



APPLYING TO TRUSTS

CHECK OUT THE TRUST'S REQUIREMENTS

Does the Trust encourage you to talk to their Grants Officer before writing the application?

- Then talk to the Grants Officer! If you don't, your application is almost certain to fail.

Does the Trust have an application form?

- Answer all the questions – including the ones you'd rather not answer.
- Answer the questions the form asks, not the ones you think they should have asked.
- If you can't provide information, say why (e.g. "we can't send 3 years' audited accounts because we've only been in existence 18 months").

Does the Trust ask you to write a letter?

- Read the Trust's request for information **carefully** – and supply what it asks for.
- Write to a **named person**. It proves that you've done your research.
- Keep it short (a good application can be expressed on 2 sides of A4).
- Don't include lots of supporting material they haven't asked for. They won't read your last 10 annual reports!
- Get the details right. If you're writing the same letter to 5 Trusts and change the name in the address, change it in the body of the letter as well.
- Describe your organisation and project in the body of the letter – not in enclosures.

Use a logical structure. The following is a good guide:

- Start by saying how much you want and what you want it for.
- Describe your organisation (**not** the project for which you want money). Say what you do and what your track record is. Convince the funder that your organisation can be trusted with money. (All in one paragraph).
- Say what the problem is your project will solve. Who are the people that need help? How many of them are there? How do you know all this.
- Describe the project – what it will do and how this will address the need you have just described. Make sure you clearly link the **solution** with the **problem**.
- Set out or enclose your budget.

Don't make assumptions. The Trust knows nothing about your work and probably nothing about your area. Tell them what you do and what the area is like – but keep it short.

Write in **plain English** and **avoid jargon**. Funders will judge your application on its quality and whether they understand it – not on the number of words used and/or how long they are.

Key points to remember:

- Funders are unlikely to be familiar with the specialist words you (or your staff) take for granted (e.g. “respite care”, “flexible day care”).
- Do not say *“If there are any points on which you require explanation or further particulars we shall be glad to furnish such additional details as may be required by telephone”* when what you mean is “please ring if you have any questions.”
- The longer the sentences and the longer the words, the more likely you are to write nonsense by mistake. As G.K. Chesterton observed, short words make you think about what you're saying.

Remember to sign the letter and include all necessary enclosures.

If you are not asking for the full cost:

- Tell the Trust what you plan is for raising the rest of the money.
- If there are options for what they might fund, give them enough information to make a decision (we could begin work without post X if we had post Y or post Z).
- If you already have a pledge of money, tell them (they are more likely to if somebody else has already agreed to fund you).

Before you send off the application get someone **who has nothing to do with your organisation** to look at it. You are too committed to what you want to do to assess the application objectively.

If there is a deadline make sure that the application is sent off in good time to meet it.

Assume that if the Trust says something in its guidelines, it means it. “You must” does not mean “We'd like you to but it doesn't really matter if you don't.”