



Top Tips for Applicants

1. Start planning early

If your project is to be successful you will need to be very organised in order to be able to claim the grant money. It is much easier if you understand from the start what you will need to do later. You can then budget in the costs to your project. Don't try to fundamentally change your project in order to match the funding stream – there will be more appropriate sources of funding out there you will be able to pursue.

2. Talk to other similar projects in your area

You may get some good ideas from other projects, and your project is likely to be stronger if you can collaborate with others.

3. Check the website and guidance notes when completing your form

There is lots of help and information available for you to save you time and make your life easier. The guidance notes explain a lot about what we are looking for in your application and even give some examples of how to fill in the form. You should also contact a member of the Heart of Wessex Programme Management Team as soon as you decide you want to proceed. They will firstly check that your project is eligible for funding, help explain how to go about your application and will also be able to offer you plenty of ongoing support.

4. When writing your application, assume that the reader knows nothing about your organisation or your project

Explain clearly who you are and what you intend to do. It is fine to use acronyms if you explain them the first time you use them. Try to see your project from the Heart of Wessex Local Action Group's (LAG) point of view. What will make the LAG want to fund it? The funding is discretionary, so make sure you answer every section fully to help explain what is different and exciting about your project.

5. Make sure you explain exactly what you want the money for

Explain very clearly what you want the money for and how you have arrived at these costs to make sure the decision makers understand your project properly.

6. Include the right skills and expertise in your project team

It won't help if you try to "make do" – you need to ensure that you have the right skills to carry out your project effectively. That gives your project the best chance of success, and any professional skills you reasonably need to buy in can also be added to the project costs.



7. Every section of the application form will be considered when making the final decision

For example, evidence of need helps to show why you need to carry out the project at all, and is better if it includes the views of the community. Hard evidence such as a survey or market research will help to show how you came to the conclusion that the project proposal is the best way to meet these needs. A risk assessment demonstrates that you have really thought the project through and are realistic about what could go wrong and how you would deal with it.

8. It may help to provide additional information with your form

If you have them, your environmental and equal opportunities policies will help show that you take our cross cutting themes seriously. You may want to include letters of support. Capital projects will be expected to provide architect's plans, any planning permission or other permissions required, and a business plan and a cash flow forecast where appropriate.

9. Grants are paid in arrears, so make sure you can cover cashflow

You will have to pay the invoices in relation to your project before you can claim the money back, so make sure you have a way of paying them in the first place.

10. Do not commit to buying any equipment, carry out any building work or recruit staff

You must not purchase anything specifically related to your grant application until an agreement contract has been received, signed and dated. Part of the funding requirements are that the agreement holder can only claim the grant when the agreement contract is in place and when goods and services have been paid for, supported by receipted invoices and full defrayal evidence.

And remember the Heart of Wessex Programme Management Team are here to help you!

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