

Funding

Introduction

For new groups in particular, it is not essential to focus on funding at the outset. This can come later, once the group decides on its function and has had time to meld.

A gold coin donation at the door is usually sufficient to cover the cost of morning tea while the group is in the early stages of its formation.

Who provides funding?

- Local, State and Federal Governments advertise funding grants in newspapers and on their websites.
- Philanthropic Trusts and Foundations (These often require Deductible Gift Recipient Status) (DGR)
- Pharmaceutical Companies
- Large Chainstores
- Banks
- Insurance Companies
- Business – small and local as well as large and national

Where can groups look to find out about upcoming funding grants?

- Ask your local, state and federal member to add your group to their newsletter mailing list for information about upcoming funding grants.
- Governments place advertisements in newspapers, particularly the Courier Mail on a Saturday, as well as their websites to advertise funding grants.

Queensland Government Grants Website: www.qld.gov.au/grants

Philanthropy Australia Website: www.philanthropy.org.au

Easy Grants newsletter distributed by Our Community, (a not for profit social enterprise), is a publication dedicated to providing information to non-profits about funding grants. <http://www.fundingcentre.com.au/>

“One Off” v “Recurrent” Funding Grants

Grants for “one off” or “short term” projects are more readily available and easier to access than “recurrent” funding grants.

Some funding bodies like to award straightforward grants eg equipment, whereas others are looking for new and innovative projects to fund.

Pilot projects, or successful short term projects that are well scoped, well carried out and well evaluated can often be presented to funding bodies as impressive evidence in bids for recurrent funding.

Writing Submissions for Funding Grants

Small groups unfamiliar with submission writing often feel daunted at the prospect of applying for funding. The best option is to seek help, and there are a number of avenues for doing this.

Most funding bodies will try to answer questions you might want to ask about their grants, so do not be reluctant to give them a call before you write your submission. They will not tell you how to write it, but they will often let you know if your project is suitable for their particular grant. They will also explain what you need to do if you are a Queensland branch of an association that is incorporated interstate.

If your group is supported by a Professional, seek their assistance or ask if they know anyone with experience who could walk you through the questions.

Sometimes local community organisations hold grant writing workshops. The Gambling Community Benefit Fund holds free workshops from time to time, and so too does the Brisbane City Council. ‘Our Community’ holds workshops at various times during the year at reasonable costs.

Private business and some peak not for profits will also hold workshops, though the cost of attending is often beyond the means of most small, unfunded self help groups.

If your group is not incorporated, you can still apply for certain grants by arranging for another incorporated organisation to “auspice” you.

An important factor in applying for funding is to plan ahead. With most grants, it takes about 6 months from closing date to publication of successful applicants.

There are a large number of books and websites dedicated to successful submission writing for grants. Here are just a few tips gained from our own experience.

Tips for applying for grants

- Plan well ahead. The process usually takes at least 6 months.
- Suit your project to the grant. Otherwise you will waste your time and come away from all your hard work feeling very disappointed.
- If you are unfamiliar with the process, seek help from people experienced in applying for grants.
- If you are not sure about their requirements, call the fund you are applying to for help.
- Adhere strictly to the funding body guidelines. More is not always better, and they can become annoyed if you deluge them with material they were not requiring.
- Always submit the application before the deadline. No fund will accept applications after the designated time of closure.
- Send the submission in the exact format the funding body sets down. Sometimes people like to use bound submissions to make them look more professional. If the funding body says staple only 4 extra pages along with their form, then that is what they want.
- Prepare a budget. Obtain quotes.
- Funding bodies do not reimburse payments made prior to notification of a successful application, so do not be tempted to make purchases in the hope of a retrospective payment.
- Gather all necessary documentation early as this may take some groups a longer time to locate if there is no central office. Each funding body will want various forms of documentation eg Constitution, Certificate of Incorporation, Charity Status, DGR Status, ABN, GST, publications, newsletters, flyers, newspaper articles etc
- Provide quality letters of support, on letterhead, if they are required by the funding body. This is often a very important part of the application process. It acts as an introduction to a board of people who have never heard of your group before. It is saying that other credible organisations or individuals in the community know you, value your work, and consider your group worthy of funding. Self Help Queensland generally provides letters of support for member groups that form part of the network.

Try to obtain letters of support from local community groups that know and value the work of your organisation. Approach your local Councillor, State and Federal politician along with any other prominent community identities eg doctors, researchers, police, health professionals and any others who may have an interest in your organisation and the project you are endeavouring to obtain funds for.

Allow plenty of time for people to write letters of support, giving them sufficient background information to assist them to write a really supportive letter. The more information you provide the more likelihood there is that people will say yes to your request, the less generic their letter will be, the more it will be tailored to your organisation, and the more likely it will add weight to your application.

Some helpful information to provide to prospective support letter writers, even if you provide it in dot form, includes:

- * Asking for the support letter to be written on official letterhead
- * Supplying the name and address of the fund to which you are applying (Much better than addressing it 'To whom it may concern')
- * Providing a list or description of exactly what you are applying for

- * Disclosing the amount of funding you are requesting – including budget details if possible
- * Explaining why you need the funding
- * Describing who will benefit – members, people with...xyz..., carers, families, entire community?
- * Stating how long the group has been running
- * Emphasising (if applicable) that the group does not receive any recurrent government funding
- * Stating if the group is completely (or predominantly) run by volunteers
- * Providing any other relevant information that is likely to strengthen a support letter

- Be prepared to be accountable for grant monies, making sure your group is aware of the requirements and equipped to meet them.

- Always notify the people who wrote the support letters whether the grant was successful or not. This courtesy always keeps you in good stead for next time.

If enough Queensland groups requested a workshop related to applying for grants, Self Help Queensland would endeavour to host one.

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