Successful grant applications for your church during COVID-19 and beyond

Grant applications can be a great source of fundraising income for your church – and often provide the largest size of donation towards your project. Our webinar, **Successful grant applications for your church during COVID-19 and beyond**, offers top tips to help you find and create strong applications for grants. This factsheet summarises the four key points covered in the webinar.

1. The grant fundraising landscape in the UK

A grant funder is a philanthropic body that awards funding to organisations and charities that they want to support. There are several types of grant funder:

Trust or Foundation	There are around 9,000 charitable trusts and foundations in the UK that award grants that come from private sources such as family or corporate wealth.
Public funder e.g. National lottery	Large national funding bodies award grants that come from public sources such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
Government funder e.g. DCMS	The government also funds projects and programmes through grant funding; for example through the Department for Digital, Culture Media, and Sport (DCMS).
Community foundations	There are 46 accredited community foudations in the UK; they come in all shapes and sizes, but what they all have in a common is a commitment to making a difference to people's lives and the places they serve.

In the main, grant funding for churches will come from trusts and foundations, and public funders like the Heritage Fund.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, grant funders launched emergency funding programmes earlier in the year but as these funds start to close, many funders are starting to focus on resilience grants and funding projects that build back communities and support the most vulnerable in society. For churches, this means there are opportunities to apply for funding for the projects you run that reach out and support your community.

In fact, the impact of COVID-19 has underlined the importance of the church's mission in its support of the local community.

2. What do grant funders support?

There are diverse range of projects and causes that different funders will support. The typical areas of interest and possible examples for your church are summarised below:

Mental health and wellbeing	Supporting isolated elderly people in your community, a friendship network or neighbourhood home visits run by volunteers. COVID-19 has also highlighted the importance of supporting our communities in the area of mental health and wellbeing.
Youth work	Volunteer projects that involve young people in your community.
Community support	Food bank or meal club for low income families.
Heritage	Restoration of stained-glass windows or repair of historic fabric, including community volunteers to help with non-specialist aspects of the project like cleaning or recording and interpreting stories and information linked to the project.
The environment	A community kitchen gardening project run by volunteers that makes use of unused church grounds.
Capital projects	Building a new church hall or installing a kitchen in the church that will help to increase the number of people from the community that can get involved.

3. Where to look for funding?

There are a variety of places to look for funding opportunities. The Ecclesiastical church fundraising hub has free resources including a list of grant funders supporting projects related to the COVID-19 crisis **(www.ecclesiastical.com/church/fundraising/funds/)** and help and templates to organise your research **(www.ecclesiastical.com/church/fundraising/research-donors-and-funders/)**.

Researching possible funders takes time; but is a worthwhile investment because it will help you narrow down the field of the many potential funders.

4. Best practise in writing applications

✓ **Be prepared!** Before you start applying for grants, it is important to be prepared and cover some basics for your project. Each funder has its own criteria so there is no 'one size fits all' in terms of what stage your project must be at before you can apply but here are some key things you will typically need to consider:

- **Evidence of need.** For community projects you may be asked to evidence the need for your project. Your diocese will have statistics about the need in your area. The English Indices of Deprivation and Church Urban Fund, or your local authority are also useful sources for statistics to refer to.

- **Prepared costs for an application budget.** Create a 'shopping list' of your project/activity/service costs and/or running costs broken down into easily identifiable chunks to be funded.

- **Agreed local partnerships.** You may also be asked to evidence agreements with any partner charities that you are going to team up with to deliver your project.

✓ For capital projects you may also need to consider the following:

- RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Ins stage for large funders like NLHF (National Lottery Heritage Fund)

- Appointing staff and contractors

- Carrying out surveys

- Community consultation

- Timescales and anticipated cost

- Technical considerations

✓ **Have a clear vision.** Underpinning a successful grant application is an inspiring vision. It can be borrowed from your wider church or diocese strategy or long term vision, but should be appealing and easily understood by a funder. It should be a short paragraph to inspire people and demonstrate how you are supporting people and communities. It should stay the same across all grant applications, as it is your overall guiding aim.

✓ **Prepare for typical questions.** Each funder will have its own application criteria but some typical questions may include:

- What is the need for your project?

- What will you deliver?

- Who will benefit/will be involved?

- When will it take place?

- What will the outcomes be?

- More information and guidance on how to answer these questions can be found on the Ecclesiastical church fundraising hub **www.ecclesiastical.com/churchfundraising/case-support-guidance**

✓ **Remain positive!** Even if you receive a 'no' to your application, it may not mean 'no' forever. You may get many 'nos' before you get a 'yes' but this is normal. An application to a well-researched grant funder is never wasted, the table below shows you can respond and build from a 'no' from a funder:

Type of No	How to respond
No, not for this	Look at what else they might fund that is relevant to your church or project.
No, not unless	List what they tell you should have been included.
No, not now	If they don't tell you in their response, ask them when you can make another application. Ask for specific deadline dates.
No, too much	Ask them for guidance on the maximum grant you can apply for.
No, never	Useful to know so that you can at least take them of your prospect list and avoid harming your reputation by any future funding requests.
No, we were overwhelmed	Put the trust back on the list for future applications.

Want to find out more?

A dedicated helpline has been set up to help support churches with the fundraising hub.

If you or your church would like support with our online resources please request a call back via the church fundraising helpline on **0345 601 9959** or the online form on the fundraising hub. One of our **Church Insurance Consultants** will call you back.

And don't forget to keep checking the fundraising hub for more updates.

www.ecclesiastical.com/churchfundraising

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