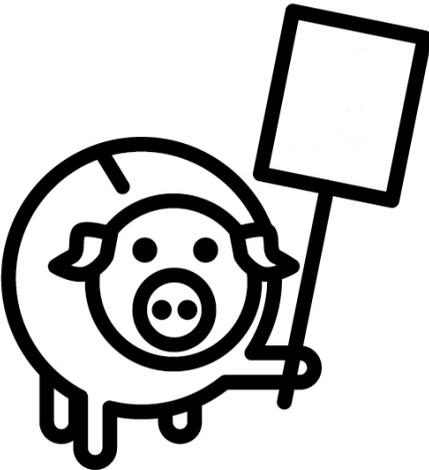


**Seeds for  
Change**  
In-depth guide



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# Raising cash and writing funding bids

A guide to getting money for your campaign

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# Raising cash and writing funding bids

All campaigns and projects need some materials and resources to keep them running and to expand. It is a really good idea to consider fundraising as part of your campaign right from the start and to make it enjoyable. There are many different ways of raising money and getting materials and equipment. You'll find some of them in this guide together with general tips.



## Creating a fundraising plan

First of all you need to work out how much money you need and by when. A good way to do this is to get everyone together and do an ideastorm on things the group needs. An ideastorm is a way to quickly gather a large number of ideas (see our guide Facilitation Tools for Meetings and Workshops). Start by introducing the issue. Ask people to say whatever comes into their heads as fast as possible – without censoring it. Write these ideas on a large piece of paper and discuss them. Which things are most important? How much does each thing cost? When do you need them by? Which are 'must-haves' and which are things you'd just like?

Once you've got the list of things you need, do a second ideastorm on how to raise the cash and get the materials. Discuss these ideas and see which are most likely to work. Are there any ways in which you can get

services or materials cheaper or for free? Do you have the necessary skills and the people to carry out your plans? The type of fundraising you do will largely depend on the skills of the people involved. For example, you might not find anyone to write a funding application, but you may know some artists who are willing to organise an auction of their artwork in support of your campaign.

Fundraising events not only help to raise resources but are also a great way of publicising your campaign and getting new people involved. If you are putting on any events make sure people know what it is about and how they can get involved in the campaign or project.

### Three things to bear in mind:



- The more inspiring your campaign the more likely it is that people want to support you.
- You don't get what you don't ask for.
- Don't forget: you only need to get enough money to do the job you've set yourselves. It's not a campaign aim to raise money!

## Bank accounts

It can be very helpful to have a bank account in the name of your group, campaign or project. You will almost certainly need an account if you are applying to a funder. Individual donors also often feel a lot more comfortable if the money doesn't go into an individual's bank account. The account doesn't need to cost anything – building societies' savings accounts are often a good choice. To open an association or society account you will need to provide a constitution and an excerpt from the minutes of a meeting mandating you to open one. We have a sample constitution for groups who use consensus on our website.

# Fundraising ideas

## Getting things for free / cheaper

Before buying anything think about ways of getting it for free. Can you get what you need through donations, on loan or through sponsorship? Here are some ideas:

**Skips** are a great source for things like wood, plastic sheets, carpets and even furniture. Once you start looking, the amount of perfectly good stuff thrown out (particularly in wealthy areas) is overwhelming. If you spot something you want outside someone's house, knock and ask. They often come up with even more things they want to get rid of. Similarly ask anyone working on a building site, or at the end of the day at a market if it's OK to take what you want from their skip. Leave skips looking tidy. Freight hauliers may have old tarpaulins which you could ask for.

**A wish list** is a list of all your needs with a plea for donations. It is a very easy way for people to help who cannot get actively involved in person. Circulate the wish list as widely as possible. It is amazing how much useful stuff is lurking in people's attics and garden sheds – paint, wood, tools, cookers, stationary etc.

Make the wish list as beautiful, eye catching and charming as possible. Put everything down, including the boring stuff like ink cartridges and printing paper (and don't forget to put bigger items like a printer on the list – it may happen!). Also ask for any skills you need, such as artists and welders. Distribute it to your mailing lists and social media contacts; put it on your stalls and on your website.

**Discounts** from businesses are common for regular customers or people whose actions they support. Bulk orders of goods like food and building materials will be cheaper.

# Fundraising events

**Fundraising events** can be a lot of fun for everyone involved. They could include benefit gigs, jumble sales or a barbecue in the park. If well planned, publicised and attended, these events can raise lots of money and publicity. Sometimes, however, they are a lot of effort and at the end of the event you will only have covered your costs, or may even have lost money!



**Publicity** is key to any good event: fly-post extensively, use all your real-life and social media contacts and hand out flyers at other events. Be creative and try to put a campaign spin on your fundraising. Also think about the timing of the event: are any other local events happening at the same time? What about school holidays, bank holiday weekends and big sporting events such as the World Cup? See our guide *Good Publicity and Outreach* for more tips.

Make sure that people realise the objective of the event is to raise money so they don't try to blag their way in! Think carefully about the **admission fee**. It must be enough to make money for the campaign, but not so much that people are excluded. Consider having a concessionary rate.

Fundraising events are a good way to get new people involved, so make sure that you have an **information stall** at the event, with leaflets and displays, campaign merchandise and a collection tin for donations. You can also ask to have stalls at events organised by other people, e.g. if a sympathetic band is playing a gig. Ask the band or DJ to point out your stall.

**Benefit gigs** usually involve local bands or DJs. You will probably have to pay for the venue and a PA system. Find a band that is happy to be paid expenses only or you won't make a profit.

**Sponsored events** are good for publicity, but can take a lot of organising. You could have a sponsored sports event, tree planting or litter pick in a local park. Think creatively to attract more publicity, people and money.

**Stalls** at fairs, car boot sales and jumble sales can be worthwhile. Collect items to sell well in advance and publicise and promote the stall as much as possible. Make the stall look attractive and welcoming. Think about putting up a banner, so people know that they are supporting your campaign.

**Running a bar** at social events or festivals can often raise more money than you take in ticket sales. Remember to apply to your local council for a licence quite a long time in advance. You can buy drinks and snacks from your local cash and carry, or through a wholefood wholesaler (most will do a range of organic, vegetarian and vegan beers, wines, ciders and soft drinks). Cash and carries will generally take back any unopened cases.

**Food:** you could get cheap veg from the market, ask for shortdated food from shops and wholesalers and cook dinner or Sunday brunch at a community centre. It could be a buffet for a set price or a plate of food for a (suggested) donation. Or make cakes or other snacks to sell at other people's events.

**Other ideas:** an open mic night, a bingo night, a raffle, a rave, a fête or fair, an auction, a ceilidh, a jumble sale, or anything else that fits in with the local culture and community.

# Donations

**Appeals through your mailing list and social media** can be very successful. Mention the fact that your campaign needs money in every newsletter, leaflet and post. People assume that if you are regularly communicating with them then you must be doing alright, but campaigns are usually funded out of campaigners' own pockets. Be clear about how to donate, e.g. provide links to donate online and provide a postal address and the group's name for cheques.

If the situation is really urgent, you could make a special leaflet or post information about your financial situation online. Make sure to suggest ways that people could help – giving examples can help people identify with your situation and illustrate how every little helps. For instance: "Last month we spent £200 on action materials and £100 on travel costs. This has all come out of our pockets. If everyone on the mailing list sent just £5, this would raise £900 and pay for three month's worth of actions." Don't overdo it or people may doubt your need.

It's worth asking people to donate regularly – say £1 per week or £5 per month by standing order or through an online payment system. This is an attractive option since you know you can probably rely on that continued income, which helps you plan ahead.

Make sure to write personal thank-you letters to people who have sent money and give examples of what their donations have achieved.

**Bucket rattling at events:** at every event make sure you do some bucket rattling. Small change soon adds up and there are always people who will chuck in notes! Don't overdo it, or do it aggressively. Keep hold of your bucket. At other people's events it's best to ask first.



**Buckets in town** are very easy – just go round places where lots of people gather rattling a bucket! In some communities, pubs will be the best place, in others try cafés and informal restaurants or just standing on a shopping street on a busy day. Check if your local council has any conditions, choose venues that are likely to be sympathetic and check in with the staff first.

**Benefactors:** you may be fortunate enough to have someone offer a large amount of cash to your campaign. People like this are rare and often prefer to remain anonymous.

**Busking** can raise a lot of money and entertains the local community.

## Regular donations from supporters

You could also ask for donations from supporters, either one-off donations for specific activities or regular donations towards the running costs of your campaign. You will have a better chance of success if you can ask potential donors directly, whether in person or through email or social media. This way you can target your request at people and organisations that you know support you. Encourage supporters to set up a standing order: it will mean a regular income allowing you to plan the finances of your campaign better. See also the section on *Crowdfunding* on page 19.

## Going to work

Going to work can be easier, quicker and more lucrative than any of the above fundraising examples, but is more often forgotten. Rather than spending twenty hours working on a far-fetched scheme to get money, it's sometimes better to just go and work in a café serving coffee for twenty hours...

# Funding applications

Applying for a grant is often the only way to get larger sums of money. You could ask for funding for newsletters, organisational and equipment costs for an event or action, office and staff expenses, action and communications equipment.

## Which funder?

There are many different organisations that give grants to small campaigns and projects. Your first step is to make a shortlist of those that are most likely to support your project or campaign.

Nearly all funders have guidelines for giving out their money. These cover the kind of groups and activities they will fund, how much they will give and how to apply. In Britain, there are a number of directories that provide information about funders such as the Directory of Social Change and the 'other funders' list on the Edge Fund website. Ask your nearest Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) for advice. (Look at the members section on [www.navca.org.uk](http://www.navca.org.uk) for your nearest CVS).

Your best bet, however, is to talk to other groups similar to your own to find out where they got their funding from.

## Gathering information

Once you've got a shortlist of possible funders, find out as much as you can about them. What kind of activities do they fund, what are their **criteria** for giving out money? Do you need to use their form? How much do they give? Is this the right funder to approach?

Each funder varies greatly in the amount of work needed to apply and how much money they give. If they've got a website or printed publicity materials, read them very carefully. Talk to people who have been able to get money from that particular funder as well as those who were turned

down. Find out what works and avoid other people's mistakes. A huge proportion of funding applications are rejected because they did not follow the guidelines or forgot to send some requested paperwork (like a copy of your constitution), not because the funder didn't like the idea.

You also need to find out about **deadlines** for applying. Some funders only allocate funds once or twice each year, so find out when the next deadline is and how long it takes for them to decide. If you are looking for money to print leaflets next month then a funder who takes six months to make a decision is no good. If there are deadlines then make sure you keep to them!

## Application form or free-style application?

There are basically two types of applications: either the funder provides an application form to fill in or you have to write a freestyle application. In the case of an application form, make sure you understand the questions you are supposed to answer. Always read the accompanying guidelines. Make sure you fill in all the boxes. If in doubt, phone the funder and ask!

If you are writing a freestyle application, find out what you should cover in it and how detailed and how long the funder expects it to be – they should advise you on this. For smaller sums a cover letter, a one-page project description and a one-page budget is usually enough. See page 14 for more detail.



# Tips for writing funding applications

Although each funding application should be individually tailored to the funder, there are basic rules that apply to all. A funding application should be clear, concise and convincing. Like a news release, you will need to catch the potential funder's attention immediately. They probably receive loads of proposals and yours will have to stick out.

## Before you start writing

**Only use up to date forms and guidelines:** these often change several times a year, so it's worth double checking!

**When is the deadline:** do you have enough time to write a decent application?

**Read the application guidelines.** Do you fall within their funding criteria? If the guidelines say that they only fund nature conservation projects then don't submit an alternative energy proposal. Follow the organisational structure they want the application in.

**Make a list of key words** from their publications (words that crop up several times to put across what they are interested in e.g. priority, community, empowerment, accessibility, marginalised, justice, sustainable, innovation). Using the same words as the funder will increase the chances they understand and like what you are saying!

**Make contact with the funders** – let them know you'll be applying, don't be afraid to ask questions. But think about what you are going to say beforehand. Appear professional and remember to be nice!

## When you are writing

**Never write 'Dear Madam/Sir'.** Find a name and check the spelling.

**Project title:** think of a snappy name for your project.

**Use the funder's language** – be sure to use the same key words as they do. Confusion often results from using different words for the same ideas.

**Use verbs which make you sound pro-active**, e.g. increase, maximise, start up, connect, organise. Never use *would, could, should, might, or may*. Always use *will*. If you don't have confidence in yourself and your project, they won't either.

**Clear and easy to read:** organise the text in a clear structure so that everything flows smoothly. Avoid technical jargon and be concise. Get someone who is good with grammar and spelling to proof read it – don't rely on a computer to grammar and spell check.

**Focus, focus, focus** – if you are doing a community energy project, don't spend too long writing about the benefits of other projects your community is involved in. Prove why the project is important and show that it's relevant to the funder – how does it fit their policies? Is it a topical theme? Does it fit in with current policies of recognised bodies such as the UN?

**Credibility** can be emphasised through the overall appearance of the application. Put a nicely designed group or project logo on your cover letter. If appropriate you could also enclose CVs of project staff and letters of support from other campaign organisations or institutions.

**Measurable results** have become very important to funders – try to provide concrete numbers, whether it's of people, pounds or resources. When you report back at the end of the funding period the funder will compare your results with what you claimed you'd achieve in your application, so **be realistic** – don't try to do too much. Show the proposal to others for a 'reality check'.

**Comprehensiveness** – make sure you provide all the information required. If you do not understand a question in the application form, phone up and ask the funder. If they ask for the application in .doc format, then provide it in that format. Make a checklist of all the bits of paper the funder requires and then go through it just before you send the application off.

**Never send standardised letters** or general funding requests to funders.

# How to write a freestyle application

The following is a basic outline of an application for a funder with no standard application form. Each funder has their own guidelines, so find out what they are and then tailor your application to each individual funder. For more detailed information and help ask your local Council for Voluntary Services, see the members' section of [navca.org.uk](http://navca.org.uk).

## Cover letter

This is your best chance to catch the attention of the funder, so make it concise, snappy and exciting. The cover letter is the first document the funder will read and it is often the basis for further consideration or rejection. The cover letter should state the name of the project, the proposed start date and length of the project, the goals of the project and how it fits into the guidelines of the funder, the total budget, the type of support requested and the names of any other funders approached to fund the project, or already contributing to the project. Don't forget to include your organisation's name and address. A well designed letterhead helps as well.

## Project summary

Sometimes called project description, this part is ideally only one page, and hardly ever more than two. It is a concise, hard-hitting, informative page which describes in brief who, what, where, why, when, how and the expected outcomes.

It should contain the following elements:

### Needs statement

An overview of the needs (problems) your organisation wants to address with this project or campaign. Describe briefly the overall context – this will help the reader to get a more complete picture of the scope of the problem. Use relevant facts, examples from the community or statistics to underpin your statement, and make sure all the data is correct. Identify who will benefit if you tackle these needs.

## **Goals and objectives**

This section is not what you will do, but what changes your project will bring about, and how these changes will address the needs you outlined above. The objectives should be specific and as measurable as possible.

## **Activities and timetable**

How and when are you going to achieve the objectives of the project? Describe the concrete activities you will carry out. Be clear and realistic.

## **Evaluation**

How will the success of the project be judged or measured? For example, you could have regular evaluation meetings to monitor progress, you could count the number of people who participate in your events or ask people to fill in questionnaires about what they got out of it.

## **Why they should fund you**

How does your proposal fit in with their funding policy? Have they supported you before? You may need to emphasise different aspects of your work for different funders, for instance some might be interested in you because you fall within their geographical area, others because the project falls within their sphere of interest.

# How to draw up a budget

It's possible to be both too detailed and too vague with budgets. Each funder has different expectations, so do ask. The budget consists of two parts: **expenditure** (or costs) and **income**.

## Expenditure or costs

Main sections could include: staff and consultants' fees or salaries, publishing, equipment, overheads such as rent, telephone, heating, electricity and office supplies, insurance, travel and training.

Don't forget the less regular costs like replacing computer hardware or repairing the shared vehicle. You may wish to just bulk together the costs in a few categories, but be sure to work everything out on a more detailed budget so that you can answer any questions that may come up. Don't be afraid to ask for too much so long as you remain within the published guidelines. If a funder likes a project but thinks it is too expensive they will quite often give you a percentage of what you asked for, or ask you to revise your figures. An application will rarely be rejected because a budget isn't exactly as expected, but it will be rejected if it is viewed as a bad investment. Do remember that you will have to keep receipts for all your spendings – many funders will want copies of these at the end of a project.

### Example of a basic budget

#### Expenditure

Printing (600 leaflets at £0.10 each)	£60.00
Telephone & internet	£15.00
Van hire	£50.00
Petrol	£30.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£155.00</b>

#### Income

Donations from benefit gig	£37.00
Benefits in kind (van hire)	£50.00
Funding requested from Dosh Trust	£68.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£155.00</b>

## Income

List all the different bits of income that you expect. Some funders fund all the costs of the project, but many expect to you find 50% or more of the money from elsewhere (*match funding*). This could for example come from another funder, donations or membership fees. Luckily most funders accept contributions in kind – that is materials and time that people donate to the project. So if someone lends you a van for free, you should estimate how much it would have cost you to hire it and put it down as contribution in kind. You can even put a monetary value on volunteer time, say at the current industry rate for that task.

The budget is often the basis on which a funder decides whether you are experienced and organised enough to handle their money. So make sure that all your figures add up and that your total expenditure and total income add up to the same figure. Get someone else to check it over.

## Appended information

Append any relevant supporting evidence such as: a time line and detailed work plans, your latest annual report, facts and figures supporting your case, letters of support from other organisations, an organisational chart, photographs and press cuttings. Choose these materials with care, make sure they support your application rather than undermine it! A letter of support can be a good idea, but if it's from certain kinds of organisations or a political party then this can signal 'political' activities which funders often refuse to support.

## After you've sent the application

Phone up and check they've got it (and haven't lost it yet) and let them know you are available if there are any questions. Sometimes they'll let you know of any minor changes they'd like you to make (which obviously improves your chances).

## Got the money?!

If your application is successful the hard work can begin. First of all send a thank you letter to the funder – building good relations will help you get more funding. It is best if just one or two people deal with the funder to avoid confusion and help build those relations.

Check whether you have to sign a contract with the funder. If so, read it through very carefully. It usually says things like you have to keep records and receipts for all the expenses and that you have to write a report at the end. Do make sure you fulfil these conditions within the set deadlines. If you don't the funder might demand the money back or at the very least never fund you again.

If there are any problems with the project, or the figures in the budget change, always let the funder know and ask their advice. They are usually OK about it and sometimes can offer help.



# Crowdfunding

Asking lots of people to fund your project with (relatively) small amounts of money is called crowdfunding. The idea of asking for funding from a large number of people isn't new, but various platforms on the internet have made it an accessible possibility for projects to find money. On the face of it, asking for crowd funding is very similar to requesting a grant from a more formal funder – you'll need to be able to communicate a clear and concise summary of your project, show that you're worth giving money to, and have a well prepared budget.

## Running a crowdfunding campaign

Asking for crowd sourced funding needs to be run as a campaign in its own right – a simple request usually won't receive much attention and will get lost amongst the competition – so you should be prepared to put a lot of time and thought into how to communicate with your potential funders. Since it's not just one funder making a decision on whether to give you money, but potentially thousands of people, you'll need to continuously promote yourself, rather than just the once with a formal funder. Before you make your pitch on the crowdfunding platform make a plan of how to provide regular updates and information about your project through social media, and prepare whatever materials you'll need in advance.

## Which crowdfunding platform?

There are lots of internet platforms for crowdfunding, and each has its own culture and rules, so it's essential to do your homework to work out which platform is most suitable for your project, and how best to pitch your campaign. There are plenty of guides to crowdfunding on the internet, have a look at these and speak to a group which has tried crowdfunding before.

# Raising cash and writing funding bids

All campaigns and projects need some materials and resources to keep them running and to expand. It is a really good idea to consider fundraising as part of your campaign right from the start and to make it enjoyable. There are many different ways of raising money and getting materials and equipment. You'll find some of them in this guide together with general tips.

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