

# HOW TO

## WRITE A GOOD FUNDING BID

So you have your group all set up and running, at least to some degree, but you're short on funds. Here are some basic pointers on how to submit a good funding application and avoid bad submissions.

### A GOOD FUNDING BID

#### What is the purpose of your group?

GROUP is a community based support group for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people. Formed in 2004, GROUP is based in Manchester and is volunteer led. We currently have 7 volunteers who run the organisation, and we support over 80 people each month.

Our mission is to reduce the isolation of LGBT people. The group meets weekly and there is a varied range of activities we run at these meetings. These include: discussions, debates, art and craft workshops, live music performances and information workshops on topics such as safer sex. Along with this, we also hold quarterly events and outings which all members are invited to participate in. Research has found that one in two LGBT people feel isolated ('Sexuality Matters'). Our group gives LGBT people the opportunity to meet in a safe space, interact with other people and build up their support networks.

#### What do you want funding for?

We want funding to support our running costs for the next 12 months. This would include rent for the space we use for our weekly meetings, volunteer expenses, materials and resources needed to run our weekly activities, and funding for quarterly outings. This funding would mean that we would be able to continue our services and support over 1000 people in the next 12 months. This funding would also mean that we could concentrate our energy in ensuring the future sustainability of the group by using the next 12 months to seek funding for future years.

#### How do you know that there is a need for this project/activity?

We know that there is a need for our group because of the consistently high number of people attending our weekly meetings (average of 21 people per session), and the positive feedback we receive. At each meeting we monitor who attends and what they think about the group. In the last 6 months 89% of people attending the group felt that it had a positive impact on their life.

Our weekly meetings give people an opportunity to be themselves and meet other people. Research shows that LGBT people are more likely to suffer from mental ill health than the general population. For example, 2 in 3 LGBT people have experienced depression, which is over 3 times higher than in the general population ('I Count'). For many people experiencing isolation and mental ill health, our group is of real benefit. It offers a place for people to build social and support networks and many of our activities encourage growth of confidence and inter-personal skills. Our social outings are also of great importance, and for many people they are something to really look forward to. We ensure that these events have much more benefit than simply being 'social'. For example previous events have included a countryside walks (along with physical benefits, the mental health benefits of exercise are widely recognised).

As our group is so valued by the LGBT community, we know that its future security is vital. This funding would mean that we could use the next 12 months to secure longer term funding from other sources to ensure our future sustainability.

#### How will you measure the impact of your work?

If successful we would continue monitoring information such as the impact of the group. We would recruit for a volunteer who would be responsible for ensuring this monitoring took place, and that the results were analysed. To maintain standards and ensure COMPANY remains relevant to its members we would listen to and act on any criticism or suggestions for improvement.

This clearly outlines how your group runs and how many people you support.

This follow on from the research is good as it illustrates that the purpose of your group is based on an evidenced need.

This detail of what the running costs entail and the length you require funding for is beneficial and will allow them to better understand your project budget.

Funders like to know that their funding will have a long lasting benefit, so try to illustrate what this will be. How the group will keep going is a good example of this.

Again, back up what your saying with facts. If you don't currently have these facts then you could perhaps do a simple questionnaire to your service users.

Detailing the benefits of the group and how they meet a 'need' is important.

Ensure that funders recognise the benefits of these outings. Whilst having fun is obviously important, if events address a need (ie mental health), then they will be more fundable.

Whilst this is repeated from the previous question, it is important to mention again as you have highlighted there is need for the group to continue. Don't be scared of repetition if it is necessary and relevant to the question.

If you do already do monitoring, then mention this - it may give the funder more confidence that you will be able to successfully monitor the impact of the work if successful. If not, check out the 'How to evaluate group activity' factsheet that the LGF produce.

Clearly describes the activities your group runs

Using research to back up your point (and referring to the source) is always recommended as it backs up your point. The LGF may be able to help with this, so get in touch.

Along with detailing the specific things you require funding for, it adds more impact and 'value' if you can detail what this money will actually mean - for example, how many people you will help

Again, it's always good to back up what your saying with fact, to ensure it doesn't come across as an opinion.

When documenting need, again it's important to use facts.

Think practically about how you will monitor - for example if you need a volunteer to do this properly then state it - it ensures that they know you will take this seriously.

It's important to detail what you will actually do with the monitoring. For example, you could say you will monitor the impact being made, but this does not necessarily mean you would do anything about it if monitoring showed that the project wasn't having much impact. Show that you will measure the impact, and that you will be prepared to adapt to ensure that your work has an impact.

# A BAD FUNDING BID

## What is the purpose of your group?

GROUP are a support group for LGBT people.

Whilst it's good to be succinct, this is too vague - list aims and objectives of your organisation - detail what you stand for and why you exist. Describe the activities or services your organisation provides, your location, how you are managed or governed, how many members you have and how long the group has been running etc.

As this is often the first question, it is often the first time 'LGBT' will be mentioned. Whilst funders should be well aware of this acronym, it may be useful to write 'lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT)' in the first instance

## What do you want funding for?

We want funding for running costs of the group, and to pay for some social outings for our group members.

How long do you want the running costs for? Be specific. Detail what these running costs involve.

Many funders would not fund social outings - is there another way in which you could describe this or expand upon it to make it seem more meaningful and beneficial to your service users?

## How do you know that there is a need for this project/activity?

We do not currently have enough money to keep us going for the next year, so we know that we need this funding. Many LGBT people feel isolated and our group offers them a place to meet other people. Also we know that there is a need for social events because our members find them really enjoyable.

Whilst this may be the case, it could be worded in a different way. Put the emphasis on the need for the groups sustainability rather than bank balance. Evidence what running costs would mean in terms of what you can offer your organisations members. A funder wants to fund you because they think your organisation is worthwhile and of value, not because you have no money and simply want to resolve this issue.

Can you find a statistic to back this up? A funder will want to know that the need is evidence based and not just your opinion.

Again, funders may not see a 'social event' as something of real value - more information perhaps could be given to detail why members have found them enjoyable.

## How will you measure the impact of your work?

We will ask our members what they think of the group and the social outings and see what they like and dislike.

Be more specific - what exactly will you ask them, when will you ask them, and what will you do with this information. How will you monitor the impact you are making? Will you use this information to inform the work you are doing?

This needs to be expanded on. This is an opportunity to show what you will actually do with the information you receive and how it will inform your work - for example is your group flexible enough to change activities due to criticism or suggestions from members?

Hopefully this will give you a better idea of the kind of information you should include in funding bids, and how to write these so that your chances of being awarded money are increased. If you need more support in completing application forms, contact your local centre for voluntary service (CVS) as these very often offer help in writing funding bids. They may also run workshops around finding grants, which will help if you're struggling to identify where to access funding. And good luck!