

# Chapter Three

## **Get your Stuff Together (Making the Application )**

A Funding Portfolio

What do you need to keep on hand?

Check out the Funder

Completing the Application Form

Filling in the Form

Final Checklist

Failure

Success

## Making the Application



It often happens that you hear of a pool of accessible funds but the applications close in a day or two. “Help!” does not have to be the automatic response. Funding applications can be a breeze if you have what you need all in one place.

## A Funding Portfolio

An organised and up-to-date file will greatly reduce the pressure and work involved in making funding applications. You can mix and match the information depending on what the particular funder requires.

### What should you keep on hand?<sup>1</sup>

It is particularly important to ensure you give a good overview of your parish or trust and the particular project you have in mind, especially to a funder that may not have heard of you. All of the suggested information needs to be concise and clear. It also must be professionally presented. Keep papers etc in clear files or on the computer so documents don't get dog-eared. Ensure the documents have been proofread for spelling and grammatical errors. Use uniform formatting and ensure all documents can be easily attached to an application.

#### *History of your ministry*

- ∇ Why did you start a particular ministry?<sup>2</sup>
- ∇ Who was involved then and now?
- ∇ What have you achieved?

#### *Aims and objectives*

- ∇ What are the aims of your ministry/project?
- ∇ What are the current objectives?
- ∇ What is your mission statement?

#### *Management*

- ∇ What is the management structure?
- ∇ Who are the office holders and committee members or ministry leaders? (Also include their contact details.)
- ∇ How often are meetings held?
- ∇ How does decision making occur?
- ∇ How are leaders and volunteers supported in their roles?
- ∇ Meeting minutes<sup>3</sup>

#### *Legal Status*

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<sup>1</sup> Much of this chapter is taken from DIA Community Development Resource Kit.

<sup>2</sup> Statistical information to back up the need that inspired your project will help a great deal.

<sup>3</sup> A few funders require a copy of the minutes authorising you to actually apply to the funder. It is wise to be organised for the meetings and to ask for a motion enabling application for the funds rather than having to ring around afterwards.

What is your legal status? If your church does have a separate Trust, keep copies of your:

- ∇ Certificate of Incorporation
- ∇ Trust Deed
- ∇ Constitution and rules
- ∇ charitable status with IRD
- ∇ any other documents such as a Memorandum of Understanding.

#### *Financial information*

You will want copies of:

- ∇ Audited accounts
- ∇ Certificates of Income and Expenditure
- ∇ Annual budgets
- ∇ Bank Account details<sup>4</sup>
- ∇ Treasurer's name and contact details
- ∇ GST registration number if applicable
- ∇ Details of sources of funds

#### *Support and publicity*

Keep a list of the other community groups you liaise with. Also keep on hand:

- ∇ Letters of support.<sup>5</sup>
- ∇ Up to date brochures
- ∇ Good quality photographs<sup>6</sup>
- ∇ Short summaries of the ministry's work and effectiveness
- ∇ Any newspaper articles
- ∇ A list of positive comments from clients and other agencies etc<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Some funders will also require a copy of your most recent bank statement so ensure they are all kept together.

<sup>5</sup> It is good practice to ask a couple of community groups each year to write you a letter of support. Some funders require it but all will appreciate seeing you co-operate with other groups.

<sup>6</sup> Photographs are absolutely brilliant for attaching to accountability reports. A good picture really can convey a great deal more than a page of writing. Photos also have the added benefit that the funder can use them in their own promotional material. Ensure you have permission from those whose photographs you have taken if you do plan to use them outside your own ministry. Larger ministries actually record the written permission of anyone whom they photograph.

- ▽ A compilation of client surveys
- ▽ Annual report
- ▽ Recent newsletters or parish bulletins that mention the good work your ministry is doing

### **Check out the Funder**

Before you apply to a particular funding organisation, ensure you have checked out their philosophy, their criteria and priorities along with the average size of their grants. Then only apply if you meet their criteria.

Stick to your own priorities – never change what you do to suit the desires of a funder. “Of course not,” you say, but it is actually quite a temptation just to do a bit of tinkering around the edges. Before you know it, the project has changed completely from the original God-inspired vision.

Check up on the closing date for applications and ensure you have the correct form. Now you really are ready to go!

### **Completing the application form**

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Application forms vary. Some are very simple and others require a lot of detailed information.

Before you do anything else, read the application form right through. Make a note to find any information you will need to complete the form. Also note any supplementary material you will need. (Hopefully you will already have all additional material in your Funding Portfolio.) Ideally gather all the information and material you require before you sit down to complete the application.

As you are filling out the form, emphasise the benefits of what the funders money will achieve, keeping the entire application as brief as possible.

Most organisations require the following information:

- ▽ Project or organisation overview

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<sup>7</sup> Ensure these are recorded word for word. You can omit words if the quotation is too lengthy. You simply put three dots to show this has happened. Do not include participants names.

- ∇ Legal structure
- ∇ The problem or need your project seeks to address
- ∇ Project outcomes – specific, achievable and measurable
- ∇ Project implementation – how will you achieve your outcomes?
- ∇ Evaluation – how will you measure success?
- ∇ Budget<sup>8</sup> and professional quotes
- ∇ Amount requested
- ∇ Contacts – list daytime and evening contacts for two people who know about the project and the specific application
- ∇ Referees – it is helpful to list two outside referees who understand and support your project.<sup>9</sup>
- ∇ Any other supportive material

### Filling in the form

The application must be easy to read. Some are available to complete on-line. It is even preferable to type your application if you cannot do it on your computer. If you must hand write your application, do it with a black pen<sup>10</sup> and ensure your writing is legible.

Always ask for what you need. Never ask for more than you need because you think the funder won't give you all you ask for. They probably won't grant your total request but they will be able to spot an inflated request a mile off.

Never guess if you don't understand a question. Always ring the contact person to clarify exactly what it is they want to know.

If you are asked about which other funding agencies you've applied to for funds, then always come clean. These other agencies may turn you down<sup>11</sup> but it is important to be scrupulously honest. Truth telling is a biblical injunction *and* funders have good networks with each other and with the wider community – they will probably find out anyway.

### Final checklist

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<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 1 for an example.

<sup>9</sup> Ensure you get their permission before using them as a referee. It is very embarrassing for everyone if they are unaware they have been listed and then are contacted by the funder.

<sup>10</sup> Black photocopies better than blue.

<sup>11</sup> If they do turn you down, then inform the other funders so they know you do not have the money.



Ask someone who is not part of your ministry team to proofread your application, both for legibility and for understanding. It is amazing how much language we use that is “in-house”. We do this without realising that others may not know what we are talking about.

Now double check the application:

- ▽ Have you fully answered every question?
- ▽ Have you attached all the documents you were asked for?
- ▽ Does the budget add up and have you added notes to budget explanations where necessary?
- ▽ Do you have all the required signatures?

When you are happy that the application is complete and you have done all you can, make a photocopy for your own file and send the application off.

Don't forget to pray that God will provide all the resources needed to equip your project to do his work.

### Failure

If your application is denied, look on it as a great opportunity to learn and do better next time. If your application is declined then find out why. Often it is because there were simply too many applicants for the funds.<sup>12</sup> Even in this instance it is helpful to ask why your application was given a lower priority than the successful ones.

### Success



**Praise God!**

- ▽ Send a thank you letter to the funder as soon as you hear you have been successful in your application, even if you have only been partially successful.

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<sup>12</sup> Most funders receive requests for three or four times the money they have available to distribute.

- ▽ Note down on your Funding Calendar when your accountability report is due and ensure you send it to the funder before the due date. Include some photographs and positive comments from project participants and other community groups if possible.
- ▽ Acknowledge your funders publicly.
- ▽ Ensure you spend the money on what it was allocated for and keep accurate financial and program records.
- ▽ Invite your funder to visit your project well before the end of the financial year.
- ▽ Note due date for next years application on your Funding Calendar.