

Grant Funding Guidance for Schools

Applying for grant funding can be a minefield and is very off putting for many people. However, with a little time and effort it can be done.



Application processes can be long and confusing but once you have completed a couple of applications you begin to know what these funding organisations are looking for. Firstly, try and set up a small group of teachers or parents or both who will co-ordinate the project and nominate one person to complete the funding application.

Take some time to carefully think about your project and what it might involve. Make sure it is realistic and can be achieved, it is better to concentrate on a few smaller beneficial projects then go for something too big and unachievable.

Try not to make the mistake of asking for contributions for **features** or particular aspects of what you are doing e.g. to provide swings for a playground, or equipment for the sports hall. It is much more important to translate these into **benefits for your group**.

If your project is at a school mention the involvement of the children being paramount and the benefits they will gain from the project. Most of these applications focus heavily on benefiting communities and community involvement. i.e. opening the garden up to other groups for their own use or activities. The more people and local groups you can involve in your project the better chance you have. Making the project accessible to all especially to less able bodied people is important.

Creating new wildlife habitats is very important as is using environmentally sustainable resources and recycled materials. If the project includes a pond the LEA doesn't seem to any specific guidelines most of it is common sense i.e. they must be properly fenced with visible signage, be within view of the main school building and children should not use the pond unsupervised. They do have some suggestions and advise you to read the H.S.E guidelines regarding construction regulations.

Many of the questions are quite repetitive so you find yourself having to adapt the same answers to many different questions. The best tip is to keep your answers as brief as possible, for written applications no more than two sides of A4 is usual. Some organisations have different stages to their application process with a brief first stage application to get through and then it becomes more in depth and specific.

When doing a budget try and get a general idea of the cost of products, materials and services and make sure your overall figure is inclusive of VAT. With most of these grants if you claim back any of the VAT you have to pay it back to the funder. What ever you decide to do you must be sure that it can be carried out in full as detailed records must be kept and sent off at the end of the project and you may even get visits to see the progress of work being carried out.

Questions you will be asked

1. What activities will take place if you receive a grant?
2. Explain how you know people in your community want this project
3. What other organisations will you be working with and how will they be involved?
4. How many people do you expect to benefit directly from your project.
5. How will your project meet the outcomes of the Breathing Places grant programme?
6. How much your project will cost?

You may come across a few problems i.e.

Bank account details. Many school clubs do not have their own bank accounts as their main funds are held with the local authority. (Using PTA bank accounts is not normally accepted either) Although this is common practice funders like the lottery haven't recognised this yet and don't realise that they are sometimes asking you to provide the impossible.

It is therefore normally acceptable to send a letter on school headed paper saying that all funds are held with the local authority but will be 'ring fenced' for the project only. Provide the local authorities bank details and say that if they require any further information to ring the authority concerned.

Things to remember.

- Outline your needs or problems
- Describe your solutions
- State the benefits
- Explain the costs

When applying for these grants you have to remember that you are in competition for money from thousands of other applicants so you have to try and get your application to stand out. A good motto to follow when applying for funding is that if you don't **ask** you don't get.

If you require any information I would be happy to help, you can contact Ayesha Sharman on 01271 327087 or e-mail swcaa@btconnect.com

Grant Making Organisations

B&Q Better Neighbourhood Grants

Start up support for local community projects ideal for Schools, community groups and charitable organisations. The B&Q Better Neighbour Grants are available to help get a community project up and running. The scheme provides £50 to £500 of B&Q materials, for example, pond liners, plants, peat-free compost for projects such as a pond/wildlife garden or paints labelled low or minimal VOC for redecoration projects. It is important that the project is sustainable. For example, the materials and methods used should not cause environmental damage in the short or long-term. The final result should have long-lasting benefit to the community. Better Neighbour Grants do not cover maintenance, so the project should be designed for easy care.

Contact your local B&Q store for more details

Big Lottery Fund - Changing Spaces

Fund community groups who want to improve local green spaces such as play areas, community gardens, parks, wildlife areas and village greens, kick-about areas and pathway improvements. www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Lottery Fund - Local Food Grant

Local Food is a £50 million programme that will distribute lottery grants to a variety of food-related projects to help make locally grown food accessible and affordable to local communities. www.localfoodgrants.org

Breathing Places

The Breathing Places programme is a UK wide small grants programme developed in partnership with the BBC. It complements the BBC's Breathing Places campaign by giving funding for small groups www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Also try writing to local garden centres and builders merchants asking for donations many are happy to help if they can.

We love to hear about your projects and can feature them on our website, just get in touch at swcaa@btconnect.com

This information is also available as an SWCAA Guide which can be downloaded from our member's area on the website.

DOWNLOAD THE PDF HERE