

Getting things for free

Everyone loves getting things for **free**. The good news is that you can get many things for **free** and without breaking any laws - you just have to know where to look and who to approach!

What freebies might you need?

- **Knowledge** – specialist advice or support around a specific subject
- **Skills** – training, support with IT or marketing, skills swap etc
- **Premises** – rooms to meet or put on an event
- **Equipment** – items for raffles, computer equipment, etc
- **Time and commitment** – volunteers, patrons, co-opted committee members, business support etc

Where can you get them from?

- **Local businesses** – supermarkets and local retailers often give freebies to voluntary, community or faith groups for raffles or events
- **Organisations** – your local support organisation (such as a Council for Voluntary Service) and Volunteer Centre offer lots of free advice and training. You could also try swapping your skills with someone from another community organisation or charity
- **Online** – there are lots of freebies available on the internet from places like Freecycle. Many Social Media websites are also free and you can use them to create events, build connections or manage meetings. See the [Social Media factsheet](#) for more information.
- **Some schools, businesses and statutory services** (fire or police services) will let voluntary, community or faith groups use meeting rooms for free
- **Places of interest** - If your group or organisation likes days out and trips it is always worth contacting the place of interest that you are going to visit (such as theme parks, garden shows etc) to find out if they do special offers or freebies for voluntary, community or faith groups

Eight top tips to getting things for free

1. **Do your research** - What do you know about the organisation you are asking donations from - do they usually donate? What kinds of things? Make sure you have a project plan so that you can communicate your idea well
2. **Make the right contact** - Organise your approach, send a letter or find out what the usual process is. Collect all the relevant information and present it neatly.

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3. **Know who you are talking to** – show you have done your research and make it personal
4. **Be polite but assertive** - Ensure your approach is right and respond well to others
5. **Point out the benefits** - Highlight the benefits to both their organisation and the community and demonstrate that you have thought through the project.
6. **Have vision and enthusiasm** - Describe the project positively in order to sell your idea to others
7. **Be positive but take rejection** - Try not to get disheartened if they say no.
8. **Leave the door open for a next time** - Whatever the outcome show your appreciation and maintain a professional approach. It will demonstrate that you are someone that is worth helping in the future.



Further links and support:

- Freecycle – A brilliant website where people offer items they no longer need or want for free - www.uk.freecycle.org/
- Magic Freebies UK – Small freebies - www.magicfreebiesuk.co.uk/index.php
- For free days out in Greater Manchester - www.dofreestuff.com/greatermanchester.html
- LawWorks – Free legal help to individuals and community groups who cannot afford to pay for it and who are unable to access legal aid. Website: www.lawworks.org.uk
- Community Matters – Low-cost, targeted and practical support. This includes training and consultancy; free advice and legal services; business development support; online resources; and a dedicated youth department. Website: www.communitymatters.org.uk/
- For any further information, guidance and support, please visit GMVSS (Greater Manchester Voluntary Sector Support) – A partnership of support organisations that offer free guidance and support for local voluntary and community groups in Greater Manchester – www.vaoldham.org.uk

Image taken from: <http://sjtheatre.wordpress.com/2010/05/24/the-magic-word-free/>

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