

Top tips for grant applications

Making a solid case for support through a well written grant application is essential for any organisation seeking funding.

We manage a wide range of programmes that invest in strengthening communities.

Our grants recognise the inspirational role of community groups, projects and charities in identifying and meeting local needs.

We also award educational grants and scholarships.



Read the fund information carefully

Each Fund will have its own unique criteria that will explain its aims, who can apply and what you can apply for. Be honest to your organisation and to your beneficiaries by applying for a project that your organisation has the ability to deliver.

Ensure good governance

We look at the organisation as much as the project. Governing documents hold the core information about your organisation and should be working documents that are regularly reviewed – a document where the contents are put into action - not a document kept on a shelf and never looked at.

Key documents are the rules of your organisation – often referred to as your constitution, your latest set of accounts or an income/expenditure sheet and your safeguarding policy. Please see our helpsheets on Organisation Structures and Minimum Standards Required to be Eligible for Funding for further information.

Understand Unrestricted Reserves

'Unrestricted Reserves' (sometimes referred to as 'Free Reserves') are 'monetary reserves that are not tied in to a particular use'. It is recommended good practice to have a set limit of between 6-9 months operating costs in unrestricted reserves and to have a policy regarding this.

To not have any unrestricted reserves could raise concerns that the organisation is unlikely to survive the short term and that the project is unviable. We need to understand that your Trustees are aware of this risk and are taking steps to increase reserve levels in the long term.

High unrestricted reserves could indicate that your organisation is in a healthy position with lots of money in the bank. It would appear therefore as though your organisation does not need a grant. You should explain if high reserves are the result of savings put aside for a specific purpose - to purchase premises for example.

Be honest about this figure within the application form as this can be checked within your annual accounts.

Show your understanding of your local community

We want to see that you know your community well and understand the issues it is facing. Tell us about these issues and how they affect the people you work with.

Try not to use generic statistics, local information that relates to your area is more realistic, but ensure it applies to the people you work with. Ensure your application is fact-based, don't exaggerate your claim but also don't underestimate the value you bring to a community.

Write in simple and easy to understand language

Write your application in clear English or Welsh, avoiding the use of jargon and of acronyms. Assume we will not know what you mean!

Make sure your figures add up

Providing us with a cost breakdown helps us to see that the project you're requesting funding for has been planned and all costs have been taken into consideration.

If you are applying for part-funding please tick the items you are applying for from this fund and tell us where the remaining funding will come from, including when you are expecting to know the outcome of this funding.

Show us how you know that this project is needed

Explain the process you have gone through to find out that this project is needed.

Include any community consultation, any relevant local information and project monitoring where work is ongoing.

This shows us that you have taken the views of your beneficiaries and used that information to shape the project you are proposing. Be passionate about your work, tell us why your organisation is special and explain why your beneficiaries think you are special.

Be sure to explain how you will show that your project has been successful

For example:

- Increased membership from X to Y over 12 months.
- Formal feedback via two questionnaires at the beginning and end of the project.
- Video clips showing reflections by beneficiaries.
- Feedback from a third party such as teachers, neighbours or parents.

Please tell us as clearly as possible what you would like to spend the funding on

For example: we will employ a fitness tutor for one hour once a week over 12 months. The tutor will provide conditioning exercise sessions for disabled members of our wheelchair basketball team which meets twice weekly at the leisure centre. The club currently has 15 members.

Get an external perspective

Finally, ask someone who doesn't know the project or your organisation to read the application before you submit it - if they can understand what you are proposing, you're nearly there.