

Cumbria Youth Alliance

The Do's and Don'ts of Fundraising



Golden rules of fundraising and successful applications

The Do's of fundraising and the Don'ts

DO

- ✓ DO get to the point in the first paragraph – Why? What for specifically? How much? You have to spell out for the funders exactly what your group does and why, as they may not have come across what you do before and they may not be clear about what you want or what it is for?



- ✓ Use the KISS principle! (Keep it simple stupid!)
- ✓ DO ask for a specific amount of money (a real figure not a rounded up amount)
- ✓ DO approach the appropriate funder for the amount of money required; what have they given to in the past? No point in asking a big charitable trust for a very small amount or indeed vice-versa. So try and match the funder to the size of the application – don't waste a complex application process if you are only asking for £1000. The quick tip is to go and look at their last year's annual report what was the average grant they gave out. You can usually find this on the website or look them up on charity commission website to see how much the average grant is and what kind of organisations they have supported in the past year or so.
- ✓ Do make sure your application is laid out well with all the information that the funder requires. Most websites will tell you what layout they want. Follow this to the letter and give them what they want to see in an application – if your application shows something different the chances are it will not be successful
- ✓ DO ensure that your main contact can answer questions about your project confidently if the funder rings up with any queries. Make sure the contact can provide the correct level of information if required to do so and respond to any requests for further details promptly and accurately
- ✓ Do make sure if you have put down referees that they know about your application and have a copy of it so that they can talk knowledgeably about your work – don't put down referees names without telling them – when the funder phones up you don't want the referee to say "I know nothing about it!"
- ✓ DO allow enough time between submitting the project and the date you need the money for or the date you want the project to start. Usually 6 months for a bigger application and 2/3 months for a smaller one – some trusts only meet once or twice a year so you may have given up hope then suddenly hear from them – check on the website for when the grants panel meets and try and make sure you meet the deadlines so your application will be considered at the next grants panel.
- ✓ DO get a contact name and use it. You can find this by going onto the Charities Commission and clicking on their annual report or usually by searching through the website details. Sending letters just saying Dear Sir shows just how little effort you have made to find out more about the Trust and the people who work there.
- ✓ DO remember when completing an application it is **80% preparation, 20% writing**- on average I would spend 1 or 2 hours reading website information, looking at previous annual reports before starting the application – the devil is in the detail !

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Don't

- ✓ **DON'T send a standard 'cold calling' letter** - funders can receive hundreds each week. Mostly they just get filed under B for Bin
- ✓ **DON'T cut and paste** from old applications unless they were successful – and make sure everything is still relevant and up to date – I personally believe every application should be treated freshly and I don't cut and paste from older applications but tailor my application to what I read on the website or read in the information about the funder – the small amount of time saved by cutting and pasting is false economy – tailor the application to the guidelines.
- ✓ **DON'T write a begging letter**, rely on emotional arguments or say your organisation will fold if they don't give you the money - if they think you're in that bad a state they won't want to fund you at all!! Would you give money to somebody about to go to the wall – what a waste of funding that would be! Don't cry wolf – organisations might get off with it once or twice but people just get fed up of hearing about the state you are in and switch off.
- ✓ **DON'T waffle or use big words because** you think it'll impress people - it usually has the opposite effect
- ✓ **DON'T worry about spelling mistakes** -funders aren't looking for perfect grammar; what they do want to see is a well-thought out, convincing application but do make it easy to read and make sure it contains everything they have asked for but don't send things they don't want. If it says do not send reports or photos they mean do not send reports or photos!!
- ✓ **DON'T become money-led** (i.e. let what the funding is available for dictate what you do rather than what your Objects say you can do). You can only apply for funding for the things you are allowed to do under your objects of association – if you want to divert from that you have to get approval from the Charities Commission – need is everything – you must establish need – if there is no need there are no customers
- ✓ **DON'T use jargon and acronyms** they will mean nothing and just turn people off – CYSS, Early Intervention, CAF, all mean something to those of us working with young people but not to others

C Clarke
Cumbria Youth Alliance
Member of the Institute of Fundraising

If you need help and assistance with your fundraising Cumbria Youth Alliance can help in the following ways

- Help you identify suitable funders so you can undertake the applications
- Help to check your bids before you submit them
- Help to find information that will strengthen your bids
- Help to bring together partnerships to jointly work together on new programmes and funding bids
- Be a referee and advocate on your behalf with funders
- Lobby funders if we identify gaps in provision or funding

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