

Top ten reasons for rejection

Success rates for funding applications vary depending on the level of demand and the type of grant available. Charitable trusts and foundations can have a 25% to 60% success rate and this is not dissimilar for other funders, such as the Big Lottery. Here are the top ten reasons for why funders reject an application:

- 1. The applicant is not eligible** – Funders often receive applications that they cannot fund, for example because the governing document says that an organisation works with older people, and the funding programme is specifically targeted at children and young people. Always check your legal form, charity status, geographical remit, or beneficiaries against the funder's criteria.
- 2. The applicant fails meet the criteria** - Many applications fall outside the funders' own criteria. For instance the BBC Children In Need Trust aims to benefit disadvantaged under 18s, but still receives many bids which do not show how their target group is disadvantaged.
- 3. Projects are poorly planned** - A bid for a computer or a vehicle needs to show how it would be stored, insured and used. Have you thought through all the implications of taking on this new resource?
- 4. Applications are not clear and concise** – Have you explained what your project is in a way which others can understand?
- 5. Lack of clear and demonstrable outcomes** - This is a high priority for any funders, you must show that you are outcomes orientated.
- 6. The budget** – Having a robust financial management procedure can go a long way. You must make sure that your costs are realistic and represent value for money. Provide quotes for any costs and if any **match funding** must be secured before a grant is released. For major capital (such as a building), applicants will need to show how they plan to raise the funds for long-term running costs and maintenance.
- 7. Very few funders will make grants retrospectively** – i.e. after the project has taken place. Bear in mind that they can take months to consider your application, so if you want to run a play scheme in the summer holidays, do not leave the applications until June, (even if you have money in the bank to 'lend' to the play scheme).

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8. **Applications are made without monitoring and evaluation processes in place** - Groups need to show how they plan to measure the success of the project they are seeking funding for. How will progress be tracked and money managed?
9. **The application is incomplete or illegible** – Make sure you answer all questions and fill in the application form properly. Don't make funders hunt for the information and make sure that any supporting documents are also completed, accurate, up-to-date, and complement the application form.
10. **The applicant misses the deadline.**

The largest numbers of Big Lottery applications are rejected simply because they do not adequately meet the aim of the fund applied for, the project has not adequately demonstrated the need, the application has not represented sufficient value for money and shows a lack of involvement from project beneficiaries.

In some cases, such as with the Lloyds TSB Foundation, demand simply outstrips supply. Other reasons why the Foundation has not offered grants include:

- The charities' core work is not sufficiently focused on their mission.
- Applications don't fall within their guidelines.
- Charities don't have up-to-date annual returns or accounts filed with the Charities Commission or other relevant regulatory bodies.

Remember

Everybody gets rejected at some stage. Use it as an opportunity to get feedback on how to improve (if this is something that funders are able to offer) for next time and make use of the appropriate support organisations who can help you.

- **Funding Central** offers advice on how to build a relationship with funders and an introduction to grants under their 'support and advice' section of their website - www.fundingcentral.org.uk

**For any further information, guidance and support,
please visit www.vaoldham.org.uk**

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Key Words

Beneficiaries – the people that the project aims to support

Match funding – when you make a contribution to go with your grant application. For example, if your total project costs £50,000, you might supply £10,000 from your own or other sources

Outcomes – the changes and effects that happen as a result of your work

Retrospectively – Applying for a grant or funding after an activity has taken place