



**Get Funding Ready: a guide for first time fundraisers.**  
- Katrina Duncan

# Get Funding Ready: a guide for first time fundraisers.

## Introduction

Fundraising for arts activities is a highly competitive process that can be very time-consuming with disappointing results. This guide is intended to help you think before you take the plunge, to consider how to prepare for making your pitch for support and do all you can to ensure that your bid is the best it can be.

It focuses on applying for **grants**. A grant (sometimes called an award) is money paid to an organisation or artist to create and deliver a piece of work; for the purposes of this guide, we are looking at music participation for young people. The **funder** (the organisation giving the grant) is not expecting the grant to be repaid (as with a loan) or for a financial return for its money (an investment). Some funders do talk about the grants they give as investment – but the return they are expecting is social or artistic; they have interests and priorities that they want to see served by the organisations receiving their grants.

Organisations making grants get their money in different ways. Some are publically funded. For example - local authorities (whose money comes from central government, from locally raised rates and taxes) and Arts Council England (whose money comes from central government and from the national lottery). Some are charitable trusts or foundations set up by wealthy individuals or families who wish to support their passions (e.g. the arts, building conservation, medical research) or help others less fortunate than themselves. Some businesses have also set up funds to support the community using their profits or specifically raised funds – e.g. Tesco Bags of Help (funded through the 5p levy on plastic bags).

## 1. Research

It's important to do your research so that you can ensure you are applying for funding from the right organisations. Look for the funders who are interested in the work you want to do. Think about your art form and the people you seek to engage.

### Arts Council England (ACE)

ACE invests public money including National Lottery money to help bring great art and culture to everyone. Their [website](#) lists all their current and forthcoming grant programmes.

[They also have information on other sources of funding >](#)

ACE also funds the [National Foundation of Youth Music](#), a national charity investing in music-making projects for children and young people experiencing challenging circumstances.

## Local Authorities

Some local authorities produce lists of trusts and foundations that will fund community activity – including the arts – in the borough, so it's useful to do some searching online to see what might be available to you.

For instance, here's Islington Council's [funding page >](#)

## Online Directories

There are a number of online directories – some you can access for free and others require a subscription fee. There can be duplication across these different directories. If you are new to applying for grants, it's a good shout to start with the free ones. Some good ones include:

- [GrantNav](#) presents open, comparable grants data for the first time – so you can easily see who is funding what, where and how much.
- [Funding Central](#) lists funding for voluntary and community organisations - not funding for individuals - and is free to organisations with a turnover of less than £1,000 per annum.

Many organisations do not fund **individuals** so we have done some research on who will and list them in **Appendix B** below.

Look at the websites and print of organisations that are doing the kind of work that you want to deliver – they often list their funders.

## Thinking through your project

It's important not to create projects just to fit the guidelines of a particular funder or programme. Funders will usually ask about your experience and track record, and your organisation's vision and mission – and they can usually spot when you have veered off course just to create an activity that you think will interest them. Don't try to fit a square peg in a round hole – it won't fit! It'll also waste a huge amount of time and resource to try.

Many funders list on their websites the grants they have made in the past which is an excellent way to get a sense of what they want to support, and at what level.

How much money you need to realise your project is also a consideration in your research; you may be an excellent fit in terms of mutual interests, but if a funder offers only grants of £2,000 and you need £20,000, is this where you should put your energies? You often hear fundraisers say it can take as much time to write a bid for £2,000 as for £20,000; which would be your priority?

## 2. Eligibility

As well as researching funders' interest and priorities to see what fits with your plans, also check about their eligibility requirements. Some funders won't fund individuals, or will only fund registered charities. Others will only fund activities taking place in certain counties, boroughs or even wards. The Big Lottery Fund reported, for instance, that 46% of applications to its Reaching Communities programme between May and July 2012 were ineligible!

### 3. Timing

#### Deadlines

Some funders have certain times of year with set deadlines when they will consider applications. Others having rolling programmes where they accept bids throughout the year. Their publicity will also advise how long they take to turn round an application – so you will have an idea of when you will hear the outcome of your bid. For example ACE has no deadlines for bids to the [Grants for the Arts Programme](#), but they take six weeks to process an application for under £15,000. That six week period starts from the day you hit 'submit' on your application form.

There is a prior process you need to go through setting up an applicant profile which ACE needs to approve before you can start your application. Some funders or programmes have two-stage applications so you need to factor in your time to write the second stage, should you get through to that.

#### Your project start date

The Foyle Foundation gives this advice: *“Generally, applicants should receive a decision within 4 months. It is therefore important to apply at least 6 months before the start date of activities”*.

Consider too when you will need a grant to arrive in your bank account as successful bids usually mean you meeting some initial requirements before you get your mitts on the money. It would be wise, therefore, if making a Grants for the Arts bid to allow **at least** eight weeks from when you submit your bid to when your activity will commence. And that is for a programme of activities where you do not need to recruit participants or attract an audience, all of which takes time.

You also need to think about what you do if your funding bid is not successful – indeed, you may be asked about this in a funding application. Would you have sufficient time to cancel provisional bookings (e.g. of venue hire or engaging other artists) without having to make payments?

#### Editing time

Do not underestimate the time it will take you to write your bid. It will take a little time to form a clear narrative, and a corresponding budget plan too. It's likely you'll need to make some revisions along the way – even for something as simple as fitting word counts – so give yourself enough editing time.

You may have to provide referees with your application. They'll need time to check with in advance that they are happy to be named in this way. You may also need to provide details of artists working on your project and to name partners and attach letters of support from them. You might also be expected or required to have devised your programme in response to the interest and needs of the people who will take part in your activities. Youth Music, for example, specifically ask you to give evidence of consultation with your intended participants so you need to allow time for this, if you haven't already.

No funders award grants retrospectively – i.e. for work that has already taken place.

## 4. Contacting the funder

Assuming that you have done your research, checked your eligibility and feel that your project is good fit, do read and re-read the funders guidelines. It's also worth checking out any help sheets they offer (ACE Grants for the Arts have several) and FAQs sections (frequently asked questions). Some funders are willing to offer advice by email, over the phone or in person. If you take advantage of any of these services, do ensure you have read all their guidelines, help sheets and FAQs thoroughly; it is very frustrating for them if you ask a question they answer to which is readily available on their website. Funders are busy people too!

That said, it can be very helpful to speak to a funder (on the phone or in person), it gives you a chance to talk through your plans and hear their response, and some funders will stipulate that you have a telephone conversation with them before submitting an application. If you are fortunate to have this conversation, an officer may advise you about which aspects of your programme may need strengthening in a bid, or suggest the level of funding they are most likely to consider.

Funding officers can also give you a sense of the current competition and what their trustees/funding committee is most interested in. Some funders have their own targets (or political priorities) which mean that applications from London-based organisations or for activities taking place in London may be eligible for funding, but are not a priority for that individual trust.

## 5. Paper or portal

Many funders are now processing applications via an online portal. Others accept applications only by email, and a few still require hard copy. Whatever they want – that's the way to do it.

A number of funders require you to complete an online eligibility check as the first stage of the process – usually checking things like individual or organisational status (e.g. sole trader, registered charity), where and when the work will take place, or the level of funding you are seeking. Some of these give you an immediate result allowing you to move on to the application itself; others take time (usually no more than a few days) to advise you of the outcome.

It is advisable to work on your application outside the portal, pasting in the text only when you have a final version of it, rather than writing and revising your application in the portal. Some portals are a bit 'clunky' and not always reliable at saving changes.

If you are required to upload documents to the portal (such as constitution or budget), be sure to label these clearly with the name of your organisation or project.

Another caution with regards to portals relates to deadlines. Do not leave it to the hour before the deadline to submit your bid. You might lose your internet connection. The portal may crash because of the volume of applicants working on it. If the latter happens, the funder **may** extend the deadline but there is no guarantee of this and late applications are normally rejected. Equally, do not leave it to the day before a deadline to post a hard copy application; the fallibility of postal services is renowned.

## 6. Writing the bid

### A case study

*To demonstrate some of our advice, we have created a case study –*

It is currently December 2017. Ali lives in Barking, has been a keen musician (largely self-taught) for 10 years and has recently been volunteering at youth sessions in a local community centre. Whilst there he has met another volunteer, Sam (who has recently moved to London from Newcastle) who has a music degree and experience of running workshops (for Generator music development agency) and more recently for Barking & Dagenham Community Music. Given the positive response from the teenagers to the sessions Sam and Ali have been running, the community centre manager asks if they could do something more concentrated over the 2018 summer holidays; she can't offer them any fee but has helped them write a bid to the local authority community small grants scheme, and is willing to be named as a partner in other funding bids they will write to be able to pay themselves to deliver the programme.

The Centre has a studio with good equipment but no-one on the current staff is a music specialist. They do have a youth worker with a dance background who can deliver Arts Award training for young people. Sam and Ali are designing a workshop series, **B-Summer**, with content based around the activity they have been delivering voluntarily. From this, they hope that some of the participants will achieve a level of skill that they can manage the sound studio for The Centre as well as developing composition and recording skills for all participants.

### The narrative

Read the whole application form – at least twice – before you start writing. This should start you thinking about the information to include about you and your project, and where best to place it.

(Some funders using portal applications provide a sample form or full list of questions on their website. If they don't, it's a good tip to copy and paste their questions into your own working document so you can see the entirety of the online form.)

If you are writing the application for an organisation/on behalf of yourself and partners, this is the time to get their input. If you haven't already planned your project in detail, it is likely that the funding application will sharpen your ideas. Together, question whether your vision, aims and objectives are achievable. Do you have the capacity to manage, deliver, evaluate and report on your proposed activity? Assuming the answer is yes, once you have everyone's input and suggestions on how to respond to the application questions, delegate one person to work on the narrative – writing by committee is always time-consuming, frequently frustrating and rarely produces good results.

You should be able to explain your project succinctly to a layperson. What is it why there is a need for it? Who will make it happen? Who will benefit? How, where and when it will happen? What happens after this project is complete? It is likely that the application questions will prompt you to provide this information (and more).

## About you

Never assume that any funder has prior knowledge of you or your organisation. You should have pre-existing information about you and what you do e.g. from your website, a CV. However, it is worth reviewing this, in keeping with the priorities of the funder you are applying to.

Does your description foreground their interests – e.g. if you are making an application to support grime workshops for teenagers, focusing on information on your (excellent) track record in early years' provision, might not be the way to assure the funder that you have the necessary experience for this project.

From our case-study, Ali's experience with the target participant group, Sam's training and experience with a similar target group (in Newcastle), and their commitment to their local area will be relevant to different funders.

## About the activity

Most music projects comprise a number of workshops over a period of time; some will culminate in a performance or a recording of the music created by the participants. Make sure you are specific about the numbers, as well as the content – stating how many workshops you will deliver for how many participants (your budget should also indicate this so be sure that it tallies with your narrative).

Before going into detail, it is a good idea to start your project description with an overview, or summary, particularly if there are several strands to the project. Our case study for instance, would say:

B-Summer will provide up to 30 young musicians (14 – 17 years old) six three-hour workshops (one per week), in The Centre in Barking & Dagenham's Heath ward during the summer holidays 2018. The project will develop skills on their instrument/s, in composition, production and recording. In addition participants will learn how to repair and maintain the studio equipment supporting the potential of paid work at The Centre for a few of them. The Centre has an Arts Award club and participants can use their learning from B-Summer to contribute to an Arts Award. The young musicians will be recruited through schools and youth clubs where we have already run taster sessions to create a programme that responds to the interests of young musicians who are not being catered for by school or other local provision.

## Outcomes

Many trusts now require applicants to state the outcomes their activity will have or, put another way, the change that they plan to bring about through their activities. Youth Music's - [Taking an outcomes approach](#) - is a very useful guide and outlines the process below:

**In a nutshell, taking an outcomes approach requires you to go through five stages:**

1. Define the need for your project. Why should it exist in the first place?
2. Define your intended outcomes. What are the changes you would like to bring about as a result of your project?
3. Define your activities. What will you do to achieve those outcomes?
4. Define your indicators. How will you know you have achieved your outcomes?
5. Evaluate. Review your progress, both good and bad. Learn from it to inform next steps.

**The language of outcomes is all about change, progression and making a difference. The change could be in skills, attitudes or behaviours. Examples where the change is in participants might be:**

- Developing instrumental technique and compositional skills
- Increasing confidence and communication skills.

- Developing trust and working as a member of a team.

### Outcomes could also be about you and your workforce, such as:

- Increasing understanding of music-making with young people in hospitals
- Improving skills in leading music technology workshops with teenagers.

B-Summer's outcomes look like this:

- Participants develop instrumental and composition skills
- Participants develop production and recording skills
- Participants increase their knowledge and skills in using and maintaining studio equipment
- Participants develop their employability

## Evidence of need

Wherever possible, support any claims you make with evidence, such as government statistics or academic studies. Anecdotal evidence does not carry the same weight. However, data you've collected - such as speaking to a range of young people using a community centre about the kind of activities they would like to take part in and what they want to get from it, would have resonance.

For our case study, the following would be a good way to evidence the challenging circumstances experienced by the young people attending The Centre:

The 2015 English Indices of Deprivation reports that Barking and Dagenham has moved from 20<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority district (since the 2010 Index). The only London borough with a higher placing is Tower Hamlets (3<sup>rd</sup>). The Centre is located in the Heath ward, which has the borough's highest proportion of households with two or three deprivation dimensions. Unemployment among 16 - 24 year olds is 26.4% (compared to the borough average of 24.9%) and 32% of residents aged 16 + have no qualification (compared to 27.9% in the borough overall). (2011 Census).

You can get information on local populations and indices of deprivation on most local authority websites, or through [neighbourhoodstatistics.gov.uk](http://neighbourhoodstatistics.gov.uk). Many funders publish their own research and evaluations on their websites and these may contain useful facts - e.g., about existing young people's music provision, or the impact of participation in music-making. Sound Connections has researched London's 'cold-spots' in terms of young people's non-formal music provision - [\*In from the Cold: Reflections on mapping and developing non-formal music to address social need in London.\*](#)

Try [Google Scholar](#) for academic theses and articles.

## Participants/beneficiaries

Funders will have specific questions about who will benefit from your planned activity. For example, Youth Music invest in projects working with children and young people in challenging circumstances, aged up to 25 years who live in England; they give clear descriptions of what they mean by challenging circumstances and you will need to explain who you will be working with and how your project will respond to their situation.

Many funders now require that you consult participants about the outcomes and content of your project. You may need to have done this before you make the application - or can include your consultation as part of your planned activity. This can be a challenging part of an application if you or your organisation does not have funding that allows you to plan activity but there would be no point in achieving funding then not being able to deliver your project because you can't recruit participants through lack of interest.

B-Summer has run a pilot programme (Ali and Sam working on this as volunteers) testing the interest of its target participants, including consultation on what participants wanted from future programme.

Consultation with participants is also about engaging them in making decisions for themselves, and with young people and music-making, respecting their musical interests and choices.

## Partners

You may be asked to name partners and their role in the project. As mentioned above, this is something you need to work on as part of planning your project so that you have your partners' agreement that they can be named in your application.

Partners' roles could include activities like referring for help recruit participants, providing pastoral support for participants, supporting evaluation, providing free use of a venue or instruments. You may wish to put a financial value on their support which can appear in your budget as in-kind match funding (see below). Partners may be contributing cash to the project.

The support of The Centre (including free use of the studio) will be an important asset in any funding application for B-Summer, as will their relationship with Barking & Dagenham Community Music.

## Risk analysis and mitigation

Some funders ask for a risk analysis as part of your application, and others as a condition of funding when your bid is successful. What you need to demonstrate is an understanding of things that could go wrong with a project and – more importantly – what measures you would take to mitigate that risk (to avoid it or to reduce its impact.)

B-Summer's risk analysis:

| Potential risk        | Mitigating actions  |
|-----------------------|---|
| Lack of participants  | <p>Recruitment: we have devised the programme to meet the interests of young people attending taster workshops; recruitment will take place through The Centre and in other youth clubs and schools and we do not foresee difficulty in engaging 30 participants.</p> <p>Session content: this is not dependent on a specific number of participants.</p> |
| Partnership breakdown | We have established partnerships with The Centre and with Barking & Dagenham Community Music who have committed their in-kind support of the programme. We are continuing our engagement with these partners through other activities taking place from now to summer 2018.   |
| Match funding         | In-kind support (see above) is already confirmed. We are investigating other cash-match funding should our bid to the Community Fund be unsuccessful.   |

## Exit strategy

Most funders will want to know what will happen when the project (and their funding) comes to an end, and their application forms will include a question about legacy or exit strategy.

As part of your planning, you should be considering what participants might do next and how you would sign-post them to more or more advanced opportunities. Local authority arts departments, youth services or music education hubs may be able to help with this information if you don't have it yourself. For example:

B-Summer music leaders will spend additional dedicated time with each participant toward the end of the programme to discuss next steps; these could include signposting to Arts Award or further instrumental learning, more intensive music production courses (e.g. run by CM Sounds), further education (e.g. Barking & Dagenham college), or casual work at The Centre.

## Evaluation

You will almost definitely be asked to provide information on how you will judge the extent to which your project has been effective in achieving its target outcomes.

Looking at your intended outcomes, what will you measure (indicators) to assess the journey travelled and what tools will you use (evidence or methods) to make this measurement? This is the language used by Youth Music in their outcomes approach. Other funders may ask about the monitoring you will carry out to evaluate your success. These monitoring tools/methods might include:

- Self-assessment questionnaires (participants)
- Diaries of the weekly activity (participants and/or music-leaders)
- Observation (of participants) by music-leaders or other staff – e.g., youth workers, parents, school teachers
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Audio and video recordings.

It is important to be realistic about what you can do with the time and people you have available. You will need to allow time for assessing where participants are at the start of the programme and at the end – in order to map changes.

An example of B-Summer's evaluation:

**Outcome** - Participants develop their employability

**Indicators**

-Increased musical/technical skills, ability to work with others and respect the work environment

**Methods/evidence**

-Participant self-assessment about their skill progression and attitude to the workplace (studio)

-Music leader diaries observing participants across the programme

-Observations of participant attitudes by other staff in The Centre

-One-to-one discussion on next steps – including any sign-ups for courses, additions to CV, job interviews

The [Youth Music Evaluation Toolkit](#) offers very clear and useful advice and tools for planning your evaluation processes.

## Language

Be assertive, choosing confident words and remind yourself of the funders' objective at every stage. Where appropriate mirror the language funders use in their guidelines. That said, don't throw in buzz words or phrases just for the sake of it – or to mask the fact that you have not really thought through your project.

Use active language e.g., 'our project will help 200 users in six months' not, 'in six months, 200 users will be helped by our scheme'.

Use positive language, e.g. 'our sessions will provide positive experiences for participants' not, 'we hope participants will find our sessions positive'.

Applications usually have limited word counts or character counts, so you will have to be succinct – but whatever the restrictions on length, you should aim to make it a clear and straightforward read for the funder. Stream of consciousness is not a helpful approach. The assessor reading your application will also be working to a deadline and may be reading 40 or 50 applications a week. The way you present your application should help them understand your project and how it fits with their criteria. As well as considering the clarity of your writing, think too about presentation. A funder's heart will sink if they are faced with dense text, no paragraphs, long sentences and a tiny font. Some now specify the font size you should use – usually around 11 or 12 point.

You may find that portals have a different word/character count to your software – and will not let you submit your application until you have edited to their word/character count. Another reason not to leave submitting your bid to the hour before the deadline.

## The budget

Once again, make sure you have read and understood the funder guidelines.

If the application form/portal does not provide a budget format, think through the different stages of your project – from consultation with participants through to final evaluation and reporting – and create budget headings that reflect these different stages. Your budget should tell the same story as your narrative. The Sound Connections' [Innovate budget template](#) provides a good starting point for a budget.

Your budget needs to be realistic and have sufficient detail to demonstrate to the funder that you know what you are doing, and have included all the income and expenditure at appropriate rates – e.g., paying music leaders properly. You should not be paying anyone less than the [National Living/Minimum Wage](#) and in London should aim for the [London Living Wage](#) as a minimum.

The Musicians' Union has negotiated rates for different jobs that musicians do including [education](#) and you can find those on their website. Again – these suggest a minimum rate and you may choose to pay higher, particularly if you are engaging an experienced music leader. Preparation may be reflected in the daily rate you are paying, or you may budget for it separately.

Notes are also a good way to help the funder read and understand your figures, see below.

## Expenditure

What costs will the funder cover? Some will cover only the project costs and not contribute to 'core' or running costs. Others (like Youth Music), will limit the amount of the budget that may be spent on core costs. Some may allow for capital expenditure (i.e. – buying 'things' such as equipment or musical instruments), others will not.

Another area of expenditure where funders have different approaches is around contingency. This is a financial cushion to cover any unforeseen costs – usually calculated at a percentage (perhaps 3% to 10%) of your total expenditure. Read funder's guidelines to see their position. Contingency on the budget below might be calculated at £125 - 5% of the cash expenditure of £2,500.

|   |       |   |
|---|-------|---|
| Cash  |       |   |
| Music leader fees                                       | 1,800 | 2 leaders x 6 (3 Hour) workshops x £150       |
| Resource materials                                      | 300   | 30 participants x £10 per person              |
| DBS checks  | 0     | Music leaders are already checked             |
| One-to-ones on progression advice                       | 320   | 30 sessions x 20 minutes x £32ph              |
| Evaluation – planning, data analysis and writing report | 400   | 2 people x 2 days x £100                      |
| In-kind   |       |   |
| Venue/studio hire                                       | 900   | The Centre (6 weeks x £150)                   |
| Loan of i-Pads  | 750   | Barking & Dagenham Community Music – 5 x £150 |
|   |       |   |
| Total expenditure                                       | 4,470 |   |

## In-kind

Some funders allow you to note in-kind support for your programme; this is where you get something for free that has a financial value – e.g. use of a venue or equipment without paying a hire fee. Some ask you to note any in-kind support separate from your cash budget; others want you to include it in your budget (see B-Summer budget below for an example of this). Remember that if you include in-kind income it should have a balancing in-kind expenditure line.

## Income

Some funders will be very clear about the maximum (and minimum) amount of funding they will award any applicant. Some say the maximum available and the average grant they award; if they don't, looking at previous grant recipients may provide this information. A conversation with the funder will help with this area too. Don't think asking for a smaller amount is more likely to make your application successful. If you do not have sufficient funds overall, or have not realistically budgeted your project, a funder is not likely to support you.

Most funders will want to know if you have approached any other funders or secured other funding, and on what terms – e.g. conditional on match funding. Make sure you have researched whether the funding body you are applying to prefers to be the sole funder or requires that there is income from other sources – often referred to as match-funding.

Match-funding may come from different of sources, e.g. participants paying fees, other grants. Here is the B-Summer budgeted income:

|                                    |              |  |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--|
| <b>Cash</b>                        |              |  |
| Fees from workshop participants    | 150          | 30 x £5 (for the six weekly sessions)          |
| Barking & Dagenham community grant | 500          | Bid submitted; decision to come January 2018   |
| ABC Foundation                     | 2,170        | This application                               |
| In-kind                            |              |  |
| Venue/studio hire                  | 900          | The Centre - confirmed                         |
| Loan of i-Pads                     | 750          | Barking & Dagenham Community Music - confirmed |
| <b>Total income</b>                | <b>4,470</b> |  |

Be clear about how much you are asking the funder for – don’t just leave a deficit between your expenditure and income and assume that the funder knows you are asking them to cover that difference.

It may seem too obvious to have to say, but it isn’t: be sure your budget adds up properly.

Funders report that simple errors are surprisingly common. If you are working on an excel spreadsheet to create your budget, check your formula – eg, if you have a number of sub-sections in your expenditure, does the total expenditure include all the sub-sections?

## Other information

You may be asked to confirm you have or provide copies of documents such as:

- Your organisation’s constitution
- Your most recent set of accounts
- Employer’s/Public Liability Insurance
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Child Protection Policy (including confirmation that you carry out DBS checks on everyone working with young people).

Letters from partners confirming the role they will take in the project may be required at this stage, or on confirmation of funding.

Only send the additional materials that you are asked for. Think of the amount of reading the funding officer has to do to process applications; they have decided what they need from you to make their decision.

## Check again, and again – and probably again

Get someone from outside your team or organisation to read your application (words and numbers). Does it make sense to them as someone not involved in the project?

You need someone who did not write the bid to proof-read it – for spelling, grammar and consistency of language. It is very difficult to spot your own spelling mistakes. If you are working alone and there really is no-one you can get to proof-read your application, leave it for a day or two before proof-reading yourself.

Someone else should check your budget too – is it realistic, clear how you have calculated expenditure and income, and that the amount of funding you are requesting is specifically stated?

## Meet the deadline

Yes – we've said this already but it's worth repeating. If there is a deadline, be sure to submit your application in time or it will be discounted and you may have to wait a year before that funder has its next round of applications.

## 7. What the funder does with your application

Funders have different processes for considering your application; usually more than one person is involved in the decision. A common process is for a funding officer to assess your bid and write a report to a panel or board with a recommendation to fund or not. In smaller trusts, the applications may go directly to a panel or committee to read and make their decision.

For Innovate projects, Sound Connections considers:

- How innovative is the project?
- How inclusive is the project?
- How well does the project empower young people through consultation and participation?
- How well does the project consider progression its participants?
- How strong/ secure are the project partners?
- How clear and realistic are the outcomes?
- How considered is your evaluation plan?
- How clear and strong is the evidence of need?
- How considered is the project's sustainability?
- Is the budget realistic?

An ACE help sheet explains the process for Grants for the Arts applications: see Appendix A.

## 8. Responding to the result

### Good news

If you are successful – do say thank you, particularly if you have a conversation with a funder which helped shape your successful bid.

Be sure to provide any further information required by the given deadline – e.g., many funders require you to sign and return an offer letter. If you don't do this, it may result in the withdrawal of the offer of funding. Other information may include confirmation of the dates of activity which was provisional when you submitted the funding application, evidence of match-funding, and your bank details.

Other conditions of the funding are likely to include crediting the funder in a specific way, e.g. size and positioning of their logo on your publicity. You may also have to acknowledge their support in your annual accounts. Most funders will require that you use their grant within a set time (e.g. one or two years from receiving their funding offer) and that you may only use it for the purposes stated in your application.

The grant may all be paid upfront but is more likely to come in at least two instalments: one at the start of the project and the second at the end when you submit a report on the project. For larger amounts of money and for projects spanning a year or more, you may have to submit interim reports to release the funding in a greater number of instalments.

It's important that you invite funders to see the work. They may not have the time to come but will appreciate the invitation. Be sure to give them plenty of notice of dates. It is good practice to explain to your workshop participants why these strangers are visiting – and to advise the funders if you expect them to participate in the workshop rather than observe from the sidelines.

Deliver your reports when required, as these are important in building your relationship with the funder who you are likely to approach in future for new projects or developments of your current activity.

### Bad news

If you are not successful, read any feedback you are sent and consider reapplying if the funder allows this. If the funder hasn't given any written feedback, pick up the phone and ask for it (unless their guidelines explicitly state they are not willing to do this). One fundraiser we know said she had resubmitted bids to Youth Music and ACE and had success on the second or third attempt. In both cases, she found it very helpful to talk to the funders as well as reading their written feedback, to really probe where she needed to strengthen the bid.

The reasons for being turned down may seem slight to you – but remember the competition. You may have written a very good bid but others being considered in the same funding round were better. At the next round of applications, as well as you presenting an even better application, the competition may not be so strong.

Be aware that some trusts will not accept a new application from you until a period of time has lapsed from your previous application, even an unsuccessful one. There should be information in their guidelines about this. For example, Garfield Weston Foundation say: 'we are unable to accept another application until a full calendar year has passed since the date of our letter conveying the outcome of your previous application'.

Just because you've been unsuccessful with one or two funders does not necessarily mean that you/your organisation or project is poor. It may be that it's not the right fit for a particular funder or that it's not what they're looking for right now. Go back to your research and consider what other funders you might approach.

If lack of experience in running the activity was a reason for being turned down, what can you do to address that?

If lack of management skill or capacity meant your application was rejected, could you work in partnership with someone else/another organisation that could provide this?

If the problem was with the bid, is there a training course you could do or someone else who could work with you on rewriting the bid?

Rejection can be tough but no-one, not even the most skilled and experienced fundraiser, expects that every bid they submit will be successful. Be resilient. Persevere.

**Good luck!**

## Appendix A

### Other guides to making funding bids

Most funders' websites will have guidelines about applying to them for funding. Remember to read these carefully.

- **Arts Council England (ACE)** have a wealth of help sheets as well as guidance on each of their funding programmes:
- **Youth Music** have detailed guidance notes on each of their funding programmes. They also have a handy 'Youth Music Funding File' which outlines a number of alternative funding options.

Youth Music also have also published the following guides:

- [Taking an outcomes approach](#) – Guidance on Youth Music's Outcomes Framework
- [Youth Music Evaluation Toolkit](#)

The (National Council for Voluntary Organisations) NCVO KNOWHOW NONPROFIT website has a range of information available on fundraising, including:

- [Writing funding applications >](#)
- [How to make a fantastic funding bid >](#)
- [How to write a successful trust letter >](#)

#### Funding Central

[Funding Central](#) is an online resource managed by the NCVO which provides access to contracts, grants and loan finance opportunities for organisations (not individuals) all in one place. Access is free to organisations with income under £100,000.

#### More resources:

You can download the NCVO Members [Quick Guide to Writing a Fantastic Funding Bid](#) from The Small Charities Coalition.

#### Easy Money? The Definitive UK Guide To Funding Music Projects

This [PDF e-book](#) can be purchased in its entirety (£19.99) or by chapter (£5.99) – and includes a chapter on Grants and Charitable Trusts.

## Appendix B

Useful links to organisations/websites that detail funding for **individuals** delivering music-making with young people:

- Grants for the Arts <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/grants-arts>
- <http://www.fentonartstrust.org.uk/news.html>
- <http://fundingforartists.org.uk/composers/>
- <http://www.jerwoodcharitablefoundation.org/about-us/what-we-do/>
- <https://www.helpmusicians.org.uk/creative-programme/funding-wizard>
- Local Authority community/voluntary sector funds often have small pots for local arts initiatives. Try researching local authority arts funding.

## Appendix C

### Arts Council England process for Grants for the Arts applications for £15,000 and under

After checking an application is eligible, we do a risk check. At the risk check stage we look for potential weaknesses in how the activity has been planned and budgeted – things that could cause problems and make the activity hard to deliver.

As part of the risk check we may consider any or all of the following:

- Is the timeline achievable and detailed enough?
- Are appropriate partnerships in place to support the activity, and are they confirmed?
- Is the activity sufficiently well planned?
- Are any tour schedules at an appropriate stage of confirmation?
- Are plans to evaluate the activity appropriate?
- Is the budget reasonable and appropriate for the proposed activity?
- Is there an appropriate level of partnership funding, and is any expected funding likely to be secured?
- Are there appropriate measures in place to manage the budget?
- Are any asset purchases justified clearly, and are the costings based on quotes?
- How has any previous funding from us been managed?

If we find a risk, we will give a rating of major, moderate or minor:

**Major risk** means that a particular issue gives us concern that the activity is not likely to be managed successfully and/or there are serious concerns about your budget.

**Moderate risk** means we have noted some risk to the successful delivery of the activity, but this risk can be mitigated using payment conditions.

**Minor risk** means that although we have noted a particular issue we do not think it represents risk to the successful delivery of the activity. We will take no action, but want to register that a risk has been identified (important for audit purposes).

If we think any parts of your activity's management or finances are major risk, we cannot process it any further. Your decision letter will highlight the main reason that your application was considered 'major risk', followed by a statement explaining how we reached this decision.

After completing the risk check, we will consider the strength of the artistic and public engagement aspects of your activity. We want to fund activities that are of high quality and engage people strongly.

#### Artistic quality:

- Are the activity's artistic aims clearly expressed?
- How strong is the artistic idea?
- Is the plan to carry out the activity likely to achieve the artistic ambition?
- How strongly does the activity develop the work/skills of the artists/organisations involved?
- Does the artistic/organisational CV paragraph and any supporting information demonstrate a good track record?
- Are the artists/organisations involved of high quality?

#### Public engagement

- Does the application make a good case for public engagement with the activity?
- Are the target audiences for the activity clearly identified?
- Does the activity specifically increase opportunities for people who don't currently engage in the arts or are engaged a little in arts activity?
- Does the activity increase opportunities for people already engaged in arts activity?
- Are plans to market the activity to audiences/participants well defined, and are they likely to achieve audience projections?
- If there is no immediate opportunity to engage people (e.g. R&D) does the application show that the applicant has considered how the public will be engaged in the future?

We will consider your activity alongside other applications and will look at the range of projects we support. We want the projects we fund to cover a broad range of activity types, art forms and geographical areas. We also review a range of reports on our spending so far and future demand on the Grants for the Arts budget.