

ENGAGE
R E N F R E W S H I R E



Funding Toolkit

Are you ready to start applying for funding?

Preparation and application



Getting ready

Grant funding can support our group or organisation, to deliver a project, or continue to deliver and improve your services. It can allow you to expand your reach and involve more people in your project, improve facilities and upgrade equipment, or generally have the financial ability to do things your group wants to do.

This guide will help you to consider:

- Plan a Funding Proposal
- Funding Checklist - what are the essentials?
- Searching for Funding
- Talking to Funders
- Getting Started with your Application
- Budgets



Planning a Funding Proposal

Plan well in advance as it can be a long process! It typically takes 12 weeks from submission to hear if you have been successful, or not.

- Don't start writing a funding proposal before you have done the necessary research, thinking and planning.
- Proposals should be discussed and approved by your management committee/Board of Directors/Trustees.
- Where possible, your proposal should be developed with the community you support. Funders will ask you to demonstrate need, and community involvement, in the development of your project.
- Give yourself time to plan, gather evidence, and write the proposal before the closing date.
- **Always reach out to the funder before beginning your application.** This helps to build a relationship with the funder early on, and they can provide advice and guidance about what they need before you start.

Developing your Project Brief

When writing your project brief you should consider the 5 W's - Why, Who, What, Where and When

- **Why is your project needed?** - What is your evidence of need? Do you have any quotes or case studies from your community? Can you find information/research on how your project fits with local strategic plans or national policy? What are the barriers/challenges faced by your community?
- **Who will your project benefit?** - Think about the difference the project will make not only to your community but also to staff and volunteers. Then think about the wider community, will they benefit? Will you share your learning with other organisations so they can benefit?
- **What difference will the project make?** - Your project should provide a solution to the problem you have outlined above. Funders want to know what will change as a result of the project. Can you summarise this as an overall aim of the project? Do you have specific objectives or desired outcomes?
- **What are you planning to do?** - What does your project look like? What are you planning to do?
- **Where and when will your project happen?** - Funders want to know you have given consideration to when and where your activities take place, this will also help you budget effectively. How has your community informed the planning process?

Funding Checklist - What are the essentials?

The essentials are documents and policies that most funders will ask for you to submit along with your application.

- Does your group have a management committee with at least three members?
- Are the management committee clear on their roles and responsibilities?
- Does the group have a constitution everyone agrees on?
- Does the constitution allow the group to apply for funding?
- Does the group have a bank account in its own name?
- Are there at least two signatories, who are not related, on the bank account?
- Are you accounts up to date?
- Do you have all policy documents in place prior to applying for funding? For example, a child protection and safeguarding policy for working with children.



Funding Search Databases

Searching online for funding can feel overwhelming and be time consuming. You can always reach out to our Funding and Development Officer for support, but if you want to do your own search here are some useful tips and resources.

Search Engines

- [Funding Scotland](#) (free to use)
- [Get Grants](#) (free to use)
- [Grant Nav](#) (free to use)
- [Funds Online](#) (free to use)
- [The Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts](#) (free to use)
- [Grants Online](#) (subscription to use)
- [Grant Finder](#) (subscription to use)



Useful Tips

- Look at annual reports - identify organisations that do similar work, support similar communities, or tackle similar issues. Look at their annual reports to see who their main funders are.
- Sign up to newsletters - funders and the Engage Renfrewshire funding newsletter.
- Regularly check your local authority website.
- Keep in touch with any existing funders.

Finding the right funding

It's important that you don't waste your time applying to the wrong funder or fund. Follow the steps below before you start working on your application.

- **Eligibility** - Read the criteria thoroughly. Check if your group is eligible i.e. does it fund charities, CIC's, un-constituted groups etc. Are there maximum income thresholds?
- **Target groups** - Will the funder fund the groups you are working with?
- **Outcomes** - Will your project meet the outcomes set by the funder?
- **Timescales** - When do applications have to be in by, when will you find out about the funders decision and does this fit with your timescale or needs?
- **Contact the Funder** - Where possible, discussing your project with the funder before you begin your application is best practice.



Talking to funder representatives



Talking to the funder can seem daunting, but they are there to support and guide you through the application process, and beyond. Funders often have local Fund Managers who are familiar with your local area and can signpost you to other supports, or funds.

- **Be professional** - Communicate professionally with the funders representatives, but don't get caught up in using complex language, be yourself.
- **Be prepared** - Have your proposal ready and make sure it fits the criteria.
- **Have a list of questions** - what do you need to know? For example, how do you submit your application, does the funder use a portal or is the application send to an email address? What format do they want the application in? Is there a deadline time on the closing date?



Getting started with your application

You've read the eligibility criteria, your work meets the funders preferred outcomes, and you've reached out to the funder. **Now you are ready to start writing.** It is unlikely that you will complete your application in one go, especially for a large project or sum, so it is good practice to consider the following points:

- Does the funder have an application template, or have you to submit a letter?
- If there is a template, get a MSWord copy, make a draft copy and use this to develop your application, save in a folder along with the guidance/funding criteria.
- Consider how the application is submitted.
- Prepare the documents required when submitting, save them all in a folder alongside the application.
- Clearly label folders and documents.
- Give yourself enough time.



What makes a good application?

- Answering the questions on the application, within the word/character count, and...
- Clearly demonstrating...
 - Aims and objectives of your organisation
 - Target audience / the community you support
 - The need for your project
 - The outcomes - the difference your project will make
 - Community led - how have your members influenced your project development
 - Partnership working
 - Good governance - policies and procedures
 - Realistic budget
 - Project structure - key milestones, indicators of success
 - Succession planning - how will the project continue after the grant, or what is your exit strategy?



What is a funder will be looking for in your application?

Funders want you to demonstrate there is a **need** for what you plan to do, **who** and **how many** will benefit, and that you have developed your project **with** your community. They want to know **what** you will do, and **how** you will do it. You need to convince them that you have **clear** and **achievable outcomes**, that align with their priorities. And that you can **monitor** and **evaluate** the effectiveness of your activity. They will expect you to outline your **costs** and demonstrate that you can **budget** and handle your grant efficiently.

Many funders will ask you to consider **sustainability**, they want to know what will happen to your project beyond the funded period.



Tips

- **Plan ahead.** It is useful to develop a funding/fundraising strategy.
- Take note of **deadlines.**
- Long complicated sentences are difficult to read and understand. **Don't use jargon and keep it concise.**
- **Don't make assumptions.** The funder may not know about your group or local area.
- **Do your research.** Understand where your group/project is **filling a gap and meeting a need** in your community.
- **Answer the question.** Give a clear and concise answer to the question asked.



Budgets

Having accurate and up to date accounts is vital to ensure the efficient running of your organisation. When it comes to developing a funding proposal this information is key to budgeting accurately for the project you want to deliver.

- Your budget is one of the most important parts of your funding proposal, so it's vital that it is accurate and realistic.
- It is best practice to make yearly budgets. This will inform your funding strategy.
- Budgets require regular maintenance- updating and review.
- Accurate budgets and financial recording will help you to see what your costs are, and where you are spending your money.
- Accurate budgets help you to produce full cost recovery budgets for funding applications, i.e including a realistic amount to cover the core costs.



Budgets

Jargon busting! Many funders divide budgets into capital & revenue costs.

- **Capital** costs are - one off spending such as equipment, setting up costs or building costs.
- **Revenue** costs are - staff costs, rent, heating etc.

When you are developing a budget for your project it is important to:

- Keep a note of how you arrived at your figures, so you can explain them if asked.
- Don't forget to include inflation on all costs if projecting for the year ahead (a general rule is 5%)
- Consider where you will make up any shortfall. Will you look for match funding, or do you have a fundraising plan?



Funding application checklist

Funders will be looking for the following in your application.

- What you want to do.
- How do you know it is needed.
- How you will do it.
- Who you will work with.
- What the impact will be.
- How much it will cost.
- What you will do when the grant runs out.
- How you will keep track of your progress.



Funding application checklist

- ✔ Have you filled out all parts of the form? If any sections or boxes do not apply have you written 'Not applicable or N/A'?
- ✔ Are the names of committee members and contacts the same as those on your supporting document e.g. your account or constitution?
- ✔ Have you attached a copy of your constitution, if required?
- ✔ Have you enclosed your latest yearly accounts or financial estimates for the following year, if required?
- ✔ Have you attached your budget?
- ✔ Have you kept a copy of your completed application for reference? Remember to keep a note of the date it was submitted.



Additional support

- Funding and Organisation Development Officer

info@engagerenfrewshire.com

0141 887 7707

- Invest in Renfrewshire (IIR) Communities Team

Econdev.community@renfrewshire.gov.uk





STRENGTHENING THE THIRD SECTOR

Engage Renfrewshire Training

All courses are free to attend:

- **Writing Successful Funding Applications - 2 hours**

To express interest:

email - info@engagerenfrewshire.com

or call 0141 887 7707