

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Q: Where can we get advice about preparing accounts? We are an unincorporated association and the National Lottery Awards for All wants a set of accounts but this is not in our skill set

A from SCN: As an unincorporated association, you can apply for a grant with The Social Change Nest assisting you. Typically we have seen that if a group is eligible for the grant, and the funder is happy with us being the fiscal host- we can supply our company accounts as posted on Companies House. The reason being that as an unincorporated group you don't have any accounts to share, as you don't have a bank account.

Q: Funding for CIC limited by shares, is there any additional information available?

Similar Q: How to overcome the challenge of funding CIC limited by shares

A from Kate:

- As far as I can tell, you would have to go through each funder's eligibility requirements to see if they fund CICs. If they are a brilliant fit for your work, but don't fund CICs, it could be worth emailing to put forward your case to ask if there is any flexibility.
- Google "grants for CICs" and similar phrases, there are lots of useful results such as [Unrestricted Core Costs Grant Funding For UK Charities & CICs](#)
- As ever, look at similar CICs and see who funds them to form your prospect list.

A from SCN: We do our best to post grant opportunities on our [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#), but the majority are shared in our [newsletter](#). Follow us and [subscribe](#) to make sure you don't miss out.

Q: Our organisation is currently run from France and we are about to set up a UK entity. Any advice on how to approach fundraising when we are set up in the UK?

A from Kate: Similar to any newly established charity, work up a basic fundraising strategy as part of your business plan: will you focus on grants, events or major donors; assess your capacity, expertise and warmth/scale of audience to decide which route to focus on.

A from SCN: As you navigate your set-up, consider partnering with a fiscal host. This will allow you to get set up quickly, accept donations, apply for funding opportunities and give you a simple, transparent way to manage your money. We do support incorporated groups, but find that some people partner with us just while they set up their legal entity (as this can take a long time), and others don't want to incorporate

at all. Get in touch with our team if you'd like to find out more,
hello@thesocialchangenest.org.

Q: As a pride org where our interests and deliverables lie across various areas (arts, social change, lgbtq+, etc) how is best to approach looking for funding?

Similar Q: How can you find funders if you are an infrastructure/ support organisation not focused on one cause?

A from Kate: Look for organisations that have similar overarching aims and see who is funding them. Look for funders in each stream/ project e.g. if you're working in a local area look for local funders, or if it's a specific project look at projects similar to those and who is funding them. So you've actually got more chance of finding funders, don't think of it as having to find someone who will fund everything, they can fund just specific projects.

Q: How to capture social value impact in grant applications. Are there templates for this?

A from SCN: This website/ matrix may help you

<https://www.goodfinance.org.uk/measuring-social-impact/outcomes-matrix>

Q: Effective ways to meet the word count in a meaningful way to be successful?

A from Kate: Practice, start by defining your organisation in 20/50/100 words, then repeat for project, need, and outcomes. Focus on facts/actions and cut descriptors. 'Cheat' by condensing - they're not they are, etc. There are also tips in the handout. It is a useful skill as it can help with verbal interactions too as you'll improve your ability to swiftly define your cause/need/activity and spark interest in potential supporters.

A from SCN: Some writing exercises we find useful -

- Write what you want to say in 1 sentence, then 1 paragraph, then 3. This helps you to work out what's most important.
- Write the same thing twice. Once in prose and once in bullet points. This often helps you to condense and get to the point, or elaborate and include finer details.
- If you are over a word count remove any 'fluffy' words or descriptions. A good tool to use is Grammarly. There is a free version available and it not only points out any grammatical errors but can suggest best practices when writing and help you cut down unnecessary phrases.

Q: Best ways for grassroots organisations to prospect grants?

A from Kate: The best place to look for funding prospects is to see who is funding similar-ish organisations/projects, especially locally. Empower your group to look out for funders for example thank you walls of local theatres, newspaper mentions of

grants awarded to community projects. Also, look at corporates for modest support - supermarket chains, and estate agents often have local community giving schemes. Ask 'well-connected' family/friends/neighbours if they have any links to funders and if can they introduce you or offer advice.

A from SCN: As you prospect grants, think of how you will receive and hold your funds as a grassroots organisation, especially if you are unincorporated and don't have a bank account. Check that the funder will grant to grassroots groups or that they accept fiscal hosts. The Social Change Nest can partner with you through your grant application and success stage. Read more on our [grant application FAQ's](#)

Q: What are the most common mistakes people make when applying for funds?

A from Kate:

- Not enough prep/research - is the funding stream a good fit, open for applications or oversubscribed to the point of no realistic chance of a grant - if in doubt call or email to politely enquire.
- The most common mistake in the application is not answering the question that is being asked - double-check that what you have written definitely responds in full to the question.
- Not saying what exactly will happen - how many participants, how many interactions etc. What will happen if you don't do a project?
- Don't be shy about your work, be proud of your achievements and your capacity - if funded - to deliver more excellent work.
- If it's quality over quantity, make that clear, be proud of it.
- Not including facts and figures is a common mistake.
- Whilst not a mistake as such, overusing jargon and acronyms can be a barrier to understanding for readers not experts in the same space as your cause. Use layman's terms where possible unless you are applying to a funder expert in your field.

A from SCN: Some groups believe they are ineligible for grants because they are unincorporated and don't have a bank account. The Social Change Nest can help you with this. If you meet the grant eligibility criteria for a fund you'd like to apply for and if the funder will grant to a CIC or a fiscal host, you can apply. As a fiscal host and legally registered CIC we offer a grant management service, which means that we sign the grant agreement on your behalf to release the funds and provide any documentation needed.

Q: How to begin, I've struggled as I've never completed a grant application, and would love to write a successful one and build my confidence

A from Kate:

- Find funders that support similar/local organisations and investigate their application processes, are any of them very straightforward online application forms?
- Pull together a 2-page 'case for support' using the tips from the training, this can be used as your proposal to trusts that do not have an application form.
- Look at funder websites to get an idea of what questions they ask and the supporting information required, for example, Awards for All has the application questions listed. [National Lottery Awards for All England | The National Lottery Community Fund](#)

Q: Would you recommend any useful grant writing AIs?

A from Kate: I wouldn't personally recommend using AI to write an application, for several reasons including environmental concerns and am not at all convinced the output is of a high enough quality. I can understand using it as a drafting tool to practise editing down texts to word counts, and help with first drafts if you have a fear of the blank page, but don't copy and paste your whole application. Some funders are apparently using AI checkers, and I've seen one publish a statement that they will not accept AI text in applications, I expect more will make their position clear in the near future.

A from SCN: We have had funders tell us that the quality of applications has lowered, whilst the number of applications has increased, making it much more difficult for them to read through everything. We wouldn't suggest using AI to complete an application for this reason, but as Kate mentioned, there is no reason not to use it to help with cutting content down to meet a word count, or to help as a base for content which you then edit. You can also use AI-assisted tools such as Grammarly which help you with writing style but don't write for you.

Q: Is there a possibility to gather case studies and talk about them?

A from SCN: This is something we are really interested in and would be excited to facilitate. We'll be in touch in the future to discuss this.