GRANTS: TIPS ON HOW TO MAKE A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION

For your grant application to stand out among the hundreds of applications a funder receives, it needs to be nothing less than, well, outstanding.

- Identify the right types of funding opportunities for you - e.g. European, National, Regional, Local and…determine your eligibility
- Learn about the reporting requirements you will need to comply with
- Apply for the grant(s) that best suits you

The Process

Time

Do you really have enough time to write this before the deadline, and have someone check it? If not, think about holding back until the next round. Assess whether it's worth applying.

Direction

How does it relate to your own priorities?

Internal consultation

Have you checked out the project with everybody in the organization who needs to be involved? Do you have full costings, full resource demands, and consensus?

Funder consultation

Have you checked the outline of your application with the potential funder? A phone call may save you a lot of work, and it may establish a valuable relationship with their staff.

Proofreading

Has the application been read by a neutral party?

The Framework

Executive summary

Does the application include an executive summary that says clearly:

- Why the grant is needed?
- What the grant money will be used for?
- When the funding is requested?
- How much money is being requested?

Attachments

Does the format allow for attachments? Infographics can be inserted in 'additional information' section'. Are all the attachments clearly labelled?

Completeness

Does the proposal address every single item in the funder's guidelines (even if only to say "Not applicable" or "See item 2.3)" in the order / headings in which they appear in the guidelines?

The Style

Language

Is the language specific, accurate, concise, and clear? Does it contain any obviously recognisable professional jargon (unless explained), or any clichés? Is the language tentative ("It seems that it is possible that we might…") or positive ("We will…")? Go back over the text and remove the word "seems" whenever it appears.

Title

Does the project title make a positive statement?

Grammar

Is the application written in the active voice ("We will collect data on…") or in the less forceful passive voice ("Data will be collected on….)? Is the proposal written in the first person ("We will…") or the less emphatic third person ("The project will…")?

Simplicity

Is the application written mainly in short, simple, declarative subject-verb-object sentences?

The Layout

Compliance

Does it follow **to the letter** the funder's specifications on margins, spacing, type size, word count?

Presentation

Do bullets, headings, bold type, colour, borders, charts or pictures break up the layout?

Brevity

Is the proposal as brief as possible (and no briefer)?

Clarity

Are acronyms spelled out in full at first use (e.g. Deductible Gift Recipient [DGR])?

The Budget

Numbers

Does the application contain a detailed budget? Do the budget numbers add up?

Back-up

Do you have a back-up plan for your proposal if you are granted only part of the funding?

The Organisation

Skills

Does the application include a section demonstrating that your organisation has the skills, knowledge and ability to make the project a success?

Partnerships

Does the application demonstrate constructive partnerships with all other players with interests in the area? Does it contain letters of commitment from any partners?

The Project

Evidence

Does the application set out the project in such a way as to demonstrate factually, with supporting data, the existence of a problem? Does it show why the problem is significant and a high priority?

Methods

Does the application have a 'solutions' section that sets out the project's methods clearly? Does the 'solutions' section show why these methods were adopted and alternatives rejected?

Case

Does the application make a clear and consistent argument for the project?

Objectives

Does the application specify project objectives that are realistic, achievable, and measurable?

The Funder

Terminology

Does your application use the same terms / buzzwords as your funder's website etc?

Reporting

Does the application include a process for regular progress reporting with monitoring guidelines?

Benefits

Does the application establish (and quantify) the benefits that will flow from the project?

The Future

Sustainability

Does the application show that the project can survive after the funder's funding is withdrawn?

The Message

Made to measure

Is the application a one-off, tailored to the specific mission and goals of the funder, or a generic proposal that has been sent to 20 foundations (and sounds like it)?

Comprehensibility

Does the application assume too much knowledge of the area? Too little?

Energy

Does the whole application communicate your enthusiasm, your energy, and your commitment? Is it a lively read?

If you are interested in applying for funding and need help/advice then please get in touch with NNDC's Economic Growth Team:

Email: economic.growth@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Telephone: 01263 516009

We're here to help you.