

Writing a Letter of Application to Funders



This factsheet has been designed to show you an outline for writing a letter of application for funding. Sometimes you will come across Charitable Trusts who do not have an application form for you to complete. So you have to write a letter. If they give guidance on what to write, follow that. But if they don't, what do you include in your letter, and how should you present it?

Attached is a model of a possible application letter, suggesting what to include and giving some tips.

- Firstly, you must write an *individual tailored letter to each Trust*, and take the trouble in each letter to show how your application meets that Trust's objectives or guidelines. It might only mean changing the name and address, and re-writing one paragraph. But it is much better than a photocopied "dear sir or madam" letter. Keep a copy of each letter you write.
- Secondly, check whether the Trust says *how long the letter should be* and keep to that. If in doubt, stick to no more than 2 sides of A4.
- Thirdly, write out the full budget for the project for which you are applying for funds, and attach a copy to each letter you write. If you only want them to contribute part of the cost you can say so in the letter. But let them see the whole thing. A model of a budget, pointing out how to arrive at figures and what to write is attached. Obviously if it's just one item of expenditure, like the cost of a piece of equipment, then you can just put it in the letter.
- Finally, make sure that somebody is going to be available to answer queries, and give their details in your letter. And make sure they are available! There's no point putting your treasurer's details if s/he is just off on a round the world cruise and won't be back until after the application has been considered – it does happen!

Put the name and contact details of your group somewhere clearly visible at the top of your letter or if your group has its own printed letterhead use that.

Letters

Check the name of the “correspondent”
And put it here with the address
At the top of your letter
If there’s no name listed put whatever they put
e.g. The Correspondent or Secretary to the Trustees

Today’s date

Dear Real Person
(name the correspondent as above – not “Sir or Madam” unless there’s no name given)

Open the letter with a line or two explaining how much money you need, what it’s for and what you are hoping they will donate.

It can be helpful to put headings throughout the letter to help them find the information they want quickly

A good starting point would be to give them a line or two of the background about your group. For instance how long it’s been running or if it’s newly established. Say whether or not you are a registered charity. Explain how your group is organised, e.g. that you have a voluntary management committee. Include your aims and a very short mention of the main things your group does (apart from this project). If you’re a new group, explain that you haven’t any accounts for the previous year because you’re new, and tell them if you have a bank account in the name of the group, or make it clear you are opening one.

Tell them what you’re doing and what you’re asking them for

Explain what you want money for and why you are asking *this* Trust to help. This is the part where you *must* read their guidelines and their objectives or funding priorities and explain how you think your group or project meets these. You might emphasise different aspects of the project in the letters you write to different funders. Give a full but concise description of what you are doing or planning. You can also list whatever help or support you have already had.

**Top
Tip**

Apply Yourself and **Budget Yourself** are two free software programmes from FunderFinder, that you can use to help you write applications and budgets. Go to www.funderfinder.org.uk and click Resources and follow the links.

Tell this funder how much money you are asking them to give you. If this amount is for a single item of expenditure you could just write it here, explaining how you came by that figure (e.g. the fact that you got a quote, or you checked prices on a website). But if you have a budget with lots of items of expenditure, you should attach it and say here that you have included a breakdown of the costs. If you are only asking this funder to give you a portion of the total amount, explain where or how you will get the rest of the money (this should include a mention of other funders you have applied to and which parts of the project you've asked them to fund).

You could give them a bit of background to the project

Tell them about any research you have done, how you realised your community needs this activity, who will benefit etc. If it is something you've done before, or something you're continuing or expanding, tell them how successful it was. Illustrate it with your knowledge and experiences. Only use statistics that back up what you are saying. Don't just put in lots of statistics for the sake of it.

Show them you have planned it all out thoroughly

Show how you plan to evaluate your work. For example you might do a questionnaire at the end of the project, or you might monitor the numbers of people who participate, which could indicate how successful or effective the project is. You could also say a little about how you plan to run the project, who will be involved and the timescales for the work. For instance if buying equipment, show them you've thought about storing it or maintaining it. If you're working with any other organisations, or if they are supporting you, you could mention that here. Alternatively, you could write up a brief plan for the project, and attach it to this and any other applications. Tell them your future plans for the project after the grant ends.

Tell them who to contact for further information

Make it clear who they can contact for more information, and make sure that the person/s you name here are actually going to be available and able to answer questions. It sounds obvious, but don't put the name of someone who doesn't know anything about this application!

Close your letter

Check their guidance to see if they welcome supplementary information and send what they ask for. If they say “send nothing”, send nothing! If you do enclose any supporting information, keep it brief and keep it relevant. If they don't specify what you should send, at the very least you should include your latest annual accounts, your constitution and the budget for the project you are trying to fund. Don't be tempted to fill your envelope with reams of paper and long documents! Don't deluge them with every last press cutting. If you do have reports etc, you could always mention them here and say they are available if they would like to see them.

Thank them for taking the time to read your application, who to contact if they need further information, and tell them you look forward to hearing from them. Sound positive.

Yours sincerely

If your signature is scrawly

Write or type your name underneath and your position in the group.

Enc: List each item you have included with your letter at the end so that they can easily see what should be in the envelope with your letter - and to remind you to include it! Unless they request certain things, stick to accounts, governing document and budget. Resist the temptation to bombard them with massive amounts of publicity and long reports - you can say they are available if required.



Budgets

What are you calling this budget?

e.g. “*Running Costs for the Group for the Financial Year x –y*” or “*Costing for the Project or Activity*” you are trying to fund (Have several copies of this budget and include a copy with each application, even if you are only asking for part of the money.)

Put the date! Month and year will do.

If you are buying a piece of equipment list it here (say where you got the cost from – e.g. name the store or dealer)	£the cost
Don't forget the running costs of that piece of equipment for the year, or the duration of the project	£the cost
If you are buying several items, list them here like this; number of items @ £?	£the total for all
Put any other weekly or monthly costs like this; Whatever it is @ £[weekly/monthly amount] x the number of weeks or months	£the total cost
For volunteer expenses, put £[average weekly/monthly amount for one vol] x number of vols x number of weeks/months	£the total cost
For mailings put £[average cost of a mailing] (include paper, envelopes, copying and postage) x the number of times a year you send mail out	£the total cost
Look at how much you (or a similar group) spent last year on things like stationery etc and decide whether you are likely to use the same amount or more	£the cost
Don't forget things like insurance/subscriptions/ membership fees/room hire/publicity/licenses etc and say what period this amount will cover.	£the cost
Otherwise, just list each item of expenditure	£the cost
Total	£add it all up

Notes



Notes



Other factsheets you may find useful:

Fundraising - The First Steps
Easy Mistakes to Make in Funding
Applications
Community Fundraising
Lotteries and the Law

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