



Introduction

If you have never applied for grant support before, the process can appear to be daunting. These guidelines and tips should help you to get started, to know where to turn for support and give your group the best chance of success.

Where to apply?

There are a huge number of websites, directories and organisations that will list the many funding sources available. But as your time is limited, use it wisely and register to receive emails from the most relevant lists for you. Here are some ideas to get started:

- Spotted emails
- Spotted Funding Bulletin
- Spotted Bespoke Funding Reports
- Your local community voluntary service. You can attend their funding fairs as they are a great way to meet funders face-to-face
- Your sport's national or regional association
- Your local council
- Your regional funding network
- Sport England, Sport NI, Sport Scotland, Sport Wales
- Your regional sports association
- Your local community foundation
- Charities or funders that have supported you before or those that you have researched and know that your group meets their criteria

With experience and time you are likely to find that your group is able to approach a combination of local funders and national charities offering a range of grant sizes in order to meet some or all of your needs.

Top tips for applying

As every application form is different and every funder has different priorities, this section will give you some general tips that should lead to success regardless of the application.

1. Getting started

2. The group & the project

3. Setting outcomes & measuring impact

4. Costing

5. Once the application is completed

6. Next steps



1. Getting started

- Check funding news sites regularly and focus your time on applications where you believe you have the most chance of success. A 'scattergun' approach rarely pays off.
- Write down and review all the requested information and supporting documents. Most funds are oversubscribed, so funders rarely make exceptions.
- Read the criteria thoroughly and if you don't meet them don't apply. If you are unsure and the funder is happy to be contacted, pickup the phone or send an email.
- Some funds will state they don't support sport but will consider applications from groups using sport as a way of engaging with young people.
- Read through all the questions and advice notes if they are available. This helps you to avoid duplication and gives the funder the right information in the right place.
- Every application you make will need to be tailored to the criteria of the funder, putting an emphasis on their organisation's priorities.

2. The group & the project

- Be factual and include basic information about the size of your group, how often you meet, who takes part, who runs the club/group, what you do and the difference you make. Keep your description simple and clear, and don't exaggerate the impact. Playing football once a week can build teamwork, skills, socialisation, responsibility, etc. but this alone doesn't 'solve the problem of teenage obesity'.
- Explain why you are best placed to deliver the service. Do you have the capacity and specific skills to deliver the project you are asking for? Are you asking for funding to build this expertise? Are you responding to demand? Research what else is taking place in your area. Could you work in partnership with others to deliver your service? Could you share equipment and transport?
- Describe the project or capital expenditure clearly: what you will use the grant for - sessions, workers, equipment, and how it will be delivered.

3. The group & the project

- Start by making sure you are really clear about what your project is trying to achieve. Write this down and think of it as your project's impact.
 - **Impact** – broad/long-term effects of the project's activities, outputs and outcomes.
- Make sure your outputs and outcomes are S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.)
 - **Outputs** – products, services or facilities that result from the project's activities (e.g. sessions attended, qualification achieved)
 - **Outcomes** – direct changes, benefits or learnings that result from project's outputs (e.g. improved skills, increased confidence, etc.)
- Outline how you plan to capture this information and what your indicators will be. Make sure it's realistic for your group/your participants, and that it's included in any costings or project plans.
 - **Indicator** – well defined information which shows whether something is happening
- Don't try to collect data or information about everything. It's better to measure one thing and measure it well.





4. Costing

- Have a clear budget and breakdown of the costings (i.e. hourly rates for sessional workers, quotes, capital costs, % contribution toward salaries). The costings should refer directly to the written request.
- Core costs are the costs required to run your organisation, such as rent, utility bills, insurances, etc and possibly, core staffing. Most funders recognise the need for full core cost recovery. Typically, 10%-15% of project costs is acceptable.
- If you are applying for staff costs, the "on-costs" for National Insurance, tax and pensions costs should form part of your costings.
- Ask for what you need, not necessarily the maximum you can apply for. You will have a better chance of success if you show that you are being realistic.
- If your overall project budget is above the maximum, always explain how you will cover the remaining amount. You may be asked if the project could go ahead on a smaller budget.
- Some funders may ask for match funding and when approaching other funders you should make it clear that their support will unlock additional grant aid.

5. Once the application is completed

- Ask at least one other person in your group to read the application before sending - they may spot something obvious that you have left out or suggest that you rephrase something that is unclear.
- Be prepared to answer questions on the application as you may get an email or phone call during the assessment stage.

6. If you are successful

- Re-read the application and understand what you have committed to. Begin to put together an action plan with your team.
- If next steps are not clear, get in contact with the funder by phone. Make sure to ask about reporting and financial data collection in particular. Often funders will have their own templates and reporting schedule. But if not you want to make sure this is agreed before the project begins.
- Determine who will be your main contact from the funder throughout the lifetime of the project.

6. If you aren't successful

- Don't be disheartened by rejection. Contact the funder and ask for feedback and learn lessons from the experience.
- Consider [requesting Volunteer Support](#) with fundraising from the Sported Hub. The volunteer can re-read your application and provide valuable advice on what to do differently next time.

Need more guidance?

If you have any questions about this guide or would like to work with a volunteer who specialises in grants, [request volunteer support from The Sported Hub](#).