



# The Certificate in Fundraising Skills

## Lesson 6 Writing Creative Applications Avoiding Pitfalls

Go to the  
Lesson 6  
Discussion  
Board and  
add any  
other bid  
writing tips  
you have  
used or  
come across

Some people believe that good writing is the key to good proposals. To a large extent this is true. Funding bodies would agree that:

- Some applications are rejected because they contain poor ideas
- Most applications are rejected because they contain good ideas poorly presented

### **Focus on the Funder**

Novice proposal writers tend to focus on their own need for funds instead of using the application to link their project with the funder's priorities. For novice writers, the orientation is often "I-I, Me-Me" while successful writers take a "You-You" perspective

### **Avoid Assumptions**

Another common error is to paint the problem in grand or general terms. Don't say "little is known about...", "there is a lack of information about...", or "no research has dealt with..." this problem. Arguing for something that doesn't exist makes a weak statement. Never assume that a funding body, whether local, regional or national, is familiar with your community or local issues or with your group's reputation. Always include a context for your project that demonstrates your expertise and the need for the project.

### **Short and Punchy not Jargon Heavy**

Don't be tempted to write in jargon of any kind. Instead keep to short sentences and use active language to engage the grants assessor. Active language engages the reader. It is persuasive convinces the funder that a project is about to happen;

*How to write actively*

- This project will..
- We expect to..
- This project is necessary because..

*Some examples of passive language*

- This project aims to..
- It is our hope that..
- If this project didn't happen..

### **Remember to Tell a Story**

We all relate to and remember stories better than abstract concepts. Good stories are about people. Ultimately, funds are made available for the benefit of people not organisations, so use personal examples. Ask yourself if your application draws out the benefits to local people? Explain the consequences of the current void in human terms. For example, if you want to buy computers, talk about the lack of opportunity and the happy, computer-literate residents who will benefit.