



Non-Profit Organisations / Charities / Voluntary Associations

HOW TO WRITE SUCCESSFUL PROPOSALS & APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS

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How to Write Successful Proposals & Applications for Grants

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INTRODUCTION

By the time you finish reading this manual, you'll be glad you made the right decision to order a copy. *How to Write Successful Proposals & Applications for Grants* provides you with a simple blueprint to develop proposals that win grants.

This manual is a direct response to the concerns of my numerous clients who worry a lot about their inability to grasp the process of writing successful grant proposals.

Throughout the pages of this manual, I'm going to reveal to you simple and bubble-free ways to write proposals and applications that win grants most of the time. You'll:

- Learn essential techniques for developing comprehensive and compelling proposals/applications for grants.
- Read real life examples of proposals that won grants.
- Learn how to develop and build relationships with funders.
- Understand effective and best ways to communicate with funders.
- Sample essential tips on winning grants from trusts and foundations.
- Analyse common mistakes that make your applications fail to win grants.
- Get insight into what makes proposals tick.
- Find avenues for researching available grant programmes.

The manual will teach you the basics, and show you how to carry out each step in writing your grant proposals. In this present competitive environment, writing very good proposals and applications is a must to enable you win grants most of the time.

Here is a resource that you can use to enhance the quality of your grant applications. I'll lead you step-by-step through the proposal writing process; show you checklists to use, and sample winning proposals to make your applications stand out.

Follow me to unravel the secrets of writing successfully for grants. By the time you complete reading this eBook, you will have no excuse for not winning grants from trusts, foundations and government sources.

This eBook is the 'fast track' route I'll recommend for you, to master the art of successful grant writing, starting from the scratch in the fastest possible time. And it will work for anyone motivated enough to just give it a try.

Examples of my successful funding applications written over the years at the end of this manual will give you an insight into how you can also develop proposals with heart and soul to bring in that much-needed grants money.

Take a close look at these examples. You may discover ideas that you can adapt to suit the needs of your own charity or community group.

My journey to become a grant writer took me through several countries and with many experienced grant writers.

In 2006, I undertook a mentorship programme in writing for grants from trusts and foundations with Ian Kerr. Ian, now retired, is the founder of the award winning Midas Charity Appeals firm in London.

This was after I had successfully completed and passed the Certificate in Fundraising and Management Course of the United Kingdom Institute of Fundraising in 2005.

I attended grant writing courses with the Grantsmanship Centre in Trenton, New Jersey in 2004 and the Foundation Centre in New York in 2001. I spent six months on an on-the-job training programme with the famous Gershowitz Grants and Evaluation Services in Des Moines, Iowa between 2000 and 2001.

I benefited greatly from my travels around the world in search for the *golden fleece* of grant writing. I gained valuable skills, techniques and knowledge in the art of writing compelling proposals for grant.

All these long years of study and travel have given me enough assurance and confidence to believe that I can use my experience to show you how to easily and successfully write for, and win grants. My aim of writing this manual is to:

- Give you the courage to go out and get the grants your organisation need,
- Give you new insights into grant proposal writing,
- Help you to gain experience in successfully writing for grants.

I am very confident that anyone who follows this step-by-step guide and the examples provided in this manual will be on the way to creating compelling funding applications that get positive results.

This manual will help you to write successful proposals and applications for grants. You're probably starting to get a little excited about this whole course and success opportunity now and rightly so.

Let's begin the process!

Chapter 1

The 8-Step Grant Seeking Process

Grants from trusts, foundations and governments are major sources of income for many non-profit organisations. To get grants, somebody in the organisation – a trustee, development worker or chief executive - must write a proposal or an application to a funder.

A question might pop up here...Why would trusts, foundations and governments give your charity free money ... grants?

Because they care, are passionate about solving some specific problems or inequalities in society and are willing to support any non-profit organisation that can help them to resolve the problem!

Trusts, foundations and some government institutions are set up purposely to distribute money to good causes. To achieve this objective, they are always looking out for organisations to help them promote their cause.

They, therefore, periodically ask that grant-seeking organisations submit written requests for grants to them.

All funders award grants in accordance with their own specific eligibility criteria. It is your duty as a grant seeker to understand a funder's interest and link your work to it.

Effective grant seeking requires clear vision of a project. This in turn involves a process of planning, researching, reaching out to, and courting the favour and partnership of funders.

Funders want details about a project, not generalities. They want to be assured that their funds will be spent effectively. In this eBook, I'll show you what to do to become successful every time you write and submit an application to a funder for support.

One thing you must remember is that, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of other organisations like yours out there who are writing to the same funder for money. Therefore, you should present your charity as the best possible solution to the problem at hand.

To become successful at writing for grants, these are the 8 proven steps I have been taking. I'll suggest that you should also follow these steps anytime you write and submit proposals for grants. It will help you win most of the time!

Step 1: plan, plan and plan

Before you apply for any grant, you or your organisation must have identified a need or a problem in your community or among your user group. This need or problem must require urgent attention for the benefit of the public.

Let's say that your organisation is called the "All Families Support Group" based in Cassaba. The charity's aim is to improve quality of life for low-income families in the area. The community and your group have become concerned about the high rate of teenage pregnancy in Cassaba Province and would like to do something about it.

Within your organisation, someone or you, may have ideas which you believe, when implemented, can lead to solving this need and bring about a desired positive difference in the teenage group of this community. Your organisation will plan a project and seek grants to resolve this problem.

Here are examples of other problems in communities which organisations might need grants to resolve:

- High levels of alcohol consumption and misuse among young people in the community is exerting pressure on health budgets of many families,
- Terminally ill children and young people in your town need extra tuition and one-to-one support to improve their grade levels and achievement at school,
- There is the need for peer education to reduce high levels of illiteracy among parents and families in your area,
- Low skills levels among people with disabilities in your village are preventing many of them from finding gainful employment

You get the idea? Right! Clearly defining the need or problem is very crucial and can help you to develop solutions that work.

The first step you need to take as an organisation when seeking for a grant is to form a team, if this is possible. And the team should adopt strategies like brainstorming and research in a planning process to come up with ideas, suggestions and solutions for the problem.

- Think critically about the project that you would like to undertake to resolve the problem.

- Decide on the best possible way to present the need you have identified and its solution to a funder you will later identify through research.
- Clearly identify who your target group is. These are the people that the project you are proposing will benefit or support. How disadvantaged are they?
- Think of a suitable – concise, clear and precise - name for the project. This name should be able to show people what the project is all about.
- Come up with an aim for the project. The aim is what changes you want to see happen to people taking active part in the project.
- Also think about the objectives for undertaking the project. Objectives describe how you will bring about the desired change in project users.
- What activities would you undertake? You may decide to develop information materials to educate the target group, run drop-in centre for advice, provide workshops or undertake outreach in the community.

In the next step I'll show you how to develop your aims and objectives and some practical examples of them.

- Next in the planning process is for the team to think through the benefits that people will gain from participating in the project. By taking part in this project you expect beneficiaries to increase in confidence, improve in health, etc.
- Decide how you will track activities, outcomes, costs and other variables to see if your project is proceeding according to plan or not. This is monitoring and evaluation. Think also about what you will do with your evaluation data.

- Decide how the organisation will sustain the activities after the grant is finished. How will you acquire resources to continue with the project in the future?
- Finally, assign cost values to personnel, items and activities that will help you to undertake the project. This is your budget. It is an estimate of the total cost of running this project.

You will present the budget as part of your project proposal or application to a funder you will identify later in your planning stage to support your project.

At the end of the planning process, the team should come up with a written outline of your project proposal. This outline will serve as a guide when it comes to researching for a funder - trust or foundation which might be interested in funding your project.

All along, I have emphasised on having a team. This team could be made up of two, three or four of your organisation's trustees, project staff, volunteers, project manager or service users.

But we all know that in many non-profit organisations, it is very difficult to get a team. Majority of voluntary groups looking for grants are so small that they are virtually run by individuals.

Where there is no team, the person who is responsible for writing applications for grants, should act as a one-man team and carry out the activities discussed above. In this case you must plan, plan and plan.

Then come up with an outline proposal including aims, objectives as well as benefits and budget of the project.

Let me introduce you to one strategy which I follow most of the time when I'm planning a project. It can help you to develop very good proposals and applications.

Here is an example of a community group that supports elderly people in Mandy City. This group is concerned about the frequent ill-health experienced by elderly people in the community and would like to undertake a project to resolve this problem.

The strategy I'm recommending for you to follow at all planning meetings is to ask the following five questions on any problem you have identified and try to provide possible short answers to them. Then later, expand on each of the short answers.

Following this process will always guide you to successfully develop winning grant proposals and applications.

Question1: What is the problem you want to address?

Sample answer

Elderly people in Mandy City are observed to be experiencing frequent ill-health which prevents them from getting involved in community activities.

Question 2: What do you propose as a solution?

Sample answer

To train 20 local people from the Mandy City community in the year as volunteer befrienders.

Question3: What benefits will your solution bring to project participants?

Sample answer

(a) Culturally appropriate support available to more elderly people in Mandy City.

(b) Community people will gain new and relevant skills and knowledge that can help them to access employment easily.

Question 4: How will you track progress of your work?

Sample answer

(a) Form community boards to oversee training and monitor support given by the local people.

(b) Ask elderly people being supported how they rate the project and its activities.

Question 5: How much do you need and what will you spend the money on?

Sample answer

£5,000 in the year towards training of 20 volunteers and reimbursing their expenses as well as setting up weekly drop-in activity sessions for the elderly people.

One other thing that your team needs to think about is how best to prove to the funders that you are the best and credible group they should give the money to and not other charities providing the same service as you do.

You need to show your organisation as one, which is changing lives, transparent and well managed.

At this point, I would like you to stop reading and complete an exercise on developing problem or need statements. This statement should be the reason why you want to undertake this project. It takes only few minutes.

- Identify a problem in your community which needs an urgent solution,
- Write this problem or need on a piece of notebook paper,

- Read what you have written down over and over again.

How convincing is this problem to you as an urgent need? Do you believe that when you present this problem to funders, they will be convinced and compelled to the extent of awarding money to your organisation to resolve it?

It's good to think about your project's need in this way before you commence writing for the grant process.

Now, I would like you to write out the remaining 4 questions on the problem you have identified. (See example on the previous page). Provide the possible short answers too. Thank you. You have done well. Let's now continue to step 2.

Step 2: defining aims and objectives

Every project proposal should have an aim and two or more objectives. Let us look at some practical examples of aims and objectives.

We define the aim of a project as the long term changes or difference that we expect to see in people as a result of their taking part in the project's activities.

You usually write the aim using words like: improve, increase, reduce, enable and others. In your proposals or applications you can write: The aim of this project is to:

- Improve quality of life for elderly people in Mandy City,
- Increase the confidence and self-esteem of disadvantaged children and young people in Sana,
- Reduce isolation experienced by elderly and frail people in Bonbon,

- Improve numeracy and literacy skills of children who miss out on school most of the time due to terminal illness.

Objectives are the specific and measurable actions that you will take to achieve the desired changes (aims) you envisage for the project's beneficiaries. They are milestones that you set at the beginning, to reach whilst undertaking this project.

Remember that a project will be judged by whether or not it attained its objectives. Failure to reach the specific measurable outcomes and milestones will show that you are not successful at delivering the project.

There are several ways to write your objectives. You can write it as a process objective or outcome objective. Process objectives show how or what you will do to achieve the aim. Sentences on process objectives usually start with action verbs like: provide, support, facilitate, develop, etc.

Outcome objectives tell what will happen as a result of conducting the project (end results) which can be observed and measured. Outcome objectives' sentences use words like increase by, decrease by, by the end of the project It is better to state your objectives in this way rather than as process objectives.

Always write objectives of projects in SMART terms. This means they must be:

- S-specific: state what you intend to change with your project,
- M-measurable: show numbers that will indicate success,
- A-achievable: can be done,
- R-realistic: not beyond your capacity to do,
- T-time bound: by what time? days, month or year,

Here are two examples of SMART objectives:

Example 1

Let's say that your community group works to improve the quality of life for all residents in your area.

Your organisation is now very concerned about the high incidence of teenage pregnancy among students in the community. This will definitely lead to many girls dropping out of school and be deeply rooted in poverty for the rest of their lives. Your organisation met and decided to run a project that will create awareness about teenage pregnancy, its effect on homes and how young people can take precaution to prevent such things happening to them.

Your SMART objectives could be:

Objective 1

By the end of the project 50% of 500 or more girls who will participate in the project will demonstrate increased knowledge and awareness on teenage pregnancy.

Example 2

Your charity works with disadvantaged families in a certain town by supporting children and young people with educational programmes. Consultations with parents and children revealed that many young people are struggling with their academic work. The charity would like to organise a project to improve educational attainment of children and young people through after school activities. The SMART objective could be:

Objective 2

To provide 40 students with opportunities to increase their academic performance in literacy and math by at least 10% through one-to-one and group sessions over 36 Saturdays in the year.

By writing the objectives quantitatively, you will be able to measure success or failure at the end of the project. You will know whether you have been able to:

1. Run 4-hour sessions after school every week,
2. Supported 40 students in the year,
3. Verify if students' school performance have increased by 10% after 36 weeks.

So, we have looked at some key actions that should enable us to develop aims and objectives for our projects.

Now let's examine simple strategies that could help you identify potential funders for your projects.

Step 3: research potential funders

It's now time to research for potential funders - trusts, foundations, government or other sources - which your charity can approach for support. With the outline project proposal you developed during the planning step 1 ready by your side, you will now use on-line and published resources as well as personal contacts to locate the most promising funding source for your project.

A good research will fit your funding request with a particular funder's interest.

Now, how do you identify the potential funder for your project? The right funder is that grant-giving body that has funded other charities doing the same type of work as you do in the past.

This funder says in its guidelines, literature on its website or in other publications that it sponsors projects in your local area and wants to fund projects like the one you need money for now.

All funders have some basic criteria which they use in judging which charitable group to support. It is your duty to thoroughly research all funding sources using the internet, funding directories and magazines available in many libraries, to identify potential funders for your project.

You can also get information on funders by buying grant directories from bookshops or asking other friendly charities that undertake activities like yours about where they look out for their funders.

In the United Kingdom, some prominent sources from which you can conduct your research for funders are:

Funding directories:

- A Guide to Major Trusts (Directory of Social Change)
- Fundraiser (Caritas)
- Funding Insight Newsletter (Grantsonline)
- A Guide to Corporate Funders (Directory of Social Change)

The Internet or online sources

- www.trustfunding.org
- www.fitforfunding.org
- www.grantsonline.org.uk
- www.dsc.org.uk

In the United States of America, the best place to research for funders is the Foundation Center in New York. www.fdncenter.org .

While undertaking your research, make a list of all funders or foundations that you come across which you believe are likely to be interested in supporting your project. You can identify these trusts by reading their guidelines for:

- the causes they fund and want to fund,
- which groups they have funded in the past,
- the amount of money they award each time,
- the geographical areas they give support to,

If what you find about the funder is related to your organisation and the outline of the proposal you drew up, it's likely that this funder will support your project too.

Step 4: read the funders guidelines

After thorough research, you would have identified some potential funders which you believe will be interested in supporting your project. If that is the case, then take your time to carefully read the funding guidelines of the individual funders you have identified and follow all the instructions given in the guidelines.

Pay particular attention to whatever any funder would direct you to do when approaching them for grant support.

Most grant seekers are in a hurry to submit proposals/applications to funders. In the process they fail to read funders guidelines and instructions properly. Don't commit this mistake. Take your time to read and follow the funders' instructions to the letter.

This will enable you to present proposals and applications that match the interest of your charity to those of funders and help you to become successful at winning grants

Step 5: call the funder

One of the most important steps in setting yourself up to succeed with your grant seeking process is to build relationship with funders.

You can do this by developing the habit of calling grants officers of identified funders and talking to them about your project before submitting a proposal or an application to them.

With the list of potential foundations or funders in your hand, try and call the grants officers one by one. Talk them through your project outline and ask each of them if your proposal falls within their current funding priorities.

Make sure you do your homework very well before you make this call! This is a fact-finding call to assure yourself that your project is something a particular funder will be interested in supporting. Be very brief and to the point.

Before making a call to a grants officer, write what you are going to tell him/her on a piece of notebook paper.

Rehearse and master what you have written so well that when you meet your grants officer accidentally on the ground floor in a lift, going on to the third floor, you can communicate the message to him or her very clearly before the lift opens.

We call this, the 'elevator speech' – a very short 30 seconds description of what you want the money for! Be confident! Don't be nervous. Make the call. Tell whoever answers the telephone at the other end that:

“Hello, my name is John from the Children’s Charity, the Incredible. I am calling about a project my charity would like to submit to your foundation for support. I have read your funding guidelines and instructions as well as visited your website.

I believe our project matches your foundation’s interests but I want to be very sure before I submit a proposal. Is it possible for me to talk with the grants officer about this project?”

When you tell the person at the other end of the telephone that you have read their guidelines and visited their website, it shows that you are a serious person, who did your home work well. Any grants officer will be glad to help you.

When you are finally linked up to the grants officer, be bold to tell him or her that:

“Hello, my name is John from the Children’s Charity, the Incredible. We work to improve educational attainments of socially excluded young people aged 8 to 16 years in Mandy City.

Our charity is considering applying to your foundation (mention the foundation’s name) to run an out of school learning hub that will improve confidence and self-esteem of children and young people in Mandy City. Majority of the children we support suffer from genetic disorders that prevent them from attending school most of the time.

Our project will use 4 volunteers to help involve 50 disadvantaged and other children every week in activities that relieve their isolation and improve their skills.

The total cost of the project is £xyz and we would like you to support us with £xy. I am calling to ask how appropriate this project is to your interests in this funding round.”!

Whao!! Well done! The truth is that many of us are afraid or feel nervous to make this important call for no apparent reason. Making a few of these calls over time will give you the confidence to always call grant officers and talk with them about how they can give you a grant.

Grants officers are very nice staff who are there to help and direct grant seekers. Be ready to answer any questions they might ask you. If your project fits the guidelines of the funder, the grants officer will give you the green light to apply.

The confidence you gain through calling grants officers and the information these officers give, will help you to develop and write very good grant proposals and applications.

Confirm the closing date of submitting the proposal and the address to which you should send the addressed package with the grant officer.

Step 6: write the proposal or application

When a grants officer gives you the go ahead, it is now time for you to write and submit the proposal or application. So, what do you write?

1. You will write a proposal to an identified funder, seeking its support for a project you have developed in response to a community need.
2. Give your proposal/application a compelling title. We said earlier on that this title should be short and snappy and reflect what your project will do.
3. Carefully read, understand and follow the criteria in the guidelines of the particular funder you will send the application to. Use buzz words, phrases and

terms that funders use in their requests for funding publications, in your proposal to describe what they want to fund.

Buzz phrases can push important buttons.

4. Be very clear about what you want to say. Be creative and set your organisation far apart from others in the way you make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged people.
5. Show how your project fits in well with the guidelines of the funder. Give reasons why you think this funder should give you the money you are asking for.
(Remember the 5 questions you developed answers for on pages 12 and 13).

Take your time to write convincing and compelling proposals that win grants. Focus your application on the needs of people who will benefit from the project and not on the needs of your organisation.

Remember, funders give grants to benefit people in need, not organisations. Focus your need for support on the lack of opportunities among your user group and effects on them.

Then show how the money you are requesting for, will bring a difference, joy or happiness into project beneficiaries lives.

You can show this if you plan very well.

Write the application with passion and confidence. Convince the funder with words and figures that your clients need support to make a difference happen in their lives.

Show evidence of how your project users are disadvantaged.

Show how users of the project will be better off or see changes in their lives after taking part in your project. Demonstrate how effective and capable your organisation is to carry out a project like the one you are proposing.

Here are 7 key guidelines for you to follow. You have a good chance of being successful in winning grants if you:

- Communicate your ideas succinctly. Explain your project in coherent, clear and plain English language. Follow the 'C' rule –Clear, Concise and Convincing.
- Avoid the use of abbreviations and jargon – Do not assume the person reading your application knows what you mean.
- Keep your narrative simple. Write short sentences and not long winding phrases that are difficult to comprehend. This will help the reader of your proposal or application to follow your thoughts and understand the project you intend to run.
- Show effects of the good work you do in the community, your past successes and the gap you have now identified. Then, present a passionate and compelling case on why you should be given the funding.
- Use active language to engage the assessor of your grant proposal. Where possible use bullet points to emphasise ideas and issues.
- Emphasise the strength of your organisation to beat your competitors. Show that you have the capacity, experience and skills to make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged people you serve. That, you can put the funder's money to very good and beneficial use.

- Do not make assumptions. Support assertions you make about the need with facts, numbers, hard data and empirical evidence.

One important thing you need to tell the funder is how much your project will cost, how much you need from them and what you will do with the money.

I call this the *asking sentence*. You will know the project cost by developing the budget at the planning stage.

You can find examples of how some funders write their giving sentences on organisations they have funded in the past. Visit the website of funders you want to approach or read about them in directories to find out how they frame sentences on groups they have previously awarded grants.

Here are three examples of asking sentences:

- I am writing to kindly ask for £5,000 in grant funding from the Trustees of Alpha Trust towards general running cost of The Incredible's activities in the 201 X/1Y project year. This is to help maintain the quality of services we provide for disadvantaged families in Cassaba.
- All Children's Home kindly seeks a grant of £10,000 from the Trustees of the Children Education Trust towards improvements to the organisation's drop-in centre facilities for socially disadvantaged children and families in Mandy City.
- All Children's Charity promotes the welfare and education of children from disadvantaged backgrounds in Mandy City. We are kindly asking for a grant of £2,000 from the Ability Interest Trust to establish a new training unit at Mandy Community Centre for community nurse volunteers to improve on their skills.

Step 7: revise and edit

- Read over the proposal or application you've written. Correct all errors, spellings and grammar,
- Manage your time to avoid a hurried writing process,
- Read over again, revise and edit your final version of the proposal or application for style, content and technical issues.

It's good and advisable that you put the completed proposal you have written aside for a day or two. Then read it again later. In this way you can be sure of correcting any spelling mistakes, typographical errors and grammar. This is very important.

Another good habit you can adopt is to always ask someone else who does not know anything about the project you are proposing to read through the proposal or application for you. This person can give you an objective and honest feedback.

Because of pressure to beat deadlines, most fundraisers write and post proposals in a hurry without thoroughly reading them through. This is counter productive.

Whatever the deadline, do check your final proposal or applications against the checklist below.

Application checklist

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Have I got a clear and specific title that explains what the project will do?
2. Have I stated clearly who this project will help and how many of them?
3. Is this project meeting a clear need? Remember? 'What is the problem?'

4. How clear am I about what the project will be doing? What logical solution are we proposing to satisfy this need?
5. Have I said anything about the credibility of our organisation to do this? (our aims, objectives, experience and track record).
6. Have I said how our organisation involved users and beneficiaries in the project planning process and the part they will play in delivery and evaluation?
7. Check to see if you included information on your partnership or collaborative work with other organisations in the area.
8. What is the aim of this particular project? Is it satisfying a need?
9. How SMART are the project's objectives?
10. How clear am I about the specific activities this project will undertake to achieve the desired aim?
11. Have I stated how long the project will take? What are the start and end dates? Is there anything to show whether this is a new, on-going or a one-off project?
12. Have I stated how we will measure and evaluate the success of the project? Have I stated what we will do with the evaluation data?
13. Check to see if you are very clear on how much you need and what you will spend this money on.
14. Have I stated how the project will continue after this grant? What happens when this funding ends?
15. Finally, have I explained how other groups will learn from our project?

If you have developed a well-designed project, you should have answered all these questions positively and your proposal will have a good chance of being successful.

Step 8: submit your application

Finally, read the guidelines of the funder you are submitting the application to. Compare your proposal to the instructions and criteria as written in the funder's guidelines once again. Ensure that you have completed all the required supporting documents that are needed to go out with the application.

Once you have completed all these key tasks, place your proposal or application and all supporting documents together into a clearly addressed envelope and post the package to the funder's address.

Make sure that the address on the envelope is correct and that the proposal package is addressed to the actual name of the relevant staff in the funding organisation.

Finally, wish yourself "Good Luck" and wait patiently for a response in the next 2, 3, 4 or 6 months' time.

Chapter 2

17 Greatest Mistakes to Avoid

It's not a foregone conclusion that you'll be successful in securing grants any time you write to trusts, foundations, lottery or any other funder. However hard you tried, your project proposal is likely to be rejected on many occasions.

To enable you win grants most of the time I would like you to be aware of those pitfalls that can result in your proposals or applications being turned down.

Funders do have nice ways of rejecting proposals. They will write to say, "We received very many good applications more than we could fund. Competition for funds was very strong and we had to make very difficult decisions".

Your goal must be to strive and beat the competition to win the grant! Common mistakes like submitting incomplete application forms, poor presentation and requesting funding outside the limit of funders can make our applications fail.

Here are 17 basic mistakes that can result in your applications being turned down. Try and avoid them when making and submitting applications to funders.

1. Your application will fail to win grants if it does not fit in well with the funding guidelines and priority of the funder you are submitting the proposal to.

Take for example that a funder has written in its guidelines that it funds projects that improve education in primary schools.

Then you send an application to this particular funder seeking support for a literacy programme for elderly people. Your application did not take notice of the funder's priority and therefore will be turned down.

2. When you do not show that the project you are seeking money for, is related to, or fits in well with what your organisation does, your project will fail. For example, your charity provides services and support to children and young people in a particular town.

Then, in your proposal to this particular funder you are asking for grants for an old people's project. This project is not related to what you do as an organisation unless you can show that the project is for young people to work with older people.

3. You will fail to win grants if you submit incomplete proposals. This can happen if you forgot to include details of contact persons, dates, addresses or other information as required on the application form.

If you fail to answer a question on the application form, just because you think it's not necessary, too difficult or for lack of time, your application is incomplete and will not be successful.

4. Another mistake that can make your proposal or application unsuccessful is when you do not show the link between your project and the stated interest of the funder you are approaching.

Say how your organisation's mission fits in well with the funder's goal for funding?

Showing this link clearly is very critical to your application being successful.

5. When you ask for more money than the funder gives, your proposal will fail to win the grant. This is a grievous mistake that can only happen if you do not read the instructions that funders send out to you.

Let's say that a funder writes in its guidelines that the grant amounts it will award during this funding round are between £5,000 and £10,000. In your proposal or application, you are asking for £12,000 to run your project. This is more than the funder can give. Obviously you will not be successful.

You will also fail to win grants if you do not present an honest budget with your proposal or present a realistic request for funding in relation to your charity's turnover.

Here is another example. In your current proposal you are asking for £30,000 for this particular project that will last for one year.

However, in the last financial year, your total annual turnover was just £15,000 which is half the amount you are requesting from this one funder. Why this sudden and big leap?

6. Most trusts will fund projects in a particular town, district or region. Your proposal will fail if your organisation is not within the geographical area that the funder says it supports.

For example, if a funder says it funds projects in Mandy City and your project beneficiaries and non-profit work is in Brinton, do not expect to win that grant.

7. Your application will fail if it does not tell whoever reads the proposal anything about the problem or need you are addressing. Use your need statement to educate the funder about the deprivation, inequality or gap existing in your target population. Then call for an action to help them.

8. When you fail to tell a funder why your organisation is the one to be funded to undertake the project, your proposal will be turned down.

Make sure your application is very clear about your group's extensive track record in supporting project users.

That your charity is well-established, understands the needs of service users better than all other groups and are in the best position to help users gain from this project.

9. Clearly show what difference your project will make to beneficiaries to avoid your proposal or application being rejected.

Funders are impressed if you concentrate on making a difference in your service users rather than your own charity or organisation.

10. You will fail to win grants if you do not present clear evidence of your users' needs and the solution you are proposing in a logical and comprehensive sequence.

You may have identified a genuine need through consultation with users, reports or statistics of deprivation in the area and developed very good ideas to resolve them. But if you do not show this evidence very clearly or they are poorly presented in your proposal, you will fail to win grants.

11. Writing incorrect and incoherent sentences, making spelling mistakes and typographical errors can damage your proposal. Committing such mistakes show that you have not given enough time and consideration to your application.

12. When you have not build or developed any contact with the funder you are targeting with your proposal, you'll fail to win the grant. Once you have identified a potential funder for your project, try to establish a relationship using e-mail, telephone or personal contact.

Read about them on their websites, funding directories or their latest funding guidelines. If you are not sure on anything, call the grants officers to discuss your project with them before submitting proposals. This can save you much time, money and anguish.

Your application will fail to win grants if you:

13. Don't comply with deadlines given to you in the funding guidelines. All funders set dates by which you should send your proposals to them. You'll make this mistake if you do not read the funders guidelines

If your proposal is late, it will be rejected, unless there is a clause in the guidelines that says "late applications will be moved to the next funding round." Some small funders say that they receive applications on a rolling basis. In such cases, you can send your proposal to those funders at any time.

14. Fail to include the required additional supporting information that the funder requested from you. For example, when a funder asks you to provide them with your organisation's bank statement, annual account, project plan or any other information on your charity and you fail to submit them.

15. Your end of year accounts shows that you have too much money in reserves. The question on the funder's mind will be, "if you have this much money in your reserves, why do you need this amount of money from us?"

Make sure that you explain any reserve policy your organisation has in the notes section of your annual account.

16. Don't comply with the directives of the charity regulatory body of your country. These bodies expect all charitable organisations to submit their end of year accounts and trustees report as well as annual returns to them promptly.

If the trustees of your charity fail to submit these documents or are always late in submitting them, your charity will lose its credibility among funders. Your organisation will be branded as not serious, not trustworthy or just defiant by the regulatory body.

Whatever good work you are doing in saving thousands of lives within the community, no funder will give you money when you fail to comply with charity regulations.

17. In all situations, your proposals or applications will be rejected if you do not follow funders' simple instructions. Read the funders instructions side-by-side to what you are writing. Comply with the number of words you are required to use, the questions you are to answer, the information you are to send with the application. Make sure you do what the funder wants and says.

There is one big mistake that most charity personnel do. Because of pressure of time and the desire to reach out to so many funders at the same time, some charities write the same proposal and mail it to very many trusts, foundations and other funders. Your proposal will not meet many funders' guidelines and requirements and will be rejected.

The mistakes we identified in this chapter can easily be avoided if you read guidelines, follow all funders' instructions and pay particular attention to details when preparing your grant proposals and applications.

All funders have their good sides too. Majority of them are willing to discuss with you why a proposal you submitted to them failed.

Let's say that, you believed in yourself that you've followed all instructions, did all things right and written a very sound proposal. You've written about who you are and what you do well; supported the need of your users with strong evidence backed by statistical data ... and yet your proposal was turned down.

What do you do? Guess why you didn't get a "yes" to your proposal or application. Rejection letters can dent your confidence, but let it not do so! In today's competitive grant market, you need to hold fast to your confidence. You need every ounce of it. Don't just simply throw the rejection letter away in desperation.

Read this letter again, to find out why your application was not successful. If you can't find a reason, take your phone and call the grant officer of the funding organisation. Ask him or her to give you a genuine, honest and helpful feedback on why your proposal was not successful.

This can be a great learning curve for you. For most grant seekers, receiving rejection letters is a statistical reality. Always remember the steps that you need to follow, to turn a rejection of your proposal or application to your advantage and win more grants in the future for your non-profit organisation.

In the next chapter, you'll learn about the various forms and components of grant proposals and applications.

Chapter 3

Main Components of Grant Proposals

Funders support very many good causes. They are concerned about social, economic and inequality problems which they would like to address with their money. Each funder would like proposals presented to them in certain specific ways.

In this chapter, I would like us to look at different forms that grant proposals can take so that you can respond appropriately.

The right approach to presenting a proposal or an application to a particular funder is usually written in the funders' guidelines which they publish regularly. Read this guideline first before you commence writing your application or proposal.

Application form

Application forms are one of the common ways that many funders adopt. The funder provides you with a standard form, either on-line or off-line which you must complete.

Usually the first sets of information requested on these forms are your organisation's name, address and contact details.

These are followed by sets of questions to which you should provide answers. Make sure you carefully read and understand the questions before you start answering them. Write coherent and constructive answers that are relevant to the question asked.

One, two or four pages of A4 paper

Other funders would want you to present proposals to them on one, two or four pages of A4 paper with the budget on a fresh page. You must follow the instructions given and write your standard proposal as fit as possible.

A letter proposal

Another way funders would like you to present proposals to them is through a letter. You will write the application as if you are writing a letter to the funder. The first page of your letter should be on your organisation's letter headed paper.

No format given

In most cases, funders just ask you to present proposals to them without telling you which format to use. In this instance, you must use your own discretion to present a credible proposal. Be careful not to get carried away and write too many unnecessary things.

Irrespective of how funders would want proposals to be submitted to them, the most important point to remember is that, the information you present must satisfy the requirements in the funders' guidelines. You must make a strong case for support.

What all funders want is a well-thought out project detailing compelling need and real solutions with an accurate budget.

Whatever format any funder prefers, all proposals must contain certain sets of information which vividly convey your request for grants.

In a moment, I'm going to show you the structure or main components of proposals, detailing important headings under which you need to present your proposals.

All proposals to funders must have a cover letter written on the organisation's letter headed paper. This letter is your front message introducing your organisation and the work you do to the funder.

It also sets the tone of your proposal and tells how you understand the funder you are approaching for support.

All proposals, whether application form, one, two or four pages of A4 paper, a letter or any other format a funder desires should follow this logical structure which is:

Project title

Start by giving your project a title or name. This must be a short, snappy and self explanatory heading.

Executive summary

Executive summary is a one-paragraph or half-page summary of your entire project proposal which you write after you have completed writing the full proposal or application. It's the nutshell of what the project is all about.

The length of an executive summary depends on the nature of your proposal. For a two page proposal, the summary could be at most a 4-line paragraph.

The need statement

The need statement answers the question "what is the problem and how do you know?" This is where you show and prove to the funder that there is a gap in circumstances that is depriving your community of users from living a better quality of life. Say how you have consulted with your service users who said they need this

project. People are calling you to demand a project like this. A report or survey on the area shows this need.

And you are proposing this project to resolve the need identified among your service users or, in the community.

All funders use need statements to educate themselves. It helps them to make decisions on whether to fund a project or not. Use personal stories of deprivation among your service users to highlight the need.

The more convincing you are with statistical proof and empirical evidence, the better you stand a chance of being successful any time you write and submit proposals.

Project description

The project description section of proposals narrates how you are going to address the need you have identified among your service user group.

This is the place where you clearly state the aims and objectives of the project, what activities you will be undertaking and a plan of when each activity will take place.

Remember to mention numbers that will benefit and the various personnel who will be involved in delivering the project.

Organisational description

This section of your proposal introduces your organisation to funders. It helps funders to make decisions about whether the group is qualified or experienced enough to undertake this kind of project.

You need to let the funder understand the work your charity does. Write about your organisation's history, activities, service users and mission.

Say what is unique about your charity and who you serve?

Write about the skills among your trustee group that enable them to run the organisation efficiently.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the benefits that your project brings to people who take part in it. They describe the changes that happen in beneficiaries as a result of their participating in your project's activities.

For example, elderly people who take part in the project will be fit, healthy and involved within their communities. Young people will become more confident and able to make informed choices that can guide them in life.

Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation section of proposals explains to funders how you the grant-seeker plan to regularly check and track your activities to make sure that the project is proceeding as planned.

It tells the funder how you will use the information collected during monitoring to judge if you have achieved your aims and objectives. This judgement phase is the evaluation.

Sustainability

In this section of your proposal, you will tell the funder what you will do to keep the project ongoing when the grant funding is finished. Funding for projects is usually for specific periods of time, say one, two or three years. Write about the plans you have for your project to continue after the grant is finished.

Budgets:

The budget section is the last part of the proposal that you will write. It is the financial explanation of the activities you will be undertaking on the project. What you need to do is examine the activities of the project line by line and try to apportion costs to each of lines items.

You'll estimate how much you need to run the project. Find out the market values of all items – personnel and non-personnel - needed to run the project. All funders would like to know what the grant they are giving to you will buy. Take your time to verify all costs accurately.

The type of project will determine the nature of the budget. For very small projects you will develop a simple budget. Where you are undertaking multiyear projects, the budget could be a complicated one.

Appendix

Most funders want you to submit additional information about the work of your organisation with your proposal to them.

These could be your organisation's latest Annual Report and Accounts, brochures, leaflets, bank details, a work plan of the project, a schedule of activities or any other information. Comply and submit them.

In the next chapter, we'll look at what exactly is required to be written under each of the headings and real examples to guide you in creating your own better proposals.

Chapter 4

The Nuts and Bolts of Grant Applications

Let's now put into practice, lessons you've learnt so far. Let's say that your charity or voluntary group has identified a need in the community and have planned a project to resolve it.

In your research, you identified a prospective funder whose grants officer you talked to about this project. This officer has agreed that your organisation should submit a proposal to the foundation.

I would like you to follow me in examining what actually goes under each of the headings of a typical grant proposal. You'll learn how to construct each part of the proposal to become successful.

You'll also find examples of winning sections of grant proposals under each of the headings. This will greatly help you to model your own proposals vividly.

Let's start....we'll be discussing the following components of proposals here:

- The cover letter
- Executive summary
- Statement of need
- Project description

- Organisational information
- Outcome and benefits
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Sustainability
- Budgets

The cover letter

The cover letter is a one-page letter of request introducing your charity to the funder. It's the first impression that the funder you are approaching for support will get about your organisation and the project when they receive and read your proposal.

You will write this letter at the completion of your full proposal but put it on top of the grant proposal you are sending out to a funder.

Take your time to write this letter very well such as to capture the attention and interest of the funder. The contents of your cover letter should include the following:

- Who you are and what you do as an organisation,
- The problem or issue you are trying to resolve,
- The logical solution you are proposing,
- Expected outcomes or benefit to project users,
- Why you are coming to this particular funder,
- The amount you are requesting for, and what exactly you will do with it.

This letter must be short and signed by the most senior person in your organisation. Preferably it should be the chairperson of the trustees, the project manager or the chief executive.

The cover letter must be written on your organisation's letter headed paper. Follow the format below when writing cover letters:

- i. Start with the address of the funder you are sending the letter to, on the top left hand corner of the page.
- ii. Make your letter approach personal and not as a general request.
- iii. Research the funder very well to find out a specific name that you should address the proposal to, in the funders' organisation. Open the letter with the name of this contact person.

Make sure you follow the rules of writing letters and sign off appropriately. Let's look at some practical examples of cover letters. I have enclosed three good ones to guide you in writing your own.

Example 1

All Children's Home Letter headed paper

Mrs. Joy Bright
The Abbot Foundation
134 Rolls Royce Street
Fandom
BH1 3FT

2nd June 201X

Dear Mrs. Bright,

I am writing on behalf of All Children's Home to kindly ask for £5,000 in grant funding from the Trustees of The Abbot Foundation towards our children in the community project – 'Young at Heart'.

This project will engage young people aged 8 to 16 years in after school enrichment activities, games and sports while their parents are at work. They will also be supported to do their homework.

Consultations with user-families revealed that 80% of parents in Mandy City are not at home in the afternoons to welcome their children back from school. This has led to many children drifting into wayward peers, putting them at risk of getting into trouble.

All Children's Home takes children off the streets, improves their educational attainments and give them better futures through out of school programmes.

We have established an education centre in Mandy City where children come and relax, make friends and take part in fun lessons which they enjoy. This centre is well patronised with tens of children waiting to access services weekly.

We would like The Abbot Foundation to help us reach out to more needy children through this project. Your grant funds will be used towards the training and support of volunteers to guide over 200 needy children at sessions in the year.

I have enclosed our organisation's Annual Report and Accounts. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Susan Simple
Chief Executive.

Example 2

All Children's Home letter headed paper

Mr John Walliy (Secretary)
The Children Education Trust
13 James Town Park
Ablorville
BB3 4ZA

11 May 201X

Dear Mr Walliy,

Thank you for your support regarding our enclosed application. As discussed, All Children's Home is a local charity, dedicated to addressing the needs of disadvantaged young people aged 8 to 16 years from all backgrounds in Cassaba.

Last year, user consultations we had revealed that 80% of young people in Cassaba return from school in the afternoons to find nobody at home to socialise with. Majority of these children are drifting into all sorts of peer groups and anti-social problems which is adversely affecting their educational attainments.

Our charity established an Education Centre in Cassaba where children come after school, weekends and during holidays to relax, make friends and take part in fun educational and support programmes which they enjoy.

In evaluating our services, parents have told us about the effectiveness of this centre in supporting young people experiencing severe disadvantage. We are now seeking funding to maintain and develop our education centre project work with children.

We believe this project is a perfect fit for the stance of The Children Education Trust on young people. You encourage support to children and young people in need. This is exactly what this centre is doing – achieving positive difference in the lives of 200 poor children in need every year.

We will be glad if the Trustees of The Children Education Trust are able to support our project with £5,000 towards volunteers training and support. I have enclosed our organisation's latest Annual Report and Accounts. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

John Shine
Chairman.

Example 3

In this example, the funder has supported your charity in the past. After presenting them with a good report, you are asked to apply again for continuing funding.

Mr Edward Mills
The Homeless Trust
35 Wesbron Grove
Mandy Town
MM3 NN3

12 May 201X

Dear Mr. Mills,

Mandy Peoples Project is kindly asking for renewed funding of £60,000 over 2 years from the Trustees of The Homeless Trust towards the expansion of family support services to homeless people in Casaba. Last year you helped us to:

- Provide drop-in sessions for families to come in every week, access services and take part in activities.
- Provide practical support to over 350 homeless families through one-to-one advice and advocacy services.
- Connect 64 homeless women to literacy classes, 240 families to health services and 64 children to mainstream school places.

More and more families are becoming homeless in Cassaba due to financial and other social problems. Placed in temporary homes abundant in the area by their local authorities, these families need support to access services and live independently.

Mandy Peoples Project is a thriving community-based charity with over 19 years track record of helping homeless families to access mainstream services. We will be very grateful if the Trustees of The Homeless Trust are able to support us in helping poor households in Cassaba rebuild their lives and family relations.

Many thanks for your ongoing support and consideration for the Mandy Peoples Project. I have enclosed our organisation's most recent Annual Accounts and Report. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Oga Wollams
Project Manager

Executive Summary

The executive summary is a quick overview – a one or two paragraph piece of the project you are proposing to undertake. You write this summary after you have completed writing the full proposal.

However, you place it at the beginning of the proposal such that it becomes the first section to be read after the covering letter.

The executive summary portrays the significance and potential of your project to funders. You must give a strong first impression of your project in this summary. Present the summary in such succinct manner that it should arouse the interest of the funder to want to read the whole application.

One role or duty of grant officers is to summarise proposals received and present them to their boards for decisions to be taken on the projects. If you write this summary very well, you'll make the work of the grants officer easier.

And your proposal will stand a very good chance of being selected for presentation to the board. The executive summary should include the following information:

- The problem, need or issue you want the project to solve,
- Short description of the project's activities, beneficiaries, where and duration,
- Say one most important thing you want the funder to know about your organisation,
- Outcomes or benefits you expect project users to experience,

Let's look at typical examples of the executive summary.

Example 1

This one year project will educate and transform the lives young people aged 13 to 18 years who are identified as being at risk of drug and alcohol abuse, anti-social behaviour and crime in Mandy City.

Participants will be engaged in two intensive weekly sessions of youth leadership programmes, employment training and one-to-one mentoring by dedicated, well-trained and CRB checked volunteers. The aim is to help young people increase in confidence, resilience and develop interpersonal skills for their future development. The project will also organise sporting activities to help create opportunities for open communication, team working and respect for society among young people.

About 40 young people from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds will benefit from this project which will hold at the Many City Community Hall. Each session will last for 3 hours. .

Example 2

This project will improve quality of life for low-income families living at Avenue Housing Estate in Mandy City in the year. We plan to provide a safe place for families in need to come and relax, make friends and take part in workshops and activities targeting their particular health needs every week.

All Children's Home is the main and long term supporter of disadvantaged families in Mandy City. Project beneficiaries will learn new skills and gain knowledge which will empower them to live more healthily on a day-to-day basis.

All activities will take place at the Revelation Centre in Mandy City on Saturdays from 4 to 6 pm. About 100 low-income families will benefit from this project every year.

Statement of need

The statement of need also known as problem statement shows the reason why your group wants this grant. You have identified some gap in service provision which is adversely affecting your service users. And your charity is seeking the support of this funder to close the gap.

Remember that the funder you are approaching with this proposal knows nothing about your charity or the needs of clients you support. It is important that you use appropriate words and phrases that best describe your service users' situation.

Show how disadvantaged your user group is, the urgency of the need and how you know your users want this project. Create a discussion that will let the funder agree with you, say 'yes' to your proposal and go ahead to support you with the grant.

Try to arrest the attention of the funder by stating the problem in very clear terms, identifying the target group and the geographical area concerned. For example:

- 40% of the workforce in Mandy City is illiterate,
- Refugee women in Mandy City need supportive activities to relieve them of isolation and exclusion,
- Alcohol related problems among young people are on the increase in Mandy City.

Stating the problems in clear and specific terms pose many more questions like, how do you know? What is the extent of the problem? What effect is this problem having on the community, etc?

You will then go on to educate the reader of your proposal by building a strong case for support using statistics, scenarios and real-life stories to prove the need.

Show what effect this problem is having on your target population. Tell the funder how your project can help to resolve this need.

Give readers of your proposal or application hope about the problem situation and that this need can be resolved if they support your charity. End by showing how this money will make a difference to the people who will benefit from the project.

Here is an example of need statement to guide you when writing proposals or applications.

Example

Over 3,000 families living in temporary accommodation and reception centres in Mandy City experience high levels unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. They suffer appalling levels of ill-health; have less income to meet their basic needs and, are at risk of health and safety due to poor living conditions.

Various barriers including little knowledge about their new environment, language problems and loss of confidence due to displacement, prevent these families from accessing proper health care, education and information services. 90% of these families are refugees, have no permanent address and speak little English language. Thus, they are unable to access GP's and other mainstream services easily.

Left unattended to, these families, especially the children are at risk of destitution and a future menace to society. Our charity receives over 20 requests for support each day from these families in need. Our drop-in sessions are taken up quickly and we have long waiting lists. There is an urgent need to relieve disadvantaged families from increasing economic risks and social deprivation. Our service users need support to enable them access community and mainstream services to live independently.

In situations where you are asked to complete grant application forms, the question is usually asked in this way: "How do you know that this project is needed?"

You could know about the need in very many ways: It may be that you have been working with the group of clients for some time now. You might also have undertaken some research or survey in the area and found out about this need. Say exactly what you did to identify this need.

I will start to answer this question in a way like this; “*We know that this project is needed through our close working relationship with homeless families in the community over the last 5 years*”.

Project description

The project description section of your proposal tells the funder what you will do to resolve the problem you have identified. It refers to the methods, activities or steps you will follow to bring about desired benefits to project users. How long this section is, will depend on the nature of the project – whether it is a big or small project.

One good way to tackle this section is to ask questions whose answers can give you ideas and words to describe the project you want to undertake. These questions are:

- What are the aims and objectives of your project?
- What activities will you undertake to achieve the aims and objectives?
- Where and when will the project take place?
- Who will benefit from the project’s activities and how many of them?
- What is the length of time or the timeline for the project – beginning and completion dates?

Example 1

We will use your grant funds to provide interactive and interesting after school activities for a total of 100 children aged 8 to 16 years in Mandy Town in the year. Sessions will be held at the Mandy Youth Plaza, a safe and welcoming environment on Saturdays from 3pm to 6pm.

About 15 to 20 children will attend sessions on each occasion. 4 trained volunteers and 1 support worker will guide and support the children with their home work and additional tuition in English, mathematics and science. The project will also involve children in fun and creative activities that support the National Curriculum.

There will be one-to-one and small group activities targeting the personal development of these children. Parents and children will also be engaged in workshops to interact and spend quality time with each other. The aim of this project is to reduce anti-social behaviour among children in Mandy Town.

Experience has shown us that it is good to involve children in rich and exciting range of activities beyond the school day. This provision broadens children's horizon and motivates them to greater achievements.

Example 2

The aim of this project is to improve access to health care services and healthy lifestyle activities for disadvantaged families in Mandy City. One project staff and 4 volunteers will help families to take part in various activities to improve their health and quality of life. Project activities will include:

- The provision of 2 days of drop-in centre services reaching out to about 18 families per week. We will provide families with information and one-to-one support in accessing health care and other services.*
- Organise weekly healthy living activities, keep-fit and regular exercises for at least 10 families to take part and improve upon their health.*

- *Run user-meetings once in every 6 weeks. This will enable at most 12 service users to participate in planning, development, monitoring and evaluating services.*
- *Develop a user volunteer scheme for at most 10 adults to become advocates for other disadvantaged families using the project every year.*

Project activities will be held at our offices in the Revelation Corps building in Mandy City. Sessions will be from 10:00am to 4:00pm every weekday. We plan to start the project in May 201X.

Organisational information

Use this section of your proposal or application to educate the funder about the uniqueness of your organisation, who you are, what you do, where and the population you serve. Say the WAO factor that sets your charity apart from others. Present your charity as one with track record, experience and expertise in doing what you want to do.

Say how many staff and volunteers you have. Write a positive comment that people or users make about how your service provisions make a difference in their lives.

Let's look at two examples of organisation information section in your proposal.

Example 1

Established as a charity in 200A, All Children's Home operates from one of the most deprived communities in Mandy City. We provide educational support, counselling, youth forum and a mentoring project to help lift over 200 children and young people every year out of severe disadvantage and poverty.

The charity is a young organisation but has established good reputation for its effective work within the local community. Our experienced staff of 1 part-time and 5

dedicated volunteers have very good understanding of young people's needs and have developed approaches and techniques that work better with them.

The charity promotes and enhances the education of disadvantaged young people aged 8 to 16 years. This is achieved through the provision of after school, weekend and holiday learning activities and experiences.

We use fun and interactive programmes to inspire, motivate and build self-esteem of young people to become decent and responsible citizens of the future. Our sessions run for 3 hours each day and 3 days in the week. A 7-member trustee board with various skills, and including young people, run the charity.

Another example might look like this:

Example 2

All Children's Home is a community-led charity. The group was set up in 200A with a mission to engage, empower and inspire children and young people to attain their potential through fun, interesting and hands-on activities.

The organisation is based in the Revelation Army building in Mandy City. For 10 years now, we have been working with schools, community groups and youth clubs in Mandy borough to bring innovation and interest in learning to over 200 children aged 8 to 16 years every year.

Our activities include family learning sessions, parents and children time together, training for parents and carers on routes to work and a befriending scheme for young people. We believe it is good to involve children in hands-on activities, using materials they are familiar with. This will take away the mysteries surrounding difficult subjects while learning basic facts in totally enjoyable ways.

Our charity is committed to helping children succeed in life. A 5-member voluntary management committee including young people runs the organisation.

Outcomes or Benefits

The outcomes section of a project proposal describes the changes that you believe will happen in the lives of the people who take part in your project. Right at the planning stage, you'll have established or agreed on an aim which you would like to achieve with this project.

You will know if these changes have occurred as a result of your undertaking this project by:

- Consulting with users of the project,
- Project beneficiaries completing questionnaires and/or forms,
- Keeping registers of people accessing your services,
- Observing project participants,
- Collecting feedback and case studies from individuals.

Your answer could go like this! *This project will bring huge benefits and positive outcomes to young people we support including:*

- Improved interpersonal skills especially across a social mix of about 150 young people in a year.
- Improved cooperation and team-work skills as children are involved in planning activities and working in groups.
- Increased independence, self-esteem and confidence among young people. At least 200 young people in a year will now take part in a wider range of activities than they would have done before.

- Over 200 children and young people will build new friendships within the group. They will learn social skills they need to develop relationships with other peers in the community.
- About 100 young people will acquire skills that can help them to find work or set up their own business by the end of the project.
- 40% of disadvantaged young people who take part in the project will report that they feel less isolation and excluded.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is the process of collecting information on activities or services you are providing on the project in a planned and systematic way. The information you collect could be on attendance at sessions, various activities taking place, users' responses to services and many others things.

You can monitor progress of a project daily, monthly, quarterly or at any other agreed specific times.

You monitor using tools such as observations, surveys, questionnaires, feedbacks or any other means relevant to your organisation. When monitoring, you are checking progress of your project against the plan you have set up at the beginning.

You monitor for several reasons:

- To find out if your project is proceeding according to plan,
- To be accountable to both users of the project and your funders,
- To learn from your mistakes,
- To encourage best practice,

Evaluation is the process of using the monitoring information you collected to make judgement about whether your project has been successful or not. In evaluating your project, you will be asking questions like:

- Did the project produce the changes we hoped for during the planning stages?
- Are we able to undertake all the activities planned?
- Which activities went on well and which did not?
- Are we able to reach out to, and support our target group as planned?

The purpose of evaluation is to help you make changes or improvements for the better. Funders want to know how you will measure the success or failure of your projects. It is very necessary that right at the planning stage, you indicate what you are going to monitor and evaluate and how you will do it.

The objectives of your project will give you a starting point on what to monitor and evaluate. As your project begins, you will start observing how activities are progressing and collecting statistics on beneficiaries at specific periods of time.

At the end of the project or at quarterly intervals, you will use information collected to determine if the project is on target to achieving its aims and objectives. Usually, monitoring happens throughout a project's lifetime whilst evaluation occurs at the end of it. In most organisations both monitoring and evaluation go hand-in-hand.

The level of evaluation you perform depends on the nature of the project. In small projects, internal staff and committee members monitor and evaluate. With big projects, it is good to seek the services of a professional person to lead the evaluation process.

If you are going to use an expert to oversee the evaluation, it is advisable to involve him or her in the planning stages of the project. Having an external person to evaluate your project gives credibility to the work your organisation does.

Let's observe one **example** of what you could write down in the evaluation section of your proposal.

We will monitor progress of this project and evaluate its impact on beneficiaries using tools such as collection of statistics on users, questionnaires, user-meetings, observations and focus group discussions and document the lessons learned.

All participants will be asked to fill in attendance forms before settling in for activities. They will also complete evaluation forms at the end of sessions to tell us what they liked about activities and what needs to be improved.

We will organise user-involvement meetings once in every 6 weeks to collect feedback on how well the project is meeting the need of families, children and young people accessing services. At these meetings, participants will also discuss what they think about the project in small focus groups and complete questionnaires to rate the project and its activities. This will promote user- participation and involvement in the project and its monitoring and evaluation.

Project staff and volunteers will observe and keep records on all participants and how actively involved they are in project activities.

All statistics and feedbacks collected on project participants will be collated into quarterly reports for management to review progress against objectives. This will enable us to make changes to the project as necessary and enrich our understanding of the impact of the project on users.

Management and staff will use progressive indicators identified during the project planning stages to compare with project results. A final report, documenting case studies, lessons learned and other information will be developed and shared with our funders, partners and other community groups.

Sustainability

No funder will be happy to see a project they supported, sink into oblivion when the grant awarded is finished. Therefore, funders want to know how you will sustain the project when their funding runs out before they make a decision to support you.

There are so many things you could do. You could involve parents and project beneficiaries as volunteers in project provisions. This means that when the funding is finished you will have skilled and experienced people to carry on with the project.

One of the things you should do at the planning stage of your project is to think about the various ways you could generate income to continue with your projects in the longer term. Tell the funder that you have developed a fundraising strategy to guide your organisation in raising resources.

In this strategy you could spell out how you will organise events, write proposals or approach individuals to give you funding to continue with the project.

A typical *example* of how you could write the sustainability section of a proposal is:

We will sustain this project by:

- *Involving parents as volunteers in service provisions. This will build capacity and skills of community people to carry our work forward.*
- *Approaching individuals with known interest in children to support our work with donations. We will develop a donor programme for long term supporters.*
- *Organising health walks and events to generate income beyond this funding.*
- *Approaching local and national sources of funds including trusts, corporations and local government sources for continuation funding.*

We have developed a fundraising strategy to guide us in seeking funding from various sources established to help disadvantaged children for continuing support.

Our charity is committed to helping children from all backgrounds improve the quality of their lives through education and relevant development programmes.

Budgets

A budget is the financial description of your project activities. It's usually a one-page, line-by-line summary of your expenses and expected incomes. It's the estimated total cost of all items you need to undertake a project.

Your budget must match the narrative of your project's activities.

At the planning stage, make a list of all items that will help you to run the project. Assign each of them, their money value based on current market prices. The following procedure can help you develop better budgets for your project always.

- Make a list of all personnel that will be involved in the project – coordinator, project support worker, volunteers, office staff, etc. Find how much their services will cost. Apply this cost to each of the personnel identified.
- Make another list of non-personnel items – venue hire, stationery, telephone, postage, etc. Assign each of these items with their market prices.
- Write out all other costs related to undertaking project activities- buying of materials, educational supplies, refreshments and others.
- Find out about equipment needed and their costs – sports and games equipment, health equipment, computers and other technical equipment, etc. Get invoices on these items from suppliers.

Add up all of these costs. Please, check your sums very carefully. It speaks very badly of you when your numbers do not add up correctly. Do not underestimate or overestimate the items. Endeavour to find their correct market prices.

Remember, you cannot go back to the funder to say that the prices of the items you listed in the budget have increased after the grant has been approved for you.

Let's look at examples of a simple budget and a detailed budget template below and the next page.

Example of a simple project

Saturday Supplementary Classes

Project budget

Project Item	Explanation	Total Cost £
Venue hire for Saturday activities	£20/hr x 3 hrs/week x 36 weeks	2,160.00
Administrative expenses	£90/month x 12 months	1,080.00
Children's educational materials	Flipchart/A2paper/balls/exercise books/writing materials/etc	560.00
Equipment – Laptop computer - Photocopier - Software	For parental workshops, forum discussions & photocopying of lessons and other children's materials	850.00
Volunteers re-imburements	2 volunteers/week @ £10each x 36 weeks	720.00
Equipment	For sports and children's play	600.00
Refreshments & workshops	£16/week x 36 weeks	576.00
Box of simple materials	For hands-on science activities	454.00
Total Cost		7,000.00

Project budget template

Here is an example of a budget template for a multiyear project. Take note that not all items in this template will be included in every proposal/application. (It is only those items that are relevant to your specific proposal that you will include if you need to use this template).

Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Staff costs				
Salary				
National Insurance				
Pensions				
Recruitment				
Training				
Running/core costs				
Accommodation (rent & rates)				
Utilities (heat, light, etc)				
Telephone/fax				
Stationery/office supplies				
Computer accessories & repairs				
Postage/photocopying/				
Management and supervision				
Administration support				
Accountancy and audit services				
Insurance				
Direct project costs				
Services for beneficiaries				
Publicity materials				
Venue hire				
Refreshments				
Workshop expenses				
Educational materials				
Volunteer expenses				
Monitoring and evaluation				
Dissemination of lessons learnt				
Total Project Costs				

Chapter 5

Sample Grant Proposals

Now that we've examined and exhausted the proposal writing process, I would like us to look at some examples of winning grant proposals I have written in the last two years. These proposals have been tailored towards different funders and actually won grants totalling over £200,000.

The first is an example of a project proposal in which you have no restriction on the number of pages to write. I have shown you the full proposal plus its covering letter.

As I said earlier on, when you are confronted with a situation like this, do not bore the reader of your proposal or application with unnecessary words. Make a compelling case for support to the funder.

The second example is a proposal with restrictions on the number of pages to write. You must adhere strictly to this requirement.

Your choice of words is very important here. Present the needs of your service users vividly such that the funder will be compelled and convinced to award you the grant.

Please note that to protect the confidentiality of my clients, I have used fictitious names and addresses instead of their true details. Also note that you are not allowed to copy any of these proposals word for word for any purpose.

These grant proposals are protected by copyright. But you are allowed to emulate and model your own proposals on these real life examples.

The cover letter:

This cover letter should be on your organisation's letter headed paper

Mr Edwards Mills
The Homeless Support Trust
35 Wesbron Grove
Mandy Town
MM3 NN3

30 May 201X

Dear Edwards,

I want to sincerely thank you for taking time off your busy schedule in March to visit our charity, New Generation regarding our enclosed project proposal. As discussed, our request is for £60,657 over 2 years towards the salary and associated expenses of our Family Support Project. This project will provide support, information and a range of services for homeless families in Mandy borough.

These families and children, living in temporary accommodations and reception centres experience complex suits of health, financial and social problems for which they need support to overcome.

In evaluating our services, project users have identified high unmet needs for family support services. Homeless families need school places for their children, access to GP's, and income to live independently. The living conditions of these families put them, especially the children, at risk to health and safety.

New Generation has served the homeless community in Mandy borough since 19XX. We have become very effective in helping families to acquire skills and knowledge for their future development.

We will be very delighted if the Trustees of The Homeless Support Trust are able to support our project. I have enclosed our organisation's latest Annual Report and Accounts. Please do contact me if you require any further information. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Oga Wollams
Project Manager

Cover page

PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

A PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING SUBMITTED TO

THE HOMELESS SUPPORT TRUST

BY

NEW GENERATION

MANDY CITY

Main Application

Project summary

This project will continue to provide practical support to enable families living in reception centres and temporary accommodations in Mandy City to gain their rightful place in society. We will help them to access mainstream and community services, gain skills, education and employment.

Families we support experience multiple and interrelated needs arising from domestic violence, racial harassment and/ or mental health problems.

We will use regular follow-ups and involvement of families in project activities to help reduce their social and economic exclusion. Project activities will help to restore family links and build confidence among disadvantaged families.

New Generation will work in close collaboration with other local groups to build an information network for over 1000 homeless families in the year. This will ensure that they are referred to appropriate services for support and help.

Background to the organisation

Established in 19XX, New Generation is a user-led registered charity that supports homeless families and children placed in temporary accommodations in Mandy borough. The charity runs a day-time drop-in centre in Mandy City where families come to access services, make friends and share their concerns.

Activities run at the centre include literacy classes, women's programmes, healthy living sessions, education and health access work. We help homeless families with their day-to-day living, interpreting and translation, advocacy and social outings.

Over the last 15 years, the organisation has been a key provider of advice on housing, welfare benefits, immigration and other issues relating to homelessness in the area. Today, on annual basis, New Generation provides a full range of direct services to about 1,600 homeless families in Mandy borough.

Our charity works in close collaboration with housing units in Mandy and surrounding boroughs. This helps us to reach out and assist as many homeless families as possible. A 12 member voluntary trustee board made up of former and present homeless people and professionals with relevant skills run the charity. The organisation has 4 full-time and 3 part-time workers supported by 10 volunteers.

The need for this project

Homeless families with dependent children in Mandy City are experience appalling levels of discrimination, rejection and exclusion. They lack access to mainstream and community services, education places for their children and suffer health inequalities.

Each day, about 6 to 10 families come to our advice service seeking information on how to access better housing, education for themselves and their children, benefits, training and employment.

Over 80% of these families come with complex suites of problems including debts, evictions, getting on the housing register and support with health care for the family. The issues they bring require multiple visits and long term support. This situation is severely stretching the capacity of our advice team to deliver.

In Mandy City alone there are as many as 3,000 homeless families with dependent children. These families are placed in unsuitable homes abundant in the area by Mandy and surrounding boroughs. 90% of these families are from black and other minority ethnic backgrounds and the rest from poor white British communities. 67% of these families are asylum seekers and refugees (Fusi Report Dec 20XX).

Consultations we had with user families revealed that although many homeless families are qualified for welfare benefits, housing and other public services, they frequently need help in accessing them. Mandy People's Project has valiantly tried to satisfy this need in the last 14 years.

We have observed great pressure on the advice service for housing, benefits and immigration issues. This has left the needs for education, health care, training and employment to be less attended to.

In evaluating our services and in particular our client group, we have recognised a growing need for support services which can help disadvantaged families and their children to gain access to proper health care and family support.

This project will build on the success of our present and previous programmes to help more homeless families rebuild their lives. It will connect families to services that can help them to live independently.

New Generation is kindly seeking funding support from you, Trustees of The Homeless Support Trust to continue providing valuable services to disadvantaged families in Mandy City. Your support will:

- Help more homeless families to obtain entitlements and other services easily,
- Help us to track clients through referrals which will encourage them to take full advantage of available services, gain employment and keep their homes,
- Free the advice team to deal with in-depth family support cases for many clients
- Result in more families undergoing complete assessment and lasting solutions found to their complex problems

Project activities

This project will address the need for practical support to homeless families by retaining its experienced family support worker who will be assisted by two volunteers to deliver the following services;

(1) Provide a minimum of 9 hours each week of accessible drop-in sessions reaching out to a minimum of 20 homeless families and children with essential services they need to live independently. Families will be supported with information, advice and activities including play and childcare opportunities.

(2) Organise user involvement meetings once in every month. About 30 families and children will be involved in activities like developing, implementing and evaluating projects. They will also take part in meetings, health and cultural activities to reduce their social exclusion.

(3) Support at least 100 homeless families each year with their educational needs. This will include advice on higher and/or further education, referrals to adult literacy classes and other skills training programmes. We will also signpost and refer families to other agencies and groups for support.

(4) Work with individual households through weekly home visits. Volunteers will offer practical assistance with independent living, housing needs, filling of forms and bidding for houses from councils on the internet.

(5) Undertake 2 outreach sessions a week in the community with our publicity materials. This is to enable us reach out to least 20 families a week to become aware of services available to them in the area.

(6) Help at most 8 homeless families every month to register with General Practitioners. We will arrange interpreters and translators for them when visiting clinics and hospitals.

Expected outcomes

This project will bring significant benefits to homeless families in Mandy City. These will include:

- Improved access to statutory and community services for over 1,000 homeless families a year leading to reduction in their isolation and exclusion.
- Increased access to educational and training opportunities for over 100 homeless families a year. Those supported will gain skills, work placements and good income to maintain their homes.
- Increased self-confidence and self-esteem of over 200 homeless families and young people in the year.
- More homeless families will increase their knowledge and understanding of their take-up rights and entitlements to relieve them of poverty.

Target group

This project will benefit homeless families, their children and young people in Mandy City and surrounding areas. These families come from all over the country and originate from all over the world.

The vast majority are from minority ethnic communities. 67% of them are refugees and asylum seekers and the rest from poor white communities. They are families whose quality of life is decreased by difficult circumstances, especially language barriers, domestic violence and ill health.

Monitoring and evaluation

We will monitor and evaluate this project using statistics, user meetings, feedbacks, surveys and observations. We will collect data on the number of beneficiaries we support every week by asking them to complete attendance forms each time they access services.

Project workers will maintain daily diaries of their work and track individual families to provide additional feedback for reporting to the team so that we can monitor more quantitative impact of the project. This will help us to measure whether the project has been successful in achieving its target of increasing families' take-up of rights.

We will hold regular staff and users' involvement meetings once in every 6 weeks to solicit feedback on whether the project is delivering the desired outcomes. At these meetings, service users will be asked to fill out questionnaires and evaluation forms to tell us how services are meeting their needs. They will discuss which services could be developed and those to be improved.

Results from the evaluation will be used to validate programme effectiveness for internal decision making purposes, identify improvements needed in the future and provide feedback to our stakeholders.

Sustainability

We plan to sustain this project by involving homeless families in volunteering on the project. This will help to create a pool of experienced volunteers who can provide needed support to other families in the future.

Secondly, we will develop and deliver this project in a way which we can show as good practice worthy of support and replication. We can then approach local authorities and the community for support to sustain our projects.

Thirdly, we have developed a fundraising strategy to guide the charity in seeking funding from trusts, individuals and corporations to enable us address the short and long term needs of homeless families.

We believe that by working in close collaboration with other boroughs, Councils will recognise the good work we are doing and be willing to fund our programmes when we approach them for support in the future.

We have also begun outreach to foundations and corporations with known interest in funding support programmes serving homeless families. We will maintain an ongoing systematic and consistent approach to potential funders to fund our projects.

Project budget

New Generation

Budget of year 1 and year 2 for Practical Support for Homeless Families

	Year 1 £	Year 2 £
Salaries and fees		
Salary including ENRI & Pension	23,730.00	24,442.00
Volunteers out of pocket expenses	1,344.00	1,384.00
Management and supervision	1,423.00	1,466.00
Non-personal costs		
Rent and rates	1,200.00	1,236.00
Telephone/fax/postage	260.00	268.00
Office stationery/copying/ Cartridges/diskettes/etc	600.00	618.00
Travel	323.00	333.00
Training	400.00	412.00
Publicity materials	600.00	618.00
TOTAL COSTS	29,880.00	30,777.00
Financial assumptions		
Volunteer expenses: 4 volunteers each working 1 day a week @ £8/day.	(Estimated work =42 weeks/year: 4 x £8 x 42weeks = £ 1344.00	
Family Support Worker	Salary = £21,000.00 + 10% NI = £2,100.00 + 3% Pension= £630.00 Total= £23,730.00	
Salaries	Second year increase = 3%	
Management & supervision costs	=5% of personal and non-personal costs	

Example 2

A letter proposal

Community Initiatives' letter headed paper

Edwards Mills
Refugee Support Trust
35 Wesbron Grove
Mountain City
MM3 NN3

7 May 201X

Dear Edwards Mills,

I am writing to humbly ask that the Trustees of Refugee Support Trust contribute £15,000 in grant support towards the salary of Community Initiatives' centre manager post in the 201X/1Y project year. This will help us maintain the quality of services we provide to refugee and asylum-seeking families in Alabourn Province.

Community Initiatives helps disadvantaged and vulnerable families to access services they need so that they can move on to independent living. This is achieved via a drop-in centre and one-to-one advice and counselling.

These families live in temporary homes and reception centres in Alabourn Province. 80% come from refugee and asylum seeking communities and backgrounds and the rest are poor white UK citizens escaping domestic violence.

The main support given is in benefits, housing, immigration status, health, education, training, job placement and interpretation for those with little or no English. Alabourn Province is a magnet for refugee families. Here they feel more secure because they are anonymous. The ease of communication and the availability of cheaper accommodation attract people from all across the country to the area.

Community Initiatives is the largest provider of support services for refugee families in Alabourn Province and the only one which works with refugee children. It has been established for over 14 years and its staff and volunteers speak over 20 community languages. Our charity needs to secure funding for its key staff member -

The project manager who oversees the work of the charity and is essential to retaining the organisation's core staff and volunteer team.

In common with some other charities operating on very slender resources, trustees insist that appointments are made subject to funding and only for the period that any specific grant covers. This post is part funded by The Agfa Trust and when the grant expires on 31 March 201Y, we understand that The Agfa Trust will not be funding any core grants from beginning of the new project year.

Our organisation receives over 20 requests for support each day. The drop-in centre and playgroup have waiting lists. Many of the problems tackled are complex and interlinked, often arising from destitution, poor health, debt, eviction, access to GPs and other health services, domestic violence, little or no understanding of English.

We need your support for a manager to lead the charity in guiding children and disadvantaged families out of poverty. A full analysis of clients and services we provide for refugee families and children are on the back of the attached annual report. Support from the Refugee Support Trust will achieve the following:

- Permanent housing so that 150 parents can access support for their children.
- A permanent address so that 120 children can go to school every year.
- Benefits, once accessed can be handled by claimants without extra support.
- Literacy classes so that 100 families can understand their rights and benefits.

We have already secured £10,000 for this position from fundraising activities and will undertake more donor appeals to help cover the remaining costs. Find enclosed the staff budget for the year. I look forward to hearing favourably from you soon.

Please, if you need further information do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Oga Wollams
Chair (Community Initiatives).

Community Initiatives

Centre Manager Budget for the 201X/1Y Project Year

Salary & Fees

Salary including (NJC Scale PO1)	26,528.00
National Insurance	26,528.00
Less Personal Allowance	<u>10,000.00</u>
Employers NI (12.8%)	16,528.00
Pension (5%)	<u>1,326.00</u>
Total Salary Cost	29,970.00

On Costs

Rent and rates	464.00
Travel	720.00
Training	450.00
Resources (Stationery/Tel/others)	1,500.00

Sub costs **33,104.00**

Management Costs (8%) 2,648.00

Total Budgetary Cost **35,752.00**

The manager will be tasked to implement our fundraising strategy to bring in additional funds to support the project in subsequent years.

YOUR COMPLETE STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO WRITING PROPOSALS/APPLICATIONS THAT WIN GRANTS

This book contains:

- Essential techniques for writing compelling grant proposals
- Real life examples of applications that won grants
- Effective and best ways to communicate with funders
- A list of common mistakes that make proposals fail to win
- Detailed information on what makes proposals tick
- Insider tips, tricks and secrets of writing winning proposals
- Information to help you write beautiful, engaging and compelling proposals that you will be proud of.

In this present competitive grants environment, writing very good proposals and applications is a must to enable you win grants from trusts, foundations and statutory (government) sources. Here is a resource that you can use to develop proposals that can win grants most of the time. We lead you step-by-step through the proposal writing processshow you checklists to use and sample winning proposals to emulate, making your proposals and applications stand out!

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