

Hints and tips for writing a successful bid for funding

With public sector cuts hitting a wide range of groups and organisations, particularly in the voluntary and community sector, there is increasing competition in the bid funding. This paper tries to give a few hints and tips to writing a successful funding bid and ensuring your bid writing time is well spent.

Top Tips for your bid for funding

Your organisation. Be clear about what your organisation does, who / what it supports and how many people are supported by your work. Explain why your organisation is developing this project, why are you the best organisation to do this?

Demonstrate fit with the funders priorities. Explain how your project fits with the aspirations of the organisation you are asking to fund it. Make things easy for the appraiser, if it is clear from the start that the project ticks the boxes in terms of the aims and objectives of the fund you are applying for, it will be an easier decision to make. If allowed, have a dialogue with the funding organisation first, they probably won't be able to say too much but may be able to give you an indication of whether your project is the type of project they would like to fund. If you find it difficult to show a link between your project and the principles of the funder, it probably isn't worth submitting an application.

What is your project all about? Clearly set out what your project aims to achieve, who it is targeting, what geographical area is it targeting, what it's objectives are and how many people will benefit.

What exactly will your project achieve? Try to think of things that can be quantified. Funders generally like quantifiable targets and outputs as it means they can easily track and report on the progress of projects. Softer outputs which can't be quantified are generally less in favour at the moment.

How do you know the project is needed? Set out any research or consultation you have undertaken that proves that there is a need or demand for the project and that there will be sufficient take up of the services / facilities you will be providing. Demonstrate how you have engaged with the intended audience for your project. For some tips on this, see my post – How to evidence need and demand in a funding bid

Be realistic about your budget. Really think about this, spend some time properly costing out your project. The people appraising your application will need to consider 'value for money' in assessing your application so consider this, however make sure you are asking for enough funding to deliver everything you say you are going to deliver. Funders don't like it when you go back and ask for more funding because you didn't ask for enough in the first instance.

Management of your project. You need to demonstrate that your management and financial models are robust. How you managed a grant funded project previously, if so, tell them about the management systems you used and why they were successful. If not explain what models you will use, what level within the organisation they will be implemented and why you think your approach is appropriate and accountable.

Give yourself time: Whilst funding applications vary significantly in terms of the amount of information required, do not rush an application. Spend time thinking about the points above, it will be obvious in your application if your project has been well researched, considered and developed, giving the appraiser confidence that you want to and can deliver the project you've described