Podcast Transcript No.3

What NOT to do

In previous podcasts we have covered hints and tips on how to complete an application and what to include or what to do.

In this one I want to concentrate on a few things to AVOID!

1. Don’t chase the money. External funding offers great opportunities in terms of partnership working, learning and development etc as well as grants or loans. However it doesn’t mean that you HAVE to apply. Take time to consider whether you need the money or whether you are just applying for it because it is there. And just ask for what you need, rather than what you want. Your project must still be able to represent value for money
2. Don’t just apply for anything. If you have a project idea, then make sure you are applying for the right fund for your project. Some project applicants apply for multiple funds for the same project without checking as to how relevant they actually are. If you research the funds beforehand, then you can save yourself a lot of time and effort
3. Don’t invent a project simply to access money. There must be a genuine reason for your application. The appraisal process can quickly identify those applications which have been put together simply to get money for the sake of it. There are two possible scenarios and neither of them are good. The lack of need and demand will show through and your project will be rejected. Alternatively, if your bid was approved, you may then have to deliver spend and output on a project put together purely for the money. If it fails, then it may reflect badly on you
4. Don’t rush an application. If the deadline is too tight, ask yourself if this is the right time to be doing an application and whether you have sufficient time to do your project justice. There may be other later deadlines which will give you greater opportunity to develop your application. A rushed application may well fail, as information gets missed out, figures don’t add up, typos occur and baseline data isn’t collated. None of this looks good to an appraiser..
5. Don’t try to impress. Some applicants feel that they need to exaggerate the benefits of their project or to over-estimate the potential outputs. Some applicants feel that they have to stand head and shoulders above other bids. Please try not to do this. It is impossible to second- guess what other applicants will be doing and there are many reasons why bids succeed or fail. However bids are judged on their realism, so projects with unrealistic targets are unlikely to get approved.
6. Don’t lobby for support, Funding programmes have strict criteria and have an open and transparent application and appraisal process. Public funding especially so. Funders are not responsive to a “word in someone’s ear” and any attempt to try and influence a funding decision will not go down well and will reflect badly on you and your bid
7. Please don’t underspend. If your bid is approved, please try and stick to your agreed budgets. Funders will have allocated a sum of money to your project and expect you to use it all. Underspends are not necessarily good news and won’t be welcome. This is another reason why applicants need to be as realistic as possible in the amount of grant that they request.
8. Finally. Don’t give up! Help is at hand from CAS or SCC if you are struggling with the application. And the funders themselves will do their best to help you if you have any issues during the delivery phase. And if your application does not get approved, try and get feedback which will help you if you decide to try again later. Find out why your bid did not get supported this time. Was the fund over-subscribed? Was there a fundamental problem with the project or was it just down to the application? The more information you can get, the better prepared you will be next time.

As ever, if you need any help or advice on your application, Suffolk County Council’s external funding team and the team at CAS are here to assist you

Thanks for listening.