

Community Action Northumberland Funding Advice Information Sheet

Planning a Fund Raising Strategy

A fundraising strategy sets out what a group's funding needs are likely to be, over a future period (say a year or three years) and outlines how the group intends to raise the money to meet those needs.

When you start to draft a fundraising strategy the group needs to address a number of questions.

1. What are the AIMS of the organisation? (You need to keep these in mind; it's amazing how easy it is to forget them).
2. What are your current objectives? i.e. What are you planning to do to meet the aims? How do you plan to develop the organisation? What new projects do you want to set up?
3. Why? Go back to your aims and check that your objectives are working towards meeting the aims.
4. Consider each objective or plan separately and work out what resources you need to find. Remember money isn't necessarily the only way to get something - you might be able to tap into a free service or find help in kind (gifts of materials for instance) that might save having to raise the money.
5. Work out what sort of money you need. This is called drawing up a budget. Is it
 - capital or revenue?
 - one-off or ongoing?
 - a large or a small amount?
6. Think about where to go for it - possible sources
 - statutory bodies - the council, central government, Primary Care Trusts
 - charitable trusts
 - special funds e.g. government initiatives, BBC Children in Need, National Lottery
 - businesses
 - raise it yourselves

7. Decide how you are going to fundraise. Consider the skills of individual members of your group and divide up the tasks.

You may need people who can

- write well
- prepare budgets
- speak to funders
- persuade people of the value of your scheme(s) e.g. Councillors, council officers
- keep files/records
- organise events, raffles, etc.

The best way to do this may be to form a fundraising group who can support each other and see that everything gets done.

However you decide to do it remember co-ordination is essential; you must update each other regularly on what's been done and what the results have been.

Keep records

You need to keep a written record of who you asked for what, when and what their response was. You should keep copies of every letter that you send but you might also want to do a summary on one sheet.

The records will help you decide who to ask for what in future and what was a waste of time and effort.

Remember, if an organisation funds you once, there's a good chance they'll do so again (unless they've specifically said they won't).

Get into networks

You need to know where to find out about funds, and keep in touch. That way, if a new pot of money comes up you'll be sure to find out about it.

While you don't want to be 'money-led' you do need to exploit appropriate funding sources to the fullest extent. You need to take advantage of all appropriate sources of money/resources to meet your objective, when they are available.

Make sure your group is on the mailing list for any relevant newsletter – such as those published by the Community Council of Northumberland) or similar support organisations.

There is an increasing number of web-based resources offering information, links and searchable databases around the topic of funding. See www.fundraising.co.uk/grants.html as an example. Some sites are free, some are subscription only.

Be realistic

You may know that what your project needs is three workers, a purpose-built centre, and £40,000 per year running expenses, but you should also know that you're not going to get it - not to start with at least.

Nothing is more depressing than failure so, within your strategy, make sure your targets are achievable.

Break down your target into smaller amounts.

Be imaginative

Be informed - and you'll find that fundraising isn't just a matter of luck.