Writing a good Awards for All funding bid

This resource is for Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations who are thinking of applying to Awards for All for a grant, funded by The Big Lottery Fund UK. This guide will support your organisation with what information to include and not to include on your application and how to monitor your project.

Awards for All grants

Awards for All is a fund that is on-going and open to application of amounts ranging between £300 and £10,000. The fund must be used over a 12-month period and only one application per organisation can be active at once. The funder is community focused and will consider the size of group applying as well as need they will address. As such applications from smaller groups who wish to implement a community project and have little income of their own will be favoured by the funder.

First consider if your organisation is eligible to apply

To apply for Awards for All you need to have in place:

- **A board of at least three trustees** including a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.
- **A governing document** showing your charitable objects; that has been agreed by your board and approved by any applicable regulatory bodies. E.g. a registered charity constitution would need to be agreed by the Charity Commission.
- **A group bank account** that is set up as a community/not for profit account with at least two signatories required.

If any of these items are not in place your fund application will be rejected.

The Awards for All fund is made available by The Big Lottery. As with any fund this has its own set of rules as follows:

Allowable applicants:

Only certain groups may apply for this fund, they must be UK based and not for profit:

- VCS such as registered charities, CIC, constituted clubs or groups and social enterprises.
- Statutory bodies such as town, parish and community councils.
- Schools.
- Branches of larger organisations if they have their own governing document, their own annual accounts, their own staff, their own bank account and are solely responsible for how this all runs and how their funds are used. The funder will scrutinise the specific circumstance to decide if the grant can be eligible and if the branch or parent company would be responsible for the fund.

Not allowable applicants:

There are groups who are not eligible to apply:

- Groups who apply on behalf of another.
- Sole traders.
- Individuals.
- Private sector organisations.
- CICs limited by shares
- Groups based outside of the UK.

Eligible project criteria:

There are specific areas of need that the funder will consider eligible. Therefore, applications should show the project will benefit one or more of the following criteria:

- To spot potential in people at an early stage and put in place the necessities to reach that potential.
- Bringing people and communities together to build strong relationships.
- Improve buildings or spaces which especially matter to community benefit.

Eligibility and restrictions:

The Awards for All fund may be used for the following eligible expenditures:

- One-time events.
- Transport.
- Essential equipment.
- Volunteer expenses.
- Cost of training.
- Small renovation/capital projects.
- Running costs and utilities.
- Staff costs

The fund may not be used for the following restricted expenditures:

- Paying someone to make your application.
- Profit making projects or fundraising activities.
- Recoverable VAT.
- Contingencies.
- Retrospective costs.
- Loans, endowments and interest.
- Religious activities.
- Political projects.
- Electricity generation and feed in tariffs.
- Anything legally a statuary activity.

Planning:

Planning of the project is something the funder will wish to see:

- **Show involvement with the community.** For a project to be valid, you need to meet the need the community are experiencing, i.e. show you have listened to the community and understand what needs to be improved. By coming to solutions together; there is more chance the community will see the project as beneficial. Simply perceiving a need and trying to offer a project without understanding any underlying issues; that could be the root cause of a problem is more likely to fail; therefore use of community involvement will strengthen your application.
- **Be co-productive with your design**. After initial feasibility studies keep the community involved in the design and implementation of the project, this will give the widest perspective and collective pool of input to tackle the real issue and cement the way to reaching the desired output of the project.
- **It should be easy for service users to become involved**. Ensure there is no discrimination based on personal characteristics to help assure people feel welcome to give input.

What should be included on a good funding bid?

- **Name and address** of your organisation/project.
- **Start date** of your intended project. State if this is a new or an on-going project.
- **Income** for the previous year or a projection if a new project.
- **Main contact and legal contact information**. (The legal contact should be a trustee) This will include their full names, date of birth, past address' for the previous three years.
- **Validity** for your group to tackle the project, e.g. for a charity this should be in your charity objects. Is there obligation for the public sector to provide this project? If the answer is no this will help to show need from the community sector specifically. Remember, a charity is not allowed to provide a service that the public sector is legally obliged to provide.
- **The charitable benefit** your project will have to the community.

- **The existing need** that would be met by the project should be very clear. Is this social to support on issues such as isolation, disability, community cohesion or advocacy. Perhaps this is environmental such as preserving natural habitats. This need must be evidenced by consultation and other methods to prove charitable need exists.
- **Show you have researched** if there is anything else locally offering this service, has anywhere else stopped providing the needed service and what did this research show about any possible local projects to suggest your idea is valid? Talk to local authorities and councils to gain a broader sense of the community at large to put in place the best ideas.
- **Show why you need a funding grant**; i.e. show what has been done to raise funds and why there is shortfall to secure project funds by other means.
- **The items you cannot otherwise fund** to help you deliver the project. This may be a project facilitator, resources or equipment, venue hire, marketing or building repairs etcetera.
- **Show how the items will help to deliver the project**. If you wish your project to provide respite to carers through a coffee morning where people can relax and have a chat or get advice; it could be that a local church or community centre offers their venue where there is a kitchen and safe place to meet with tables, chairs and fully accessible toilets. The items needed here may be public indemnity insurance, a large capacity hot water dispenser, the teas and coffee, milk, possibly biscuits, a way of marketing e.g. flyers or a newspaper article, cost of venue hire and a trained facilitator who is available to offer advice. The general chat and relaxation comes in being around others in the same situation that share stories and form friendships; giving a much needed break from the responsibilities that for some carers are very time consuming and sometimes distressing. Think about what it is you have in place and any risk associated to the project to then fill the gaps when selecting items to ensure need is met in a safe and acceptable way.
- **Quotes** for what the items will cost and evidence to show this is a reasonable amount e.g. showing other quote figures for similar resources and the source of information. Show a detailed list of items to be purchased along with the cost and a total.
- **Sum up the costs** and show if this is the full amount asked, or if some items will be purchased using other funds.
- **Other project fund contributions** (if any) should be identified by source, amount and method. This could be small service user contributions towards sessions, fund raising events, charitable donations etcetera.
- **If match funding is involved,** then be sure to show the amounts sourced from other funders and also in a percentage aspect for comparability to any funder criteria e.g. some funders may ask for 20% match funding. Awards for All does not ask for match funding, however, the funder will want to know there are enough funds in place to meet the need, if there is also a match funder involved for part of the total expenditure that meets the total, then show this is in place to prove the budget will be realistic.
- **Be realistic** and ensure you show that the fund is a practical amount to meet the project aims.
- **Show case studies** i.e. what has your project succeeded to provide in the past that has been of community benefit and why this is still needed. This may include anonymous service user quotes, statistics, previous outcomes etcetera. If your project is new, it is still useful to show what can be an outcome e.g. a quote or survey about community need and how your project can meet this need.
- **Collaborate** with other community groups and evidence you are willing to work together to better wellbeing or places of community interest. Keep relationships going and show this in the bid, this will help to show credibility.
- **Show that there is commitment**, enough staff, volunteers and time to deliver the project as described in your application, this can be in showing past evidence of work done, any achievements, if you are a self-help group show how you need the project and that you are passionate to keep the service going for each other. Also by limiting aims and being as focussed as possible will help to instil confidence that the project is realistic.
- **Show initiative**, a funder will be interested in new ideas to tackle old problems.
- **Show how the project is going to be marketed**. What media platforms will be used, who will the audience be, is the type of marketing useful? E.g. social media is brilliant to widely reach students and professionals, however, a homeless person on the streets would not likely have access to the internet, the homeless would need something put into their hands or told verbally; so think about approach that would best suit your intended audience.
- **If you have an annual report** it is useful to reference this to evidence your outputs and commitment.

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- **Remember to be transparent**; this includes annual reports, financial accounts, etc. Also ensure reporting of all required accounts and any other regulatory requirements are up to date. This will help to show reliability of your organisation when the funder reviews your application.

What should not be included on a funding bid?
- **Don't identify service users** even if quoting them.
- **No religious or political activities**.
- **Past failures may hinder an application**. Don't make an issue over any partners who may have let you down in the past. It is acceptable to show previous joint efforts to show commitment; however, it is important not to highlight failures as this may tell the funder your project is one that may fail in the future and dissuade their support.
- **Take note of funder restrictions**. It is not acceptable to take a chance and apply for anything listed as a restriction by the funder; this will remove trust as you will appear not to follow instruction.
- **Don't duplicate** your points, there is limited space on a funding bid and you should try to include as much relevant information as possible.
- **Don't use complicated jargon or abbreviations**, the funder may not understand what you are referring to and this may hinder your application.
- **No foul language**. If you show no respect to the funder, how will the funder believe you will respect the project?

Making your application
First, ensure you have the most up to date version of the application form and funder guidance.
This can be found at: https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_a4a_eng
This resource has been made in regard to the funder version - National Lottery Awards for All Application form v21:

- **Leave yourself enough time** before the project start date to make your application. The applications usually take up to ten weeks for the funder to review and a further two weeks to process and make payment. The funder advises that you submit the application at least 14 weeks before the project is due to start. (Awards for All have no application deadlines, however, many other funders do have deadlines. Consider this if you are thinking of match funding with another funder).
- **Remember it is not guaranteed that a funding application will be successful.** It is possible to re-apply, however, if a rejected application is not changed on re-apply, chances are this will be rejected again.
- **Choose a main contact and a legally responsible contact**; this cannot be the same person and they must be unconnected.
  The main contact must be a person from the applying organisation and able to answer any questions about the application.
  The legally responsible contact must be aged 18 or over and in a funder specified position:
    - VCS – A trustee such as Chair, Vice Chair or Treasurer.
    - CIC – Director or company Secretary.
    - Statutory Body – Director, Chief Executive or Clerk to the Council for Parish or Town Councils.
    - School – Head teacher.
  There are criteria the legally responsible contact must follow, such as; ensuring the organisation supports the application, ensuring the fund is only used for projects set out in the application, ensuring the organisation meet reporting requirements of the funder.
  Remember when choosing these contacts, the persons full contact information and date of birth will be needed to be included on the application and the funder will check other sources such as information within the public domain to ensure given information is correct. Therefore, show the person full legal name as shown on a proof of ID document such as a passport and use other such diligences when completing the application.
- **Ensure you have a group bank account** that is suitable for community/not for profit use to pay the fund into. You will need to name this account on your application. You will need to produce evidence of the account e.g. the previous two months' bank statement, or for accounts opened in the last three months a welcome letter recognising the opening of the account. The evidence will need to show your organisation address, sort code and account number. If the evidence is a welcome letter this will also need to show the date your account was opened.

Remember the funder will check your evidence given against your application and any information in the public domain to ensure accuracy.

- **Funders will do thorough checks to ensure information given is truthful**, this will involve checks of information within the application against any supporting evidence, information in the public domain and any information Awards for All may hold in regard to previous applications. This is to not only check accuracy but to also check for possible risk such as fraud. If the funder has reason to believe fraud is happening they will not fund a project, if funds have been granted the funder will act to recover those funds and will also report the crime to the police. (Fraud is described as using funds for a purpose that is not intended, as such this can range from theft of funds to even using a grant to pay for charitable activities that were not named in the application or agreed by the funder.) Therefore, always ensure full honesty and transparency when dealing with grant funders.
- **Complete all applicable questions** in the application being as truthful, accurate and transparent as possible. You may **refer to the above sections; Making your application, What should be included on a funding bid and What should not be included on a funding bid to help you.**
- **Consider the criteria set in questions** such as character use limits for text and the guidance notes to the right of the document; this will help to meet the standards expected by the funder.
- **Check the content is inclusive of all project items required** at the actual expected cost. Any expenses that the application has not included cannot be taken from other listed items that have been awarded, to use funds in a way not agreed by the funder would be classed as fraud.
- **Do final checks**. When the application outlines a viable, truthful and fully costed project that your organisation has agreed, your named legally responsible contact must sign and date the application and submit. Your application will need to include all specified supportive documents; this will include a bank statement or welcome letter as previously described, as well as any project specific documentation.
  Project specific documentation may be:
  - Altering a building or land: If you need planning permission from building control to change building or land this must be in place before making a grant application. If you don't own the land or have a lease that can be brought to an end before five years then you will need to provide a letter from the owner that shows the lease will be given on successful application.
  - Working with vulnerable children or adults: Safeguarding policy when working with vulnerable people
  - Removing risk: You may wish to have a qualified facilitator, public liability indemnity insurance or even register with a regulatory body, depending on your individual project requirements. Any necessary costs associated here can be applied for via Awards for All.
- **Ensure you save the document for your own records.**
  Further information about what to include can be found on the Awards for All website.

Submitting your Application
You may apply on the funder website here: https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/user/login
If it's difficult or impossible for you to complete an application form you may contact them to talk about alternative ways to communicate your idea. Contact information is available here: https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/contact

What happens next?
For a 'Guide to what happens after Awards for All funding is awarded' please see the additional bitesize resource on the VAR website.

Support
If you are a VCS organisation based in Rotherham and would like any support in making an Awards for All application, please contact email: triage@varotherham.org.uk or telephone 01709 829821.
Website: http://www.varotherham.org.uk/

Alternatively you can contact the funder directly by email: general.enquiries@awardsforall.org.uk or call the advice team on 0345 4 10 20 30.
Or visit the website: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk