Finance & Funding Guide
2.08 Organising Funding Information

The information below is an overview of requirements and for further more detailed information, support and guidance etc please contact the BVA Group Development team via telephone 01256 423816 or email admin@bvaction.org.uk (please quote "BVA Group Assistance" on title).
www.bvaction.org.uk

Fundraising is not something you do just once in the lifetime of your organisation. It is an ongoing task that needs a considerable amount of time and effort.

Gathering information
You need to collect and keep information on your group as you go along on the following:
- the community in which you work;
- users or beneficiaries of your service;
- evidence of need;
- successes of your group, including any media coverage;
- potential funders.

Know your group
You should have your aims and objectives written down in your constitution or another document. You should also try to write a Profile (brief history) of your group and what you do. This information can be used as a basis for any funding applications.

Ask yourselves:
- Who set us up, and why?
- How long have we been going?
- What have we achieved so far?
- How far have we met the needs we have identified?
- What are our strengths?
- What do our users think of us?
- Keep copies of things like favourable press releases, annual reports, user surveys, letters of thanks or praise, statistical evidence of achievements like number of people helped.

Know the need you are addressing
Your group will have been set up to meet a particular need or set of needs. So, you need to collect facts and figures, reports, surveys and any other statistical evidence that will back up your argument that a need for your service exists.

There are places you can turn to for supporting information (census findings, local authority departments [BDBC or HCC], universities and colleges).

Prove your credibility
Building credibility with funders is an essential part of fundraising. One of the reasons why funders will choose to support your group will be because they believe that you are capable of doing what you say you will do. Collecting together this information now can save precious time when it comes to completing applications.

Storing the information
Once you have started to gather together the above information you will need to organise it in such a way that it is easy to access and use. Some suggestions:

Organisation file
In this file keep the key written details about your organisation that will be useful to have to hand when writing a funding application. The major categories of information you might need are:

- Name of group.
- Date founded.
- Why and how you were set up.
- Copy of written aims and objectives.
- Legal status - are you a registered charity, a company limited by guarantee, or an informal group?
- Mission statement.
- Present policies, including equal opportunities policy.
- List of affiliations.
- Facts and figures about your cause and evidence of need.
- Recent successes.
- Recent growth.
- People involved in your group - paid staff, volunteers, committees, members.
- Annual reports.
- Audited accounts.

Credibility file
In this file keep information that will enhance the credibility of your group and the work you are doing such as:

- Your main financial supporters, past and present - local authorities, charitable trusts, sponsors and so on.
- List of prominent supporters.
- Quotes from users endorsing the work you do.
- Press cuttings and media coverage.
- Articles supporting your area of work.
- Facts and figures highlighting the importance of your work.

Project file
This should hold information about specific projects that you want to raise funding for. It can provide a tick list of things you need to consider to make a good project proposal:

- A written description of the project.
- The need for the project.
- The project's objectives.
- How these objectives fit into your group's overall aims.
- Start and finish dates, or how you will continue the project into the future (often called your 'exit strategy').
- How you will measure the success of the project.

- The expected benefits or 'outcomes' of the project. Remember to file any relevant statistics here.
- What outside partners will contribute and their details.
- Collaboration with other groups or agencies.

Funders file

In this file keep records of:

- All the funders you have approached, successful or otherwise, with the dates when you approached them and the outcome. This is useful for the future - giving you an idea of who you can go back to and when.
- Copies of all correspondence between yourselves and funders in case you need to approach them again.
- Thank you letters. An easy thing to forget but an important thing to do. Write as soon as you receive that cheque or offer of funding. Invite them to visit you if it seems appropriate.
- Remember to keep in regular contact with your funders, sending them information about your work from time to time, or any positive media releases. In this way you are building up a relationship with them so that they remember you and feel some involvement in the work they are funding, and so are more likely to consider funding you again. Most funders like to think they are more than just 'cheque writing machines'.

Make sure that your files or records are kept centrally and are accessible to everyone. This avoids the problem of one or two people keeping all the information to themselves and the problems that can follow if those people suddenly leave the group. Everyone needs to be able to pick up the fundraising information. This central co-ordination is also needed to make sure that two people in your group don't apply to the same funders.

Make fundraising a regular item on your committee agenda.

Larger organisations could have a regular item in newsletters or bulletins.