

RESEARCHING FUNDERS

Once you have planned the project for which you are seeking funding and it has clear aims and objectives the next stage is to identify and research potential funders.

In this topic we will help you know how to search for grant funding and how to select the most appropriate funders for your project. If you attend course two 'Funders and Applications' you will have a chance to learn how to identify funders and to use some resources to research them.

WARNING: DO NOT BE FUNDER LED



Beware of the risks of chasing particular funds just because they are there! If you change your project just to fit funders' criteria your original aims and objectives may also change. Remember who your project was intended to benefit, how and why.

Only choose the funders which match your project so you can stay in control of your project.

BUT.....YOU CAN TAILOR YOUR APPLICATIONS

You can focus on a particular aspect of your project to increase the number of funders that will be available to you and to help funders understand how it fits with their criteria. For example if you are holding art workshops to increase the confidence and social inclusion of people with learning disabilities then you will highlight the art aspect for art funders, but will emphasise the benefit to the service users in an application to funders with a priority for people with disabilities.

Look through the funder's guidelines to research their 'eligibility' and 'priority' criteria and remember if the funder is not relevant to your scheme or organisation move on and find one that is!

ELIGIBILITY

A majority of funders have fixed eligibility criteria. These define which type of organisations or scheme/s can apply.

For example: They may fund groups which are constituted in a certain way, for example, most Trusts and Foundations will only fund charities which are registered with the Charity Commission.

The funder will provide guidance on how much they will give as they have various grant sizes and they may state that they will only fund projects of a certain size. You must ensure that the total cost of your project and the amount you are requesting is within their guidelines.

Also, they may only give funding towards capital or revenue costs, or a set combination of both.

PRIORITIES

Most funders will only fund organisations which benefit communities they prioritise, for example disabled people or young offenders. Also they may only provide funding to organisations which benefit communities in a particular geographical area which they have prioritised, either locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

So being eligible is one step but showing that you are a 'priority' is quite another.

FUNDING RESOURCES – WHERE TO FIND THE RIGHT FUNDER

Your local Funding Adviser has resources available which you can access to help you research funders. This will provide you with the information you need to retrieve up to date funders' guidelines and application forms.

The following is a selection of useful resources, most of which can be made available to you free of charge when you make an appointment with your local Funding Adviser based at your local infrastructure organisation (for more details go to the contacts page of this website):

- **Searchable databases:** These can help you to identify the right fund by inputting information about your organisation and project, making your research task quicker and easier, for example, Grantnet (a link is available on this website).
- **Books:** The Directory of Social Change (DSC) publishes directories of Trusts and Foundations every year. Please note: as soon as books are published they are already out of date. It is therefore always worthwhile double checking the information by contacting the funder if possible.
- **Internet searches** and specific web sites: Many funders now have their own website so you can download their up to date guidelines and application forms.
- **Funding Fairs:** Attend local Funding Fairs organised every 12 to 18 months by the local infrastructure organisation so you have the opportunity to meet funders face to face to discuss your project.
- **Newsletters:** Sign up to receive your local infrastructure organisation's newsletter which will provide up to date news on funding opportunities.



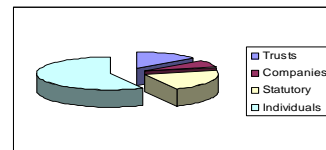
PRE APPLICATION CONSIDERATIONS

Before you make a funding application there are a few things you need to be aware of.....

1. **Relevant/appropriate fund:** Does your project match the funder's eligibility and priorities as stated in the up to date guidelines? If not, do not apply.
2. **Timescale:** Find out how often the funder's meetings are held as you may be able to submit your application/proposal at a later stage if the project is not yet fully planned. Find out when decisions are made and when the funding is released as this may be too late or too early for your project's needs.



3. **Committee support:** Ensure that your committee is aware you are submitting the application and that they fully support the project as the funder may want to visit your organisation and talk to your committee members.
4. **Taken advice:** Make an appointment to see you local funding adviser so they can help you write a successful funding application and can read through a copy of the application before it is sent off.
5. **Requirement for match funds:** Funders may not provide you with a grant which covers the total cost of your project, and they may request that you have a certain percentage of other funding in place before they can fund your project. Some funders may restrict where this other funding can be accessed i.e. not additional statutory funding, volunteer time, in kind contributions.
6. **Implications of**
 - creating application: Some applications can take weeks to complete so make sure you have enough time set aside.
 - possible 'approval': Once you have received funding ensure that you follow through what you stated in the funding application form, for example, you may have asked the funder to fund a particular part of the project so ensure that this does occur. You should also ensure that you consult with the funder if you need to make any changes.
 - monitoring and evaluation: Find out what requirements they have and make sure you will be able to do the paper work while you are delivering the project.



CONCLUSION

You should now have a clearer idea about how to find the right funder for your project or organisation. If you attend Course Two of the Funding Training Programme you will be able to acquire a deeper understanding of this information and it will provide you with a chance to put this into practice by giving you time to look through some resources.

Your local Funding Adviser is available to support you on a one to one basis by helping you to develop your project, research the right funder, plan a funding strategy, and give you advice about any funding applications you would like to submit. Visit the contacts page of this website for the contact details of your local Funding Adviser so you can make an appointment with them.

Also, download the other factsheets in this website to assist you along the other fundraising steps.