

Funding applications top 10 tips

1) Read the guidance notes

Always read the guidance notes carefully first before you start to fill in the application form. They often provide useful information to help you complete the form and help you steer your project / application in the right direction.

2) Check that your club / project are eligible

Check directly with the funder that your club and project are eligible for funding and clearly explain in your application how you can meet the funder's criteria.

3) If you are not clear about anything - phone the funder

Phone the funder directly if you have any queries regarding the grant if you can't find the answer to your question in their guidance. Most funders, particularly the large funders such as Sport England have dedicated staff to answer funding queries. Often, those on the help line are also those involved in assessments and therefore building a relationship with them and helping them to understand your project more can be beneficial when applications are assessed.

4) Forward plan

Plan your project. Make sure you know what it is you are trying to achieve and what you need to do to achieve it. Also some funders (e.g. Sport England's Small Grant programme) like to see evidence of the plan when you apply.

5) Assume nothing

Assume the funder knows absolutely nothing about your club / project – because they probably don't. Write as if the funder has no prior knowledge of your club/group, your sport, your local area or project activity and avoid jargon. Your project needs to make to someone that has nothing to do with it at all.

6) Get your application checked by someone critical

Ask someone who has nothing to do with your club to read the completed application and ask for their feedback – honestly.

7) What difference will you make? - It's all about the Outcome

It is essential that your project meets the funder's outcomes. E.g. if applying to Sport England make sure that you talk about how the project will increase participation in sport by people aged 14+. So, understand what difference the funder wants to see and clearly show how your project will make this difference.

8) What evidence do you have that there is a need for your project?

Grant funders like to see good evidence of what you need. The best evidence can often be provided by responses to surveys/ consultation about your project idea. Project specific letters of support from other organisations can also provide good evidence. Make sure if you are asking people for support that you give them time to provide it. Try not to approach them at the last minute. This could at best, not allow them the time to write the best support letter or at worst, not allow them time to write anything.

9) Stand out from the crowd – be creative

Funders are often oversubscribed so be creative and innovative with your project ideas. Creative but clear. Your project needs to stand out, so put yourself in the funder's position and think whether you would support the project from the information provided.

10) Give it the time it needs and involve the right people

Applications always take longer than you plan. Make sure you allow enough time to plan, develop and write your application. Make sure you have allowed enough time to bring in the right people from your club to support the different elements of it i.e. the treasurer for the finance or a Club Durham partner for a support letter.