

Most grassroots activism relies on the generosity of volunteers, and is run on shoestring budgets. However, the ability to secure funding for special projects can make a huge difference to what activist groups are able to achieve.

Although the specific format required for grant/funding applications will vary across funding agencies and organisations, there are some simple hints and tips that can improve your chances of success.

Identify a range of possible funding sources

Don't restrict yourself to just one possible source of funding – use your networks and existing resources to identify many potential funding options.

Make direct contact

Don't be afraid to personally contact potential funding agencies/organisations to ask specific questions about their business/areas of interest, timeframes, policies, and issues that are important to them. Keep these in mind when you are writing your application, and try to find ways to align your proposal with the funding agency/organisation's own goals and objectives.

Give yourself enough time to write the application

Hastily written applications are unlikely to be successful, and will not reflect well on the professionalism of your group. Make sure you start writing applications well in advance of the due date, and be realistic about how long it will take you to put your application together.

Clearly define your project idea and state why it is important

Clarify the purpose of your project, and give a statement about the benefits of what you want to do. Use simple, easy to read language and avoid jargon. Be specific about the goals and objectives of your project, and show how those goals and objectives will be achieved.

Discuss timelines, budget, and governance

Put together a timeline for project completion. Provide a detailed and itemised budget, and make sure you explain the governance/management arrangements for the project.

Address the specifics

Read the grant/funding guidelines carefully, and follow them. This includes specifications like how many pages are permitted, how many copies of the application are required, what format the application should be in, etc. Pay close attention to the specific criteria that must be addressed, and ensure that you provide all the necessary information. If you are in doubt about something, contact the funding agency/organisation and ask for clarification.

Include supporting material

Where possible, provide referees, reports on previous projects, CVs of people who will be involved in the project, and so on.

Stick to deadlines

Ensure that your grant/funding application is submitted on or before the due by date.

Follow up

Contact funding sources about the status and outcome of your application, and ask for feedback about its strengths and weaknesses.

Stay up to date

Add yourself to a range of relevant email alert lists, so that you can stay up to date on emerging funding sources and opportunities.