



Funding Fact Sheet – Why bids fail

Why bids tend to fail

The following points are based on feedback from a range of major funders, including:

- The Big Lottery Fund – Awards for All
- The BBC Children in Need Trust
- Wren (landfill community fund)

Eligibility

Funders such as the Big Lottery Fund and many charitable trusts received applications from organisations and individuals which they could not fund within their own rules. These applications are a waste of everyone's time.

Funders' criteria

Many applications fall outside funders' own criteria e.g. the BBC Children in Need Trust aims to benefit disadvantaged under 18s, but still receives many bids which don't show that their target group is made up **mainly** of disadvantaged people. Also research by the Directory of Social Change research found 1 third of bids to charitable trusts were rejected as they fell outside of the funders criteria. Landfill distributors find groups apply for funding who don't fall within their geographical boundaries.

Bids to benefit organisations, not people

A bid to keep your group going (or even to keep you in a job!) is less attractive to a funder than one to provide a much-needed service. Similarly, 'we need a computer' has less impact than 'with a computer we could keep our records more efficiently, freeing time to spend with our service users'.

Planning projects

A bid for a computer or a vehicle needs to show how it would be stored, insured – and used and who by. Has the group thought through all the implications of taking on this new piece of equipment/post/building?

Costing

Lack of financial planning – project costs not adding up or show a shortfall. So make sure figures are realistic – enough to pay for all the work in question? Do they represent good value for money? Has the group handled similar sums before?

Timescales

Very few funders will make grants retrospectively – i.e. after the project has taken place. Bear in mind that they can take months to consider your application, so if you want to run a play scheme in the summer holidays, don't leave the applications until June (even if you have money in the bank to 'lend' to the play scheme).

Involvement

The Big Lottery Fund rejected some bids on the grounds that they did not appear to involve either the projects' beneficiaries or local people. BIG and BBC Children in Need are concerned about bids which do not appear to come from the group – i.e. seem to have been submitted on their behalf by support workers. WREN identify lack of support for the project from the local community as a key reason for failure and encourages groups to include letters of support in bids.



Funding Factsheets

Need

Not enough evidence of need – groups often use broad statistics and do not relate them to the project's beneficiaries. Groups could use a survey of users/potential users, use waiting lists and referrals, ask people what their needs are and record this, use local research and related statistics from the health/local authority etc.

Outcomes and activity

Awards for All state the main reason for failed bids is that they do not have a clear outcome or project/activity outline. Funders generally want to know how the project will benefit people and the change that will occur, how many people will benefit, and that you can realistically achieve the benefits within a specified time-scale with the resources available. A clear outcome might be: the project will enable 20 young children to develop confidence through attending a 6 weeks summer programme of 12, 2 hour drama workshops. You need to show that you have a clear activity which will lead to the changes/outcomes you have stated.

Form-filling

Some bids lack detail or supporting information. All questions should be answered *on the application form* (unless the form states they are optional) don't just refer to enclosed documents such as leaflets or annual reports in which funders have to hunt for information (e.g. if they ask for details from your accounts on the form, copy them onto it – even if they ask you to enclose your full accounts).

Signatures and documents

Many groups have bids returned as they forget to sign them or when asked for specific documents such as a constitution, they (for whatever reason) can't supply them – don't say you have something if you haven't! Check names on application form, bank account and governing documents are the same.

Source



Source **fit4funding** Lightwaves Leisure Centre, Lower York Street, Wakefield WF1 3LJ
Tel 01924 239063 **Email** info@fit4funding.org.uk **Web** www.fit4funding.org.uk