

# Applying to a Trust or Foundation

## Step-by-step guide



Trusts and foundations offer a lucrative source of funding for homelessness projects. But they require a considered approach to be successful: you must be prepared to put in time to applications. Here is our step-by-step guide to help you in your applications:

### 1. FINDING A TRUST

**Google:** the internet is a great way to start your search for a trust. Many trusts will have websites. Google key terms such as 'homeless trust' and see what comes up.

**Bishops conference:** often your country's Bishops conference, diocese or Vincentian order will have a fund to which you can apply. Have a look!

**Directory:** there may be a directory of trusts and foundations in your country which you can access. Sometimes, there is a public register of charities (which includes trusts) so look for that too.

### 2. SHOULD I APPLY?

**Relevance:** every trust or foundation has guidelines on what they fund. You need to make sure your project fits these guidelines – do they fund homelessness work? Look on the trust's website or call them to find out.

**Restrictions:** some trusts will only fund certain aspects of a project – e.g. some will not fund salaries. Double check this before starting to write an application!

**Speak to the Trust:** once you have checked relevance and restrictions, make sure you call the trust. Many trusts have a phone number available which you can call to receive advice and to ask if they would be interested in an application for your project. They will often give you guidance on what work they are prioritising that year, and knowing this gives the best chance of success!

### 3. WRITING AN APPLICATION

**Requirements:** check how the trust processes applications. Some will say they will only accept two pages maximum. Some will have their own application form. And double check any deadlines for application, don't miss them!

**The Project:** this should be the main focus of your application. Be very clear from the start what you are asking the trust to fund.

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**Background:** while the main focus of your application should be the project you want money for, also include information about your expertise. Has your organisation any experience in this area, how long have you been working with homeless people etc.? It is important that you present yourself as credible, as well as have an exciting project.

**Case Study:** a case study of an individual you are helping at the moment or intend to help is very important. You need to personalise your application – who will this project be helping, what is their story, what is their current condition, why do they need your help?

**Statistics:** you must provide the trust with a sense of scale through statistics. They need to know what their grant would be 'buying'. For example, how many people will this project help over a year?

**Photos:** photos are a very good addition to capture the attention of the trust. Try and include pictures of the proposed project and the people you help – but make sure you have their consent!

**Budget:** some trusts will require a detailed budget to be included in the application. Some will only require the total cost and how much funding you are applying for. Make sure you have robust figures, and that you can explain any costs given. Ensure they are based on research, not just guesswork. Remember: you will have to report on this if you're successful!

### 4. WAITING

It can often take a long time to hear back from a trust – sometimes six months or even more. Don't worry if it takes this long, often trusts only meet to decide funding allocations once or twice a year.

If you are unsuccessful, this does not necessarily mean you cannot apply again for funding. You should call the trust if possible for feedback and to see if you can apply again next year.

### 5. IF YOU ARE SUCCESSFUL: NEXT STEPS

**Relationship:** it is important to build a relationship with a trust if you receive a grant. Ensure to thank them for any money in a formal letter, and invite them to visit the project. If you put time in to developing a relationship, the trust may give you money for many years!

**Reporting:** you will have to tell the trust how you have spent their money – usually this is through a report a year after the grant. This means you need to record progress in your project over the year – e.g.: how many people did you help over the year? How did you spend the money and what impact did it have?