Funding support and advice.

Making a case for support

What's a 'case for support' and why do we need one?

When applying for a grant, you will need to explain clearly and concisely to a potential funder why you need funding and what you plan to do with it.

Building and maintaining a 'case for support' is a central task for any organisation seeking funding - as it underpins your fundraising efforts.

Every application needs to be tailored to the specific funding opportunity. However, preparing a 'case for support' with all the key facts and figures about your organisation means that you already have the core elements to form part of a letter of application or application form.

When to prepare the case for support?

Don't wait until the deadline before assembling your case for support. If you receive a thank you letter from the local school for a workshop you ran recently – why not ask the headteacher if you could quote them in your publicity materials? Or you receive a community award from the local newspaper – keep a copy for your press file. If you gather material for your case for support on an ongoing basis, when it comes to making applications you will have a wider range of tools to use in making your case.

And a good case for support isn't just about making applications. There may be other opportunities to ensure your potential funders know about your organisation, the work you do and your successes. Finding opportunities to promote your organisation through events, publications and other celebrations is another facet to making your case for support.

Who's the audience?

Perhaps the most critical factor in any case for support is knowing your audience and tailoring your approach to them.

If you are applying to a funder that supports a wide range of projects, then it would be reasonable to expect they might not know too much about you specialist field. If you are applying to a funder that specialises in a particular type of activity, then you may expect greater understanding. But the golden rule is don't assume the funder knows anything about your organisation – even if you've been supported before the staff may have changed, or they may be dealing with many organisations and not remember the specifics of what you do.

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Use simple and clear language – avoid jargon and acronyms. It can be useful to ask someone not connected with your organisation to read your case for support and see whether they can easily identify what you need funding for, how much and what you plan to do with it.

Take the time to find out what your funder is interested in supporting and, in particular, take heed of any criteria and priorities. Even if you produce the most compelling case for support, if it doesn't relate to the funder's aims then it is unlikely to be considered.

And don't just 'make your case' on the application form or letter – you can make sure your funder knows who you are and what you do by promoting your organisation through your website, events and other publications.

Demonstrating your impact

Including evidence of what you've achieved in the past can be a powerful way to demonstrate your impact. You might include some of the following measures and types of information:

- **Outputs**: the number of people who attend events or use websites and information about their demographic profile (e.g. age, ethnicity, where they live).
- **User satisfaction**: what did users think and say about activity. Direct quotes from users or testimonials are always very powerful.
- **Outcomes**: what changes occurred as a result of activity.

There is further information and support available about <u>monitoring and impact</u>.

What to include in your case

Below are a series of questions that you might think about when drafting a case for support.

You might not be able to answer all of them now but think about what information you would need to gather to make your case, and who might need to be involved in preparing this.

Many grant funders use application forms in which case, you can often 'copy and paste' your case for support directly into the form – adding any specific information requested.

Alternatively if you are simply asked for a letter of application, you may find it helpful to use these headings to structure your letter and prompt you as to what to include.

Further information

A case for support works best when it is kept concise. You can always refer to further information being available and either enclose it with your application (e.g. a copy of a recent evaluation report, or copies of press cuttings) or say it is available on request.