

Making the most of...

The Black Country

Fundraising tips



Fundraising for Small & Community Groups

Getting started

- **There is no such thing as free money – sorry!** Whatever you embark upon will need time and resources – there is no dream answer.
- **Building relationships takes time but there are opportunities out there.** Fundraising is about developing relationships – before, during and after any funding – getting money is only one part. I can recommend ‘The Zen of Fundraising’ by Ken Burnett– he writes from USA perspective but offers insights into how to develop relationships and the stewardship of donors and funders.
- **What do you need? What type – core (central costs), capital (equipment, buildings etc), revenue (running costs), project funding & how much?** Might be good to do a quick audit of what you have and what you need – different funders support different types of costs.
- **Resources – who and what do you have? Who do you know?** Another quick audit. If networking or writing are not your strong points, do you have a willing volunteer – someone in your community? I have given my time for local groups in the past.
- **What is the best use of your time and resources?** You may need to be selective – spending the time on what might provide the best or quickest rewards.
- **Are you ready? Do you need some support? e.g. constitution.** Are you set up to *receive* funding? Do you have a ‘group’ bank account? 2 signatories? A group constitution? See later notes for help.

Application Route

How to make the best use of limited time/resources for maximum gain

- **Start with who you know – previous funders, your networks and contacts.** It's always best to start with 'warm' contacts. If people have funded you before, they like you and know you. This links back to stewardship – thank and stay in touch with previous funders and then thank them again!
- **Look around at your local supermarkets – Co-op, Tesco, Waitrose, Morrisons – most have community grant programmes.** These are not complicated to apply to and most favour where they have a presence. Often small amounts.
- **Research small grant makers such as Magic Little Grants (People's Postcode Lottery), Heart of England Fund and Awards for All (National Lottery).**
- **Sign up to a newsletter e.g. Get Grants – but don't pay for info!!** Some charge for access to Trusts but it's all available online. These will provide more grant information and deadlines etc.
- **Use SCVO's funder finder - [SCVO | Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations](#)** – it's free. You just have to click the link and follow the sign-up instructions.

Tips

How to maximise your chances of success

- **Read the guidance and your eligibility! This is the biggest reason for being declined (we've all done it)**
- **Read the question and answer the question – my approach is 'idiots guide'!** Do a checklist to ensure you have answered every point. You can also use the language in the question in your answer.
- **Avoid putting your application info directly into an online form or application portal.** Save your info in a word file – copy and paste when you are ready. Online forms have a habit of disappearing! You can then also use all that information for the next application.
- **Make your deadline ahead of the actual deadline.** This helps stress levels and avoids you missing submitting in time due to websites crashing, dodgy internet connections etc.
- **Think about the *difference* the grant would make** – to community, volunteers etc. – explain what you are going to do. Emphasise the changes/improvements your project will make
- **Outputs – this is what you are going to deliver. Outcomes – these are the *differences* it will make for people**
- **Use images & quotes where possible to present participant/beneficiary voices.** This gives a sense of your project and the people who will benefit
- **Consider and explain how you will measure success – monitor and evaluate.** Stay in touch with your funder – especially if anything changes. Afterwards let them know how it went (including what you might change next time)

More tips!

- **Saving on costs can be the same as fundraising** e.g. 'in kind' support and partnerships - someone who could provide a service you usually pay for as a donation of time. Can you provide something to another group e.g. rehearsal space? Then they provide something in return such as promotion in their programme or brochure?
- **Look out for specific funds** e.g. around environmental issues, mental health or Covid recovery funds. Think about the effects on your group/ community and the benefits your idea has to address e.g. isolation
- **Consider value for money** – is it reasonable? e.g. £500 for 50 participants = unit cost of £10. Does this make sense across the overall application?
- **Partnerships** – links with other local groups, (either doing the same or complementary activities), can provide more options and pool resources . A coordinated approach to fundraising is an element we are working on at Creative Black Country
- **Crowd funding and campaigns** – these need TLC too – can capture imagination e.g. Captain Tom. They need people and time to push on social media – again if this is not your forte, do you know someone? Could you link with students or your local higher or further education college/ university for example?
- **Employee Schemes** – who do you know working for a relevant organisation? Many companies e.g. Aviva, have schemes where employees vote on a local or good 'cause' each month. If you know someone ask them to put forward your idea.
- **Never underestimate the power of cake!!** A large 'slice' of Children in Need funds and other major charities e.g. Macmillan, + schools, scouts, guides etc raise money this way. Small amounts by many people enjoying cake can make a difference. It's also 'unrestricted money'. This is important as you can spend as your group wishes. Money raised through a grant-making organisations tend to be tied to a project and can only be spent on that.

Help and support

Developing your group to be ready for fundraising and making connections with other similar groups

- **Your local CVS** (Council for Voluntary Service) – these are a wealth of support and information! They can help with organisational development e.g. setting up your group constitution, exploring options of charitable status or community interest companies etc.
- **Locally these are** – Sandwell – SCVO, Walsall – One Walsall, Dudley - DVSC, Wolverhampton – WVCA, Birmingham – BVSC, Worcester – Worcester Volunteer Centre and CVS, Warwickshire - CAVA, Staffordshire – Support Staffordshire .
- **Sign up to their newsletters** – they usually have funding sections and also host ‘meet the funder’ type events where you hear from the funder directly and can ask questions
- **If based or working in the Black Country (Sandwell, Walsall, Dudley, Wolverhampton) CBC has a Funding Network** – for more information contact Yvonne@creativeblackcountry.co.uk
- **CBC has Creative Advisers to talk through creative ideas.** We will connect you with a Creative Adviser based in the areas above who can offer advice on how to get your project started and connect you with other local community groups, organisations, creatives and artists.

Creative Advisers in your area:

Dudley – Laura Dicken laura@creativeblackcountry.co.uk

Sandwell – Richard Franks richard@creativeblackcountry.co.uk

Walsall – Richard Franks richard@creativeblackcountry.co.uk

Wolverhampton – Nelson Douglas nelson@creativeblackcountry.co.uk

For more information contact the *CBC Programme Co-Ordinator* on 07736 275547, info@creativeblackcountry.co.uk



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