



GETTING STARTED

a funding information leaflet from *funderfinder*

Step 1 *Your Proposal*

Before you start to fundraise, you will have a need or a problem which you want to address, and you probably have ideas about how you intend to do this. This is your starting point and needs to be well thought through before you start looking for money. You need to turn these ideas into a written proposal which you can present to potential supporters and funders. In drawing up this written proposal ask yourselves the following questions:

- what are our objectives? (i.e. what do we want to achieve?)
- how are we going to meet these?
- what evidence do we have to support our ideas?
- what facts and figures can we use to support our case?
- does our method stand a good chance of success? why?
- has the idea been tried before? with what results?
- can we state our case clearly and with conviction?
- how will we measure success?

You may also need to ask yourselves:

- do we need to set ourselves up first? do we need a bank account and a constitution? If you need support here, your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) or Voluntary Action should be able to help, (the numbers will be in the phone book or call NAVCA on 0114 278 6636).
- how will the work fit into the rest of the organisation?
- have we got the resources (expertise, people, premises etc.) to carry it out?
- do we really want to do it?

Remember, as well as presenting your ideas you need to show that you are a credible group, that you know what you are doing and that you are capable of carrying out the work to a good standard. It is therefore vital to spend some time on developing your proposal as this is what you will be asking funders to support. Your written proposal should fit on to one or two sides of A4 paper once typed.

Step 2 Your Funding Need

Once you are clear about what you want to do the next step is to work out precisely how much it will cost. This cost is the amount you need to fundraise for. Again you need to spend some time on this to make sure that your figures are as accurate as possible.

The two main dangers here are understating your costs which will leave you with financial problems, and overstating your costs which may lead funders to reject your application. Remember many funders will have a good idea of how much things usually cost. If your costs are much higher or much lower than usual, and you don't say why, funders may assume that either you don't know what you are doing or that you are deliberately over pricing - either way they are unlikely to fund you.

Step 3 Your Fund Raising Strategy

Once you have a written proposal and costings, you are ready to look for sources of funding. There are many ways of raising money and you need to limit your approaches to a few that you can do well rather than spreading your efforts too widely. You need to work out a fundraising plan that takes account of your abilities, resources and the scale of your financial need. By doing this you will direct your efforts where you are most likely to be successful.

If you know of other groups who have done similar things find out how they raised the money. Think about how much money you need - can you raise it yourselves? Who might be interested in funding your work? What skills and knowledge do you have within your group, or locally? Can the local authority help?

Useful Books

The Complete Fundraising Handbook, by Nina Botting Herbst & Michael Norton, pub. DSC, 5th ed., 2007, £22.95, ISBN 978 1 903991 84 8.

Preparation for Fundraising, by Frank Opray, QuickGuides series, pub. Wiremill, 2004, £5, ISBN 978 1 905053 15 5, available from DSC.

Tiny Essentials of Fundraising, by Neil Sloggie, pub. White Lion Press, 2002, £9.95, ISBN 978 0 9518971 5 7.

Voluntary but not Amateur, by Ruth Hayes & Jackie Reason, pub. London Voluntary Service Council, 7th ed., 2004, £25, ISBN 978 1 872582 32 0.

Writing Better Fundraising Applications, by Michael Norton & Mike Eastwood, pub. DSC, 3rd ed., 2002, £18.95, ISBN 978 1 903991 09

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