

Top 10 tips for successful applications: from funders

1. "Check that your organisation is eligible for the funding programme you're planning to apply to. We receive hundreds of applications every day and many are turned down because they do not fit our criteria." *a Lottery funder*
2. "We get lots of applications to do similar things so it's important the applicant makes clear why and how they are different, and why we should support them rather than one of the others." *Grant Manager, grant-making trust*
3. "Successful applications stand out because the applicant is clear about what they want to do, can show clear evidence of why their project is needed, what they need funding for, how they have involved their stakeholders and how they know whether they have achieved their aims. Successful applicants will already have a plan in place about how they will evaluate their success – it is not something they leave until the project ends." *Grant Manager, grant-making trust*
4. "Don't try and contort your project – follow your mission not ours. My advice would be that if you don't clearly meet our criteria don't waste your time - we can see a mile off if a project has been warped to try and fit our priorities and we are very unlikely to fund it. You are better off finding a fund which is more appropriate to your needs." *Grant Manager, public funder*
5. "If you're not sure about what our criteria mean – just ring us and ask. People don't need to be frightened of us! We're normal people and we'd rather an applicant called us than guess and get it wrong. Our schemes use policy terms such as 'engagement' or 'participation' which mean something very specific in a public funding context – lots of people get it wrong - if you're not clear, it's no good guessing, please just ask us to clarify." *Grant Manager, public funder*
6. "You'd be amazed how many applicants don't say clearly enough what they need the funding for. A common mistake is to talk too much about what the organization does in general, and not to say clearly what they want to do and what funding is required for." *Grant Manager, grant-making trust*
7. "There is no such thing as a typical Trust or Foundation. Every Trust and Foundation is different – we are all quite quirky! I used to be a fundraiser and I know how long it can take to prepare an application so I'm always amazed that people submit a bid without having done their research. It's not just about reading our criteria – applicants need to find out about the Trust and what we aim to support and our areas of interest. It's all on the website but people just don't read it!" *Grant Manager, grant-making trust*
8. "Make sure you focus on clearly answering the questions in the application form. Read the whole application before putting pen to paper and make sure you have answered all the questions. We simply don't have time to contact applicants and ask them to send missing information." *a Lottery funder*
9. "It's always worth taking a look at the standard conditions of grants before you apply – and they are available on our website. For example, for grants over £50K we ask for a certified statement of income and expenditure which has to be prepared by an accountant. Some organisations hadn't realised this before applying. We would be happy to consider these costs being included in the budget, but once a grant has been made we can't change the amount." *Grants manager, Public funder*
10. "Allow enough time. The main reason we reject applications is because applicants don't allow enough time for us to assess the application before they are due to start their project." *Grants manager, Public funder*