

Introduction to Fundraising: Seminar Resources

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1. OVERVIEW

- The three-fold aim of your application: to inspire/excite; to persuade; and to reassure
- Understand what the funder wants, their objectives and priorities. Read their website, read their guidelines, speak to someone there.
- Echo their priorities in your language, and answer the exact questions they are asking you - do whatever you can to make it easy for them to read and understand

2. DESCRIBING YOUR WORK

- Show your track record, evidence of your success
- Not the place to be modest - imagine your best friend is writing it, what would they say?
- If you're applying to do something new to you, think laterally about other experience you have and how that has got you to where you are
- Online search - does your website/social media match what you're saying?

3. DESCRIBING YOUR PROJECT

- What is it
- What is the need/why does it need to happen now? evidence?
- Who is it for
- What the impact will be/what difference will the funding make
- Why are you the best/only person to do it
- What are you going to need - make the ask

Remember:

- Clarity: Could someone who doesn't know your project/sector/artistic discipline well still understand the proposal? Is there anything that feels ambiguous/confusing – can you clarify it further?
- No jargon: Remember even if the word count is tight, the funder still needs to be able to understand – if you use acronyms, spell them out the first time you use them e.g. Battersea Arts Centre (BAC)
- Need: Explain why the project is needed and how you know (statistics, consultation with participants, news headlines etc)
- Urgency: Why does it need to happen now? (lack of any existing provision, school timings/anniversaries/other calendar events, partnerships are lined up etc)
- Personal stories: Can you make the project feel real or bring it to life using quotes, feedback, case studies? Can you explain a participants' journey through the project by using a real example, or an imagined one?
- Make the ask!

4. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Remember most charities/lottery money has to be spent for public benefit
- Often where Project Grants let themselves down
- Doesn't have to be daunting or complicated - just about thinking these things through and writing it down, can be simple as that, and can benefit your project:
 - who exactly are the people? e.g. audiences: young people, local community - who do you think would enjoy it? Spell it out, even if it seems obvious
 - If R&D – who are the intended audiences? And who will come now – presenters?
 - How do you know they want it – have you spoken to people, have you got experience in this area?
 - How will you reach them? marketing/outreach. Make sure if you've said you'll do workshops, how you will market those workshops etc

5. MANAGEMENT

- Can have an exciting proposal but if you haven't thought it through they won't want to take the risk (excite/inspire them, persuade them, then reassure them - show them you're taking it seriously)
- Project plan: have you thought through what needs to be done when, the different stages and deliverables, who will do the different pieces of work, do you have enough time and support?
- Partners: have you thought about who could help you achieve what you want to achieve? How much needs to be in place - depends on the fund - the more that can be in place the better
- Monitoring and evaluation: Monitoring - counting what's happened, and evaluation is understanding what's happened. showing you're serious about learning from the project. How can you do it in a way that is most helpful for you? Show that you want to monitor and evaluate throughout, not just at the end
 - Some useful resources:
 - Arts Council England resources including template spreadsheets for collecting data and all sorts of advice: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/measuring-outcomes>
 - British Council Arts Evaluation Toolbox (PDF download): https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjJIYq21rbsAhVNTxUIHRU_AOwQFjAlegQICRAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fchangingthestory.leeds.ac.uk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2Fsites%2F110%2F2018%2F11%2FBC-Arts-Evaluation-Toolbox.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1-c
 - Creative People and Places: Evaluation in Participatory Arts Programmes: <https://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/our-learning/evaluation-participatory-arts-programmes>

6. BUDGETS

- Go through your project plan and create a budget line for each bit of activity – make sure you have budgeted for everything you promise to deliver
- Work out your day rate and the rates for anyone else you're going to work with – some union websites have guidelines for minimum rates of pay, e.g.:
 - Equity/ITC: <https://www.itc-arts.org/rates-of-pay>
 - Musicians' Union: <https://www.musiciansunion.org.uk/Home/Advice/Playing-Live/Gigs-and-Live-Entertainments/rates-contracts#fair%20play>
- Estimate the amount of time each part of the project activity will take you/your team
- Talk to your partners to understand the value of the in kind support they are giving you e.g. If they are giving you a week of free rehearsal space, how much would they usually charge for that?
- If you can, ask a producer or project manager to help you check the budget is realistic

7. TOP TIPS

- Talk to someone at the funder end – get as much information as you can. Call, email, get a meeting. Refer to this in your application
- Create a document with the questions, go through the guidance and copy and paste anything relevant next to each question – that way you can make sure you've covered everything they are expecting and can use the language they use
- Use the application form to your advantage. Tell a story from the first question, tell a story with the budget, with the attachments, if there is a box asking if you have anything to add – restate your case
- Be realistic – don't overpromise. If the application prompts you to consider something you hadn't thought about, think it through and work out how you could do this (e.g. evaluation) in the best way to suit your project and your aims. Budget for what you actually need.
- Trust yourself and talk to your colleagues, collaborators etc – if it's really hard to write or there's a question you don't know how to answer, it's probably because that part of the project or idea hasn't been thought through properly yet. And if you're not sure about something, the funder won't be either
- Give it to someone who doesn't know the project to read and feedback on. Finish a draft and leave it. Come back to it a day or more later, and read it as if you already know it has been unsuccessful. Re-write it stronger.
- Word counts: these can lead to better applications than if you have no restrictions! Forces you to think about what is the most important thing you're trying to convey. Write what you want to say first, then cut down. Use bullet points. Use one adjective or verb instead of two.
- Be yourself – as long as you have answered the questions, I don't believe there is a right or wrong way to do it – every funder has read so many applications, if yours sounds like you that can only be a strength.

Examples of successful applications can be found here:

<https://www.thewhitepube.co.uk/fundinglibrary>