes sense and check that your figures and additions are accurate. Give yourself plenty of time to complete it and then leave it to 'blossom'. When you look at it with fresh eyes, ideas might spring to mind which you had not previously thought of or you might pick up on things that could be re-worded to get your point across better.

Remember you are also a grant maker, so it might even help to put yourself in the shoes of the funder and imagine it is your money.

***Would YOU fund it?***





# How to... *Get Corporate Sponsorship*

## Corporate sponsorship is the support you can get from a business

### **Identify your unique selling point (USP)**

To be successful you need to think outside the box and ask yourself why the company you want money from would want to support your organisation. Ask yourself what it is about your organisation that would make them want to donate to you, rather than your greatest competitor. This should leave you in no doubt as to what your USP is. Once you have worked out your USP, the next task is to work out how donating to your organisation will benefit the company donor; this is your selling tool to secure the deal.

### **Do your homework before meeting the potential sponsor**

When requesting a meeting, send a letter enclosing a document outlining the strategic aims and objectives of the organisation for the next couple of years. Invite companies to become a part of that vision. This will set the tone for the meeting and illustrate your professionalism. When attending the meeting, look the part. It is a business meeting so dress accordingly. You must look credible.

Research each of the companies and the kinds of charitable concerns they have contributed to in the past. To research a company, look at their website and any publications they have produced, such as an annual report. Many companies are upfront about who or what they support and why they support them. Many companies will also have a vision statement. As a group, consider whether you think your YouthBank can share the company's vision and can work with the company. Consider this before you approach the company. When you meet the company let them know that you are aware of where their interest and priorities lie. Research will also allow you to decide whether you want to progress a relationship with the company; do you share values? Be clear on what you can and cannot accept. You are not selling your soul to the devil but entering into a partnership that should be beneficial to both parties.

### **Create a clear and robust partnership agreement**

This is like the funding agreements that your YouthBank will give to the people you fund. It sets out what you can expect of each other. Developing a partnership agreement is a contract between your YouthBank and its partner. This can be informal or legally binding. It is an open way of detailing what you want to achieve, how you want to work and who will do and contribute what. It also means that you can discuss how to tackle problems before they arise.

### **What can you offer your corporate sponsor?**

Outline the benefits to the company. If you are successful in persuading a company to make a charitable donation, think about what you can offer, as a charity, in return. If you are being seen to consider the benefits for the donor company, you are already lifting yourself out of the crowd by being original, often companies are expected to give but get nothing in return.

Identify early in the meeting what each company might want from their involvement. Every company will want something different in return for their investment so be clear about what you can offer and what you will accept. You know the ethos of your group so do not compromise this. Be clear on what you can and cannot accept. As a group consider and decide what you are comfortable and confident in accepting. Think about what the company may want you to do, how they will use your logo or images and how they will publicise the partnership. Carefully consider the implications of your association with any partner. If you are not comfortable and confident, be clear on why and either renegotiate OR do not progress. This should all be covered in your partnership agreement.

Some companies will want to donate because they believe in your concept, while other companies want to increase their profile; some want to boost their corporate social responsibility credentials and others want to increase staff morale and retention. Whatever the reason, rarely did anyone write a cheque for nothing. There is always a reason for what they do and it is your task to discover what that is.

Offer a variety of opportunities for promoting the work of the companies. You can assist them achieve their charitable goals in the following ways:

- Branding of company logos in promotional material for events or materials
- Sponsorship deals for main events
- Newspaper/online articles to promote events and publicise good work

### **Success**

Successful corporate sponsorship is not about writing a cheque, instead the more you layer the returns for the company, the better your chances of success. The recipe for success is to involve them on as many levels as possible – donations, events, mentoring etc. The greater range of people involved, the greater the impact. Companies really do care about what happens to the cheque they write, and the better the feedback from the charity, the greater involvement and better the relationship you build with them.

### **And finally... top tips for corporate fundraising**

1. Research the company you are targeting
2. Dress the part at the first meeting
3. Provide a professional presentation, offering opportunities for involvement on a number of levels
4. Develop a clear and robust partnership agreement that you are both confident and comfortable with
5. Listen to advice and stay true to your values.



# How to... *Self Generate Funds*

Generating your own funds for your own activities can be an excellent team building experience and develops your understanding of the value of money. Fundraising for your own group demonstrates your commitment to your group and its ongoing purpose.

## **Tell Others What You Are Doing**

Sometimes people will offer to help but if they don't, you are still sending out a positive message that young people are working hard for what they need. This can challenge a negative stereotype often held about young people.

Many funders now expect some kind of match funding or contribution from another source before they will allocate funds. Your own fundraising could be the match funding contribution.

Discos and fashion shows are great but they need funds and resources to make them happen, for example to hire a DJ, hire a hall, print posters and tickets, as well as adults to steward the event. Your group may have a member who is or has links to a DJ or music project that could assist you to keep costs down

## **Consider Working with Another Group and Split the Profits of a Fundraiser**

There are several benefits of this. It will lower your risk of failure and enables you to widen your volunteer base of those who can do the work to make the fundraiser happen. They will bring different skills and it may widen your audience of who will come to support you. Both groups split the profits equally or proportionately based on number of volunteers involved.

## **How to... Raise £1000**

You can put as little effort or as much effort into it depending on what you want to achieve.

- 1000 people give or raise £1
- 200 people give or raise £5
- 100 people give or raise £10
- 20 people give or raise £50
- 10 people give or raise £100

**Whatever your fundraising target, break it down to make it more manageable with less intimidating amounts.** You may decide to run one activity or a series of smaller activities to raise your targeted amount.

**Q: If you are doing a series of activities, how do you make sure all your group contribute?**

A: You can set individual targets. This is NOT what you as an individual pay, but it is what you raise. You do not have to do anything by yourself but if seven of you bag pack and raise £700 that is £100 towards your individual target OR if you have a coffee morning that raises £500 and there nine of you involved, each of you raised £55 towards your target.



## How to... *Build your capacity to*

*fundraise* - Ideas where you need little or no money to start

- Bag Packing at a supermarket
- Holding a sponsored event
- Football cards
- Car wash
- Activities that can involve a wide age range such as
  - Treasure hunts
  - Talent show
  - Coffee morning
  - Beetle drive
  - Race night
  - Cake sale
  - Family fun day/night
  - Open day/night
- Exciting experience and sponsorship e.g white water rafting, zipline
- Do something at another group's event
- A coffee morning at a community event
- Stall at a jumble/car boot sale
- Guess the number of sweeties in the jar
- Raffle
- Be creative