

Resources for small groups

Sources of funding

For many people, fundraising evokes images of flag days, jumble sales, stalls at fairs, and so on. While such events can be successful and can also be an enjoyable way of publicising your group and getting people involved, there are other sources of funding which can often provide larger sums of money to voluntary groups. These include:

- public bodies: local councils, government departments etc.;
- charitable trusts (including National Lottery);
- companies.

There are some distinct advantages in seeking funding from these sources rather than relying on donations from the public.

- They will expect to be asked for funds. Their aim is to fund well-managed projects that meet a definite need.
- They can provide far larger sums of money than would usually be raised through events such as jumble sales, raffles etc. The work involved in applying for a grant can be a far more productive use of time than organising fundraising events.
- A number of trusts and other bodies that run small grants programmes aimed specifically at small voluntary and community groups

Public bodies (local and national)

Merton Council, local health services and other public bodies, either on their own or in partnership, provide a range of funding opportunities. These can be one-off grants for a specific purpose or longer term (up to 3 years). You can find details on current public sector grants programmes by looking on www.mvsc.co.uk or registering to receive the MVSC e-bulletin.

From time to time, central government departments run funding programmes which can be accessed by voluntary groups. Information on these will also be put on www.mvsc.co.uk.

MVSC's *Development Worker* can help you find out about any funding opportunities that may be appropriate for your group.

Charitable trusts (including Lottery)

There are thousands of charitable trusts which exist to give grants to voluntary organisations. However you will need to identify the best trusts to approach to avoid submitting applications which have no chance of funding. You need to check:

- *Eligibility criteria:* Trusts may only fund certain types of organisation (e.g. many trusts will only fund registered charities), or organisations based in or working in particular geographical areas, or organisations of a particular size.

- *Funding priorities:* Trusts may wish to fund projects or groups who work with certain sections of the community, or fund specific types of work.
- *Size of grant:* Trusts may have minimum or maximum amounts for grants, or a typical size of grant, which may or may not fit with your project.
- *Deadline for applications:* There may be a closing date for applications which will need to fit with your own timetable for the project. It is worth remembering that, even if you are successful, the gap between submitting an application and receiving a grant is likely to be many months.

There are a number of ways to help you find this information:

- *Funding databases*, such as www.trustfunding.org.uk, will search through the details of thousands of funders to identify ones which may be appropriate for you and your project. You can access this at MVSC.
- *Funding directories* provide more detailed information on each potential trust.
- *Application packs* produced by the funders themselves set out their priorities in detail.
- *Grants officers.* Some of the larger funders have people who you can talk to before applying.

Companies

Support from companies to the voluntary sector comes in a variety of ways.

- Larger, national companies may have their own grants programmes which work in a similar way to charitable trusts.
- Local companies or local branches of national companies provide support not just through funding but through volunteering, donation of equipment etc.
- A local company may sponsor a particular event or project.

It makes sense to approach companies where there is something that connects the company and your group. Approaches to companies are likely to have greater success where there is already some kind of personal contact between the voluntary group and the company.

Approaching several funders

If you are looking for a small amount for one specific project you would probably approach one source for all the funding. Larger projects or funding for several projects may require you to approach several different sources. Whilst this can appear daunting, with more work and more potential problems, it can also attract funders, as each successful application can help to draw in other funders.

