



A Brief External Funding Guide for Church Projects Involving the Wider Community

- If your project involves the community beyond your Church membership (youth, the elderly, immigrants, etc.), then your work might be eligible for external (i.e. non-Church) funding. This applies whether your project is to hire a Lay Worker or to re-develop your premises.
- The first port of call—before you start to apply for external funding—must be your local authority's **Community Strategy (sometimes called a 'corporate plan' or the like)**. Every council has been required by law (since March 2004) to produce its own strategy. This document will contain a wide variety of information about your local area: housing, community safety & crime statistics, issues identified by the public as needing council attention, available grants, etc. Community Strategies are usually available on local authority web sites. Also check to see whether your parish council has carried out a **community survey** in the last 5 years.
- For building re-developments, use the preceding documents to find out what is or isn't being done in your community (e.g. provision for young people or the elderly, for migrant workers, single parents, etc.). There is hardly a church in the District that does not have a local need to which it could minister.
- Once you have a copy of the Community Strategy—read it! It's a mine of information. If you find that work your Church wants to do happens to match the targets set by the council, then this is a gateway to public funding. Even if the council does not have grant resources available, if you can show how your project helps to meet their goals, then this will open doors to other government grant funds.
- **Partnership working:** If your project can help the community at large (i.e. beyond your own membership) then form a **community group**. Begin with other church groups, the parish council, local schools, and other voluntary groups who might have an interest in what you are doing. If, for example, you are doing something for young people, then make sure you have 1 or 2 young people on your community group. In other words, work *with* the people in your community, not just on their behalf!
- In preparing applications: State the obvious! You know who you are and what you do, but do not assume the same for grant funding bodies. It's about the basics: who we are, what we do, & for whom, how long we have organised, etc. Also, don't be shy about stating every possible benefit that would result from your being given a grant.
- Provide evidence for any track record you have in delivering objectives for previous grants/projects.
- In preparing applications: **'Lead with the need!'** Keep in mind the three basic needs involved: those of the community or target group you are seeking to help, the needs of the grant provider (i.e. showing how your project helps meet their need to fulfil their aims/objectives and finally, the needs of your own project/church. Again, especially pay

close attention to the funder's needs—show how *you are helping them* to achieve their targets (youth, social inclusion, the elderly, etc.). This is their main reason for giving your project a grant, so make your application fit *their* criteria.

- If your church is in a rural area, then be sure to consult with the Rural Community Council (RCC) in your area. (They might also be known as ACRE: Action with Communities in Rural England.) They offer free advice through their community development workers and often administer various grants and funding streams. In the East Anglia District they are: Norfolk RCC, Suffolk ACRE and Cambridgeshire ACRE. They all have web sites.
- If your project has several facets to it, then break it into its constituent parts and apply to different funders for each specific part of the project (e.g. wages, equipment, training, building works, etc.)
- Whatever grant you apply for, make sure you know the deadline(s) for application. Just as important: Know your project's timeline: do not wait until the funds are needed to apply for grants. You might discover the grant board has met the previous month and won't meet again until a month or two later. N.B.: Grants are not given for work which has already been undertaken or completed.
- Church-related projects have to be very careful not to violate the secular grant body's principles: if it should say "not for worship-related activities or evangelising" then make sure that their funds are kept strictly for aspects of the project that are not specifically 'Christian'.
- Finally, the ABCs of a good application:

Accuracy
Brevity
Clarity
Design
Evidence
Focus

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