



'How To' Guide

Developing your funding application

Mission and Values



This guidance will be useful for: Community transport operators of all sizes who are looking at putting together a funding application.

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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to support Community Transport Organisations and other community groups and stakeholders develop effective funding bids in order to secure funds to help create, shape and develop their own transport solutions. The guide sets out the immediate steps needed to help identify suitable funders, explains how working in partnership can improve your chances of success and describes how to develop and complete a funding application for your chosen project.

Your project idea

In order to secure funding for your project, it is important that you present a compelling case for support. The Connecting Communities in Wales team has developed a presentation resource on 'Developing a case for support' which you can view at ctauk.org/cciw-resources.

Whether your project is a new, innovative way of working or a tried and tested model, you must be able to tell the funder **how you know there is a clear need for your project**. Who have you consulted with and in what form? e.g. a questionnaire or focus group. When did your consultation work take place? How many people took part? What was the outcome of this consultation work? You will need to work with your community to seek answers to these types of questions in order to demonstrate to funders that your project will benefit individual service users and the wider community.

Funders, particularly the National Lottery Community Fund, place great emphasis on demonstrating the benefits of a project and explaining how you have gone about demonstrating need through your consultation work is a pre-requisite for success.

Working in partnership

Working with stakeholders and organisations in a partnership approach is a great way to develop a bid for funding and deliver a project. With funders having finite funding available, it makes sense for Community Transport Operators and other interested stakeholders to come together in partnership to develop one funding bid rather than numerous organisations developing a series of separate bids. A combined application coming from a partnership to tackle a transport barrier in a local area, for example, will have a greater chance of success - demonstrating a holistic approach while reducing the possibility of duplication.

Working in partnership also has other benefits when developing your application for funding. This can include:

- An increased range of skills and experiences to help develop a bid and deliver the associated project
- Shared workload, supporting the lead partner, especially when developing larger strategic funding applications

- A multi-agency partnership approach will have a strong strategic oversight in relation to tackling barriers that support the local, regional and national transport network

The partnership will need to identify a lead partner for the purposes of completing the application form and corresponding with the funder. The lead partner will need to be comfortable with leading the development of the funding application and the delivery of the project on behalf of the partnership. The lead partner will ultimately be responsible for ensuring the project is delivered successfully, on time and in budget, if the application for funding is approved. The Wales Cooperative Centre (wales.coop/) can offer support to develop a formal Partnership Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding to help organisations work closely and collaboratively together.

If a partnership is applying for funding for the shared use of vehicles, it would be useful to have a resource sharing protocol which states how the partnership will make use of the vehicle/vehicles at different times and for different purposes.

Research potential funders

It is important to research a range of potential funders for your project and, if possible, earmark three potential funders who's funding priorities are a good match with the aims and objectives of your project. To do this, you will firstly need to identify potential funders. The Connecting Communities in Wales team can help you to identify suitable funders using our extensive knowledge bank and have developed a presentation resource 'Before approaching a funder' which you can view at ctauk.org/cciw-resources. Additionally, you can get support from your local County Voluntary Council who can provide a funder finder service.

Once you have identified potential funders, it is important to **carefully read their funding guidelines to ensure your organisation and project is eligible for funding**. It cannot be over-estimated how important this is. By carefully reading a funders application guidelines, you will be able to gain an understanding of whether your project is eligible, significantly improving your chances of success.

Talk to the funder about your project

Another way to ensure a successful outcome would be to talk to a potential funder prior to developing your application. This could ultimately save time and reduce the risk of your application being unsuccessful. This is a great opportunity to ask any questions you may have after reading the funders application guidelines. It is also an opportunity to describe and discuss your project with the funder and hear their feedback on whether they believe your project application will have a good chance of being successful.

Some funders, however, will specifically state that there is no option to get in touch with them or ask questions prior to developing or submitting an application for funding. Therefore, it is important to thoroughly research your chosen funding opportunities and choose the correct funder for your project.

The application form

Answering the question – it is crucial that when you are completing the application form that you answer the specific question/s that are being asked. It can be tempting (and often many applicants do not realise they are doing it) to write an answer that is un-related to the question that is being asked. It is very important to develop answers to questions that directly relate to the questions being asked. It is unlikely that your funding application will be successful if you do not fully answer, or answer with sufficient relevant detail regarding the questions being asked.

Word limits – pay attention to words limits which some funders use (such as the Big Lottery Fund) to limit the amount of words you can use in your answer. If a funder is requesting that you adhere to a certain number of words, think about the quality, not quantity, of your answers, whilst remembering to concentrate on answering the question.

Demonstrating how your project links to a funder's specific priorities – funders will often have specific priorities or themes. If this is the case, it is important to state within the application form how your project will compliment specific priorities or themes. It is useful to highlight where you have referred to the funders priorities and weave this into your answer. In the below example from the Big Lottery Fund Awards for All application form, a specific priority is 'bring people together and build strong relationships across communities'. This has been referred to in the following way and incorporated into the below answer:

'The luncheon club will greatly help to break the loneliness and isolation older people in the area face, especially for those who have lost a partner or are restricted by illness/mobility. The project will greatly improve older people's wellbeing and enable people to make lasting friendships, while contributing to Awards for All Priority 1. Bring people together and build strong relationships across communities'.

Sign and date the application form – A common mistake some people make is forgetting to sign and date their application form. Funders often state that an application will not be considered if it is not signed and dated. As such, it is imperative that you proof read your document to ensure you have not missed anything that may render your application ineligible.

Remember to include all requested supplementary information – Within the funding application and/or application guidelines, additional documentation/information required to be submitted with the application will be outlined. This may include your organisations constitution, annual accounts and relevant policies e.g. your environmental policy. It is important that you include all requested additional supplementary information, as not including it may demonstrate to the funder that your organisation is not suitable for a grant or would not be a good enough custodian of public funds.

Submit your application in good time – It is important to give yourself and your project partnership enough time to plan and construct your application and take into consideration any application deadlines. If the funder has stated a deadline to receive applications, give yourself plenty of time to develop and submit your application, taking into consideration any additional work you will need to complete e.g. collating community consultation feedback.

The funder will usually state the method for submitting your application, such as e-mail for example. If you are sending in your application via e-mail, ask for a return confirmation e-mail so that you know it has been received. Alternatively, if you are sending your application to the funder via post, it is sensible to do this with either a recorded or special delivery.

Including a budget with your application

When developing your budget, it is important to include **all costs** associated with the delivery of your project and ensure the cost of each budget heading is realistic and accurate. For example, if you are seeking funding for a new minibus, you must ensure that the cost price for the vehicle includes all associated equipment to enable the safe and legal transportation of wheelchair passengers. Therefore, either a lift or ramp would be required on the vehicle, along with **removable** seats and wheelchair tie downs.

Likewise, if it is funding for a minibus driver for which funds are being sought, it is important to include all associated costs including the salary, national insurance, holiday pay and pension on a per annum basis and ensure you deliver your project on a full cost recovery basis. The National Lottery Community Fund has some good tips and advice to ensure your project secures funding for all costs involved in running a project: nlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/funding-guidance/full-cost-recovery

If the funder has requested that you use a specific form for your costings e.g. an excel spreadsheet, you must include all your costings within that spreadsheet. Some funders, however, are happy for you to outline your costs in a more flexible way e.g. within the body of the main application.

Signing off your application form

When your application for funding is complete, it is essential that you proof read your application before it is sent to the funder. Proof reading your application will ensure that you correct any typo's, include any new and relevant information and make any required adjustments, including layout and language and ensure every question has been answered.

If you have submitted a partnership bid, ask your partners to help you proof read the application. Another 'set of eyes' will help identify any issues and provide corrections before the application for funding is submitted.

Further support and assistance

As every funding application is different, you may find other issues arise in the development of your application that is not covered by this guide. Should you require additional help or support, please contact us at:

Community Transport Association, South Wales office:

119, London Road, Neath. SA11 1LF

Tel. 01792 844290

Community Transport Association North Wales office:

Suite 8, Conwy Business Centre, Junction Way, Llandudno Junction. LL31 9XX

Tel. 01745 356 751

Connecting Communities in Wales

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