EarthWrights

A Guide to Funding Your Play Space

When it comes to funding your new play space how do you raise the money? There is so much information available online, but where do you begin? Earth Wrights Ltd have compiled this guide to help you find funding for your new play space.

Getting Started

What do you want to achieve?

It is important to decide what you want and be clear about your objectives. Potential funders need to know exactly what kind of project they are supporting and what the benefits will be for your school, nursery or local community. It is much easier to communicate your ideas to funders when you have a clear understanding yourself.

Before you start it is important that you ask yourselves the following questions:
What do you want funding for? Think of it as a project: What will it achieve? By when? Funders are keen to support activities that have clear boundaries - It helps them say 'this project achieved this and we funded that work.'

What evidence do you have that there is a need for this project? Is the project realistic and achievable?
Are we giving ourselves too much to do? Can we convince others that this project needs doing and that it is worth supporting?

How are you going to achieve it?

This is one of the most important things to consider. You may find the following questions useful:

- **Have we already got any money to put towards this project?**
- **Can we claim back any VAT we have to pay?**
- **What do we need to do to make this project happen?**
- **Will we need any planning permissions?**
- **Who will be responsible for what – and how much work will it involve?**
- **Have we got the skills, time and resources we need and if not, how can we obtain them?**

How much will it cost?

Costing your project should not be guesswork. It is important to get as near as you can to the actual amounts you are going to have to pay. Funders will know if your costings are not accurate – your figures may be too rounded or unrealistic. Try asking yourselves the following questions:

- **How much is your project going to cost in total?**
- **Where do you intend to get the money from (your own fundraising or funding bodies)?**
- **How much money do you need to get from funders?**
- **Consider how you will continue to maintain your project after the initial build costs, so you can demonstrate that you have thought about this.**

Who will use your play space and what do they want?

Funders will want to see you have undertaken a thorough consultation process.

- **Who will use your play space?**
- **Have you asked them what they want?**
- **Do your ideas meet the needs of those who will be using the play space?**

Include in your consultation process people who may, or do, have objections so that you don't alienate them (they may come around to the idea of your project if they fully understand it). Children, colleagues, parents, governors, trustees, community users, parish and local councillors may all have views and ideas.

When you have answered the questions above, you are ready to start fundraising and looking for funders.

Fundraising

Getting Organised

Think about the skills you will need to get the project off the ground and who might be able to help. Don't be shy to ask friends and family. Once you have your team of volunteers, give everyone a specific task, so that you're not doing everything yourself make sure everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities.
Be clear about the timescales for your project and stick to them.

Begin your own fundraising

Many funders will only offer you a percentage of your total project budget and some require match funding. Funders are more likely to support your project if you can show you have already raised some money yourself.

Organise events such as fayres, quiz nights, concerts, sponsored events, race nights, coffee mornings, cake sales, plant sales etc. You might want to start selling tickets in advance for some events such as concerts and quiz nights or hold a raffle on the night to raise extra funds.
Approach local businesses for raffle prizes or donations. You could offer them some free publicity in return.
Crowd funding – there are many online sites offering this service.
If you are a school talk to your PTFA

Keep careful track of money coming in and out so that you don't spend more than you make. Aim not to spend more than £1 for every £4 raised.

Promote your fundraising

A small amount of publicity can go a long way and may attract the attention of other people in the local community who want to be involved and will help you raise funds. Make up posters and ask if you can put them up in your local shop or church. The local media is a great way of getting publicity and support, contact local papers and radio stations. Set up social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter and ensure you regularly update them. Write a blog to share your experience.

Writing a Funding Bid

Find the right funding body for your project

The key to successful fundraising is to identify funders that want to fund your type of activity. Each funder will specify eligibility criteria around the type of projects they will fund, the areas in which they will fund, how to apply and how decisions will be made. Some will have cash limits. Carefully read the criteria and check that you are eligible to apply. Don't waste time applying if you don't meet the criteria.

- **What do they want to fund?**
- **What activities/who don't they fund?**
- **Is the amount of funding they offer relevant to your project?**
- **Are you in the correct geographical location?**
- **Is your annual turnover/income relevant?**
- **Do you have the correct legal status (i.e. being a registered charity?)**
- **Does the funder require match funding?**
- **Take note of their key statements made in relation to their strategy, outcomes framework or specific goal areas.**

Find suitable funders as early on in the process as you can. You can then focus your bids to their specific requirements.

Environmental Impact

Being environmentally aware is becoming increasingly important. Make sure your play space uses ethically sourced, sustainable materials and compliments the local environment. You can then highlight this as a positive benefit.

Demonstrate that there is a social need for your project

Many funders will only offer you a percentage of your total project budget and some require match funding. Funders are more likely to support your project if you can show you have already raised some money yourself.

Organise events such as fayres, quiz nights, concerts, sponsored events, race nights, coffee mornings, cake sales, plant sales etc. You might want to start selling tickets in advance for some events such as concerts and quiz nights or hold a raffle on the night to raise extra funds.
Approach local businesses for raffle prizes or donations. You could offer them some free publicity in return.
Crowd funding – there are many online sites offering this service.
If you are a school talk to your PTFA

Keep careful track of money coming in and out so that you don't spend more than you make. Aim not to spend more than £1 for every £4 raised.

Compiling your Funding Application

When you are ready to get together your funding application you should already know who you are going to apply to for funds, what their criteria is and what evidence you are going to provide to meet the funders requirements.

Writing Style

Personalise your application to each individual funder. If they explicitly state they want to fund a project that promotes children's wellbeing and deals with social isolation, tell them how funding your play space will help them meet their goal.

Use a clear font with a simple layout and structure, ensure you stay within the word count if they stipulate one. Think about a clear, catchy and appropriate title.

Be passionate and enthusiastic about your project. Make your application interesting and fresh. Be different to stand out from other applications.

Language

Always answer the question that is being asked. Remember that your application will be one of many, so be concise with your information. What is the application about and why is it relevant to them? What makes you a worthy organisation?
Use positive language such as: "this project will" not "this project could".

Illustrate how the project will make a difference and how it will help people. Focus on the positive outcomes that will come from the funding.

Make it personal using 'we' and 'us'. This will make the reader feel involved in the project.
Tell a story to allow funders to relate to the project. Make some reference to their language in your application (i.e. repeat it back).

Provide Evidence

Be clear about who will benefit from your project and why the project is important. Support this with evidence and facts and figures.

Be concise. Make it clear why you need the money, how you will use it and how you will maintain the project when the funding stops.

Activity and Outcomes

It is important to be clear about the difference between your activity and your outcomes.

Your 'activity' is what you do- for example:

Creating a natural play space in a local community or school
Redeveloping a piece of waste land into a natural playground
Making woodland more accessible and play friendly

Your 'outcomes' are the changes that are made or the differences that occur because of your activity:

- **Children's lives enriched**
- **Improved skill in risk assessment**
- **Increased confidence and self-esteem**
- **Increased creativity and problem solving**
- **Increased resilience**
- **Increased physical health**
- **More opportunity to interact with others**
- **Increased ability to be part of a social group**
- **Improved language and communication skills**
- **Greater appreciation of nature and the environment**
- **Stronger connections between people in the community**
- **Reduced family stress and Improved family relationships**

Provide a Budget

Be realistic and justify the amount you have requested. Don't over or underestimate your project costs.
How much is your project going to cost in total?

Provide a breakdown of specific items, prospective funders will want to see clearly what their money is being spent on.

Explain where you intend to get the money from.
How much money do you want the funder to give? Make sure this is within the grant size stated by the funder

Ending

Let the funder know that you will always be happy to provide further information or answer any questions that may arise.
Make sure you complete all your application forms correctly. Proof read, check and then double check that you have not left any questions unanswered or incorrectly completed. Ideally get someone who has not been involved in completing the application to proof read and check it; they can ensure there is flow, that it makes sense and meets the funder's criteria.

Following up your application

You may be able to check the status of your application online. If not, check the application documentation to see when you can expect to hear a decision. Only chase up the application if you have not heard anything when their published timeframe has passed.

Common reasons funding applications are unsuccessful

- They do not meet the funder's criteria
- They are not well planned
- The budgets are unrealistic
- The application is poorly completed and questions not answered correctly
- They don't illustrate why the project is needed

If your application is unsuccessful, ask for feedback so you can take this into account for any future applications.

Following a successful application

Many funders will want to publicise their involvement so include them on any information you send out and offer them the opportunity to get involved publicising your project.

Invite funders to any major events especially if you have a grand opening for the completed project.

Make sure you provide the funder with any follow up information they have requested. Give them feedback even if they haven't specifically requested it.

Try to monitor and record the impact your project has and how it met your and the funders objectives - this will be useful information if you want to apply for further funding either to extend the project or if you plan another project.

Resources

Sources of General Information

Listed below are websites that you may find useful.

The Community Foundation **www.ukcommunityfoundations.org**
Holds endowment funds from a number of charities and individual donors, advises trustees on which projects to fund and offers routes to applying for grants. Each region has its own Community Foundation.

The Directory of Social Change **www.dsc.org.uk/funding-websites/**
A wealth of information on where to find funding sources.

Easy Fundraising **www.easyfundraising.org.uk**
Raise funds while you shop!

Funding Central **www.fundingcentral.org.uk**
Search thousands of grants, contracts and loans. Receive tailored funding updates and work through advice and online tools.

Institute of Fundraising **www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk**
A wealth of fundraising knowledge to get you started and tips on how to successfully complete your funding application

Lottery Good Causes **www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk/funding**
There are currently 12 lottery funders who independently decide which projects have successfully applied for a grant. Each is independent of Government but has to follow guidelines when deciding who should receive National Lottery funding. Use this site to search for available lottery funding.

National Association for Voluntary and Community Action **www.navca.org.uk**
Provides funding advice, networking opportunities and support.

The Resource Centre **www.resourcecentre.org.uk**
Information on finding funding and people to help with your application.

VODA (Voluntary Organisations Development Agency) **www.voda.org.uk**
Gives advice, training, information and support to volunteers, voluntary and community organisations.

Funding Sources

Awards For All **www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/england/awards-for-all-england**
Part of the Big Lottery Fund. A quick and easy way to get small lottery grants of between £300 and £10,000. Many schools have been successful with this award.

Big Lottery Fund **www.biglotteryfund.org.uk**

Esmee Fairburn Foundation **www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/**
Supports organisations based on different themes such as 'connecting people with nature'.
Grants can range from £5,000 to £1.5m

Landfill Communities Fund **www.entrust.org.uk/landfill-community-fund**
The LCF is a way for landfill operators and environmental bodies to work in partnership on projects that create significant environmental benefits, jobs and which improve the lives of communities living near landfill sites. Some of their awarding bodies include:

www.biffa-award.org **www.cemexcf.org.uk** **www.communityfirst.org.uk**
www.sitatrust.org.uk **www.veoliatrust.org** **www.wren.org.uk**
www.yorventure.co.uk

Reaching Communities **www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_reaching_communities**
Funding Projects that help people and communities most in need.

Supermarkets
Many of the major supermarkets offer grants for local community projects.

Asda **www.asdafoundation.org**
Co-Op **https://causes.coop.co.uk**
Southern Co-Op **www.thesouthernco-operative.co.uk/makingadifference/local-funding**
Greggs **www.greggsfoundation.org.uk/environmental-grant**
Marks & Spencers **https://corporate.marksandspencer.com/plan-a/our-approach/community-engagement**
Morrisons **www.morrisonsfoundation.com**
Sainsbury's **www.sainsburyslocalcharity.co.uk**
Tesco **www.tescoplc.com/tescocharitytrust**
Tesco Bags of Help Grant **www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme/pages/Category/apply-for-a-boh-grant-tes2**
Waitrose **www.waitrose.com/content/waitrose/en/home/inspiration/community_matters.html**

Some supermarkets offer the opportunity to fundraise in store bag packing.

Other

Alec Dickson Trust www.alecdicksontrust.org.uk
The Austin Hope Pilkington Trust https://austin-hope-pilkington.org.uk
Aviva http:www.aviva.co.uk/good-thinking/community-fund
BBC Children in Need www.bbc.co.uk/pudsey
David Bellamy Award for Environmental Cleanliness www.bellamyparks.co.uk
EduVoice www.eduvoice.co.uk
The Ernest Cook Trust www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk
Fields in Trust www.fieldsintrust.org
Foyle Foundation www.foylefoundation.org.uk
Fundraising for Schools www.fundraisingforschool.co.uk
Open4Funding www.open4funding.co.uk
Grants Online www.grantsonline.org.uk
Grants 4 Schools www.grants4schools.info
The Giving Machine www.thegivingmachine.co.uk
Government Funding www.governmentfunding.org.uk/default.aspx
Countryside Classroom www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk
The Hedley Foundation www.hedleyfoundation.org.uk
The One Family Foundation https://foundation.onefamily.com
The PTA www.pta.co.uk
The People's Health Trust www.peopleshealthtrust.org.uk
The Prince's Trust www.princes-trust.org.uk
The Royal Society www.royalsociety.org/grants
The Sport & Play Construction Association www.sapca.org.uk/funding
School Funds www.schoolfunds.co.uk
Sport England www.sportengland.org/funding
Trust Funding http://trustfunding.org.uk/
Village SOS http://villagesos.org.uk
Watkin Jones Community Fund www.watkinjones.com/about-us/community-engagement
W H Smiths https://blog.whsmith.co.uk/community-grants-application/

High Street Banks often offer funding to local community groups and projects. Contact them directly to see if they can help you.

New housing estate builders sometimes offer community grants. Contact any that are working in your area.

Some of the utility companies have corporate social responsibility departments which can offer funding. Contact them to see what they can offer.

Contact your local County Councillor direct. Some counties allocate a locality budget fund to their County Councillors (in Devon this is £10,000 per Councillor) who can if they wish make grants to support projects or activities that benefit the communities they represent – this includes schools.

Earth Wrights Ltd
www.earthwrights.co.uk
enquiries@earthwrights.co.uk
01803 865919