Fundraising guidance and ideas for community groups

Here are a few ideas around community fundraising that will help you optimise the approaches you make and maximise their success.

Tapping into funding from local businesses

As a community-based group or organisation, you are well placed to understand which businesses are present in your local area. It’s a good idea to familiarise yourselves with the range of organisations that are based in or around your region or have offices nearby, particularly if they already have a strong community presence.

Try to identify those companies most likely to be interested in supporting you. This can be done by investigating their corporate social responsibility (CSR) priorities, which will usually be found on their corporate website. Many businesses include community engagement within their CSR goals. Moreover, if you can find a link between their CSR objectives and your initiative, this will really strengthen your approach (e.g. an organisation which focuses on diversity inclusion may be interested in supporting an event aimed at minority groups). You may wish to offer some sort of acknowledgement of their support (e.g. through social media) to incentivise any potential funders by boosting their public profile.

As a next step, you’ll need to identify the best recipient for your approach at a given organisation. Some larger organisations have a staff member or team dedicated to CSR, but a manager or head of marketing or communications is also appropriate. Company websites and professional social media sites (e.g. LinkedIn) are great resources for identifying the correct person, as well as providing company postal and email addresses.

Do bear in mind that, while a business may not be in a position to support you financially, they may be open to making in-kind donations of goods or services. Perhaps they have a venue that would be suitable for an event you would like to run, or manufacture materials that you could use within your project? Either way, in-kind donations or subsidised services will free up some of your budget.

Examples of successful fundraising bids by community groups:
- Local airports have financially supported public events in nearby parks
- Local museums and shopping centres have provided event hire space for free
- Local businesses have donated raffle prizes – remember social media is a great platform to appeal for prize donations and thank donors
- Local newspapers and local printing companies have provided advertising and marketing collateral

Writing successful grant applications

Grant providers will generally receive a far greater number of applications than they are able to provide funding for. With this in mind, it is important to take every step to make your application stand out and avoid any errors that could cause the application to be discarded.

Key strategies include:
• Continuously revisiting any guidelines or instructions offered by the grant provider to tailor your application to their specifications and ensure all requirements are met
• Thoroughly proofreading your application for any spelling or grammatical errors
• Paying close attention to the opening and closing dates and ensuring your application and any supporting documents are submitted before the deadline

Other fundraising inspiration

The above suggestions represent just a few of the many areas of fundraising. For further inspiration, consider tapping into the following resources:

• The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has particularly useful guidance on community fundraising [https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/funding/fundraising/individual-giving/local-and-community-fundraising](https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/funding/fundraising/individual-giving/local-and-community-fundraising)
• [https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/more-from-us/topics/community-fundraising-and-events](https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/more-from-us/topics/community-fundraising-and-events)
• [https://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk/fundraising-ideas/](https://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk/fundraising-ideas/)