



The Do's and Don'ts when writing a funding application

Resources to help you with your funding

We provide a range of resources to help you find, apply, secure and sustain funding for physical activity and sport in London. Some of these are in the form of written bitesize guides, to help you with a specific stage in the funding process. When using this guide 'From idea to funding application,' you may also want to use it alongside any or all the following resources:

- [Finding funding for your physical activity project](#)
- [From idea to funding application](#)
- [The Do's and Don'ts when writing a funding application](#)
- [Writing a funding bid – top tips](#)
- [Developing a strong evidence base to support your funding application](#)
- [Applying for facilities funding](#)
- [Securing sponsorship](#)
- [Funding guide for individuals](#)

Introduction

This guide provides a set of do's and don'ts when completing the final stage in the grant fundraising process which is writing the application.

This is the opportunity to sell the potential project to the funder. At this stage, it is very easy to undo a lot of good work by misrepresenting your potential project, not adhering to the funder's requirements, or simply not providing clear enough information to make the strongest case possible.

The document starts with general do's and don'ts, and then is divided by typical sections of a physical activity and sport application form.



Universal do's and don'ts:

Do....

Read any guidance in detail to understand how the application will be assessed. Read it twice if needed.

Check answers against this guidance and tick off any assessment criteria against what you write.

Wait until you have all the detail you need – if you are struggling for things to say, you've probably started too soon.

Use the word limit as a guide to the level of detail you are expected to provide.

Ensure information presented throughout is Specific / Measurable / Achievable / Realistic / Timebound (SMART).

Assume the funder knows nothing about you and your project.

Ask someone else to read through the application before you submit.

Don't....

Just start writing without having a clear idea of what you're saying for each question.

Write more than you need to reach the word limit.

Write significantly under the word limit.

Expect to produce a good quality application at the last minute.

Write the application in isolation.

Use jargon.

Use acronyms without explaining them.

Submit the application without a spelling and grammar check.

Repeat information that has been included in a previous answer – plan your answers to each question.



Do's and don'ts by typical parts of a physical activity and sport application form:

The 'need' or evidence base answer

It is typical early on in an application to have to provide evidence of why your project is needed. This evidence is vital in showing a funder that there is a need, and that you can prove it to them.

Do....

Use evidence you have gathered yourself, if that is what the funder wants.

Back it up with strategic level evidence (e.g. from your Local Authority).

Focus on statistical evidence, and back it up with quotes or further qualitative evidence, you can [find insight and data to help here](#).

Be clear on where evidence has come from and how it has been collected.

Don't....

Copy and paste lots of high level strategy and demographic information in without explaining why it's relevant.

Use inappropriate or sources you're not able to back up.

Just rely on anecdotal information to prove your project is needed.

Try to guess what the funder will be expecting and regurgitate this.

The project Description

This is your opportunity to prove how thoroughly you've approached this project, and its feasibility:

Do....

The background work in advance – call venues, gather costs, agree timelines.

Answer the following: What are you proposing to do? Where? When? How?

Try to capture the funders attention from the outset with an engaging description.

Be very specific – name days, times, exact costs, individuals, partner organisation's by name.

Don't....

Make any assumptions or estimates – take time to establish specifics.

Make anything up – the funder often checks and verifies information.

Be unrealistic. Have someone else check through your plans and comment.



Outputs and outcomes

This is where you clearly articulate what your project will deliver, often in the short term (outputs) and long term (outcomes). Sometimes these will be set by the funder, and sometimes you will have to articulate your own.

Do....

Make sure you know the difference between outputs and outcomes, and check it matches the funder's definition.

Be ambitious about what you can achieve, but also realistic.

Evaluate what you're proposing to achieve for a funder – does it look like good value?

Ensure the outputs and outcomes address the need / issues you identified.

Don't....

Be tempted to inflate outputs just to impress the funder – you must be able to deliver what you say you will.

Make outlandish claims about what the project will achieve – keep it grounded.

Just provide 'finger in the air' figures - try to find benchmarks or find examples to base your figures on.

Put in something that you simply won't be able to measure / evidence.

Finance

This section is often overlooked but it is vital to present a detailed financial picture.

Do....

Provide accurate costs that are professionally established if need be (e.g. for capital projects).

Provide the methodology for how costs have been calculated in the appropriate section.

Ensure you read the guidance on eligible and ineligible costs, and adhere to these.

Use an apportionment methodology for overheads, if required.

If appropriate, ensure that you fully consider and cost out in-kind match funding, as this can add considerable value to your contribution.

Don't....

Make up costs or estimate using rounded figures.

Add in any costs just to meet the maximum funding amount.

Add in costs that are not directly related to the project.



Sustainability

A funder will expect to see a clear plan for what will happen in the long term, following their investment. You therefore need to have a strategy and be able articulate this.

Do....

Ensure you present a clear strategy, not just an idea.

Think about:

Participant sustainability – what will be their journey / long term experience?

Project sustainability – will the project finish or carry on, and how?

Financial sustainability – what will be the financial model once the grant investment has finished?

Consider the idea that there might be multiple strategies you could employ, not just one.

Don't....

Treat this section lightly, for example by saying that the sustainability strategy is to simply apply for further funding when the project finishes.

Have unrealistic expectations.

Ignore the risks you've considered and hope that the funder doesn't think of these.

Further information

If you need further support in this area, then London Sport may be able to help. Contact Caroline Brooks, Funding Manager, in the first instance – caroline.brooks@londonsport.org.

Search for available funding

Our free online funding search tool is available for you to search for the latest funding available to you.

[Search for funding now](#)

Explore physical activity and sport data and insight to support your funding application

Our free online insight and data tool is available for you to explore the latest physical activity and sport data and insight in London to support your funding applications.

[Find insight and data to help here](#)



Any questions?

We hope you found this guide useful and best of luck with your funding application. For any questions related to this guide or about our funding support, please contact us below.

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