

Step 2 – Finding Funding

Key Principles

'Look, look some more, then look again'

Hints & Tips! Finding Funding There are literally hundreds of grant funding programs available for an enormous range of projects. There is no single electronic or hardcopy source listing every grant funding opportunity. Trying any single funding information source may well yield some funding grants potentially applicable to your project, but trying several will always give you the best results.

Identify Potential Opportunities

As there are a great many funding programs around, your first step is to identify a list of programs that appear to relate to your project(s). At this stage, just record or collect basic details, then later collect more information on those that seem the most promising. If you start reading the available information on the first program you find you can waste a lot of effort on what may not be the best opportunity for your project. Find several that appear to apply, list them with basic details only, then get more details on the most promising ones.

Potential sources of funding information include: Books & Literature, Media, Media Releases, Internet Searches, Internet Websites, Electronic Bulletins & Newsletters, Subscriber Services and Other Contracts.

Books & Literature

Various agencies produce a range of books and literature in hardcopy formats. Examples include:

- Commonwealth Assistance for Local Projects Directory
- Directory of Financial Assistance – Queensland Government
- The Rural Book - Handbook of Commonwealth Government Programs & Services
- Australian Directory of Philanthropy – Philanthropy Australia (concerns philanthropic gifts and funds)
- The Grants Book – SA Council of Social Service

You can find these types of books from libraries or relevant government agencies. The Australian Libraries Gateway can be found at: <http://www.nla.gov.au/libraries/>

Media

Most funding programs are advertised in major media – particularly when they are announced 'open' for applications. Most local State and Federal Members will also provide a media release to accompany announcements of new programs or programs which are 'open' for applications – these appear as stories in media.

- Newspaper Advertisements - Tenders and announcements sections of major state and national papers (The Australian, The Courier Mail, Sydney Morning Herald).
- Newspaper Articles – These are most commonly in local or regional papers and include stories about programs open for applications or stories about grants which have been dispersed to local groups. These usually derive from, or in conjunction with, media releases by local State or Federal Members. Follow up promising stories with the relevant parties noted in the story.
- Radio (especially local radio)
- Television (occasionally - for major initiatives).

Media Releases

- Your local State and Federal Member's offices will prepare media releases on a range of topics throughout the year. Most will be willing to add you to their fax-stream or email list. You will get information about funding programs via this means but be prepared to receive a lot of media releases relating to other topics!

Internet Search Engines

A relatively easy method of searching for relevant funding opportunities is to use an internet Search Engine (Google, Yahoo Search etc.). Each Search Engine has unique search features, so try using more than one. Results can be overwhelming if you enter wide criteria such as 'funding programs' or 'grant programs' so it is better to start your search with very narrow criteria and gradually widen the criteria as necessary. For example, if you were looking for funding for a cultural festival event, then start by searching with criteria such as 'funding, grant, cultural, festival event' rather than something like 'cultural funding'. Remember to restrict the search to Australia otherwise you will get a lot of overseas programs.

Internet Websites

Various government departments are responsible for the administration of funding programs which fall within their departmental area of responsibility. For example, the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services administers a range of grant programs focusing on regional areas; Arts NSW administers a range of State programs relating to arts and cultural development, Queensland Department of Sport and Recreation administers a range of programs relating to sport and recreation and so on.

Consider the 'angles' of your project and which departments might administer programs relevant to those 'angles'. Links to government department websites can be found via gateways or portals – these are available for Commonwealth as well as State and Territory Governments. A complete list of government portals can be found in the links on our website www.fundassist.com.au

Electronic Bulletins & Newsletters

Some private and public agencies produce e-bulletins or newsletters which can provide useful leads on funding opportunities. There are several free options which include items on funding. One example is the Regional Arts e-bulletin www.regionalarts.nsw.com (fortnightly) which includes upcoming funding opportunities. E-bulletins and e-newsletters are usually topic or program specific, so you will need to select the ones likely to be of most interest to your situation. We also produce a free newsletter FundAssist Newsletter (Quarterly) at www.fundassist.com.au which provides general information about a selection of funding programs across Australia.

Subscriber Services

There are also some businesses which provide for paid subscriptions to funding newsletters or online databases. There is no doubt that these could be useful in some instances. However, maintaining the currency of the information is an enormous job, and despite the best efforts of these businesses, some information may be out of date (little wonder when the same is even true for Departmental websites sometimes!). Some also produce huge volumes of information. So if you do decide to use these, you will still need to conduct further research to review the information and to ensure that the information is current.

Hints & Tips! Finding Funding Whether you choose to use free services or paid subscription services, remember they will not provide all the answers. There is simply no single source which contains information about every funding program available. If you choose to use such services you need to remember to also conduct research via other means or you may still 'miss out' on potentially applicable funding opportunities.

Other Contacts

Use your own networks or simply ring around and follow the trail '.....I am trying to get some funding for.....do you know of anything that might help?' Examples: Local Governments; Community groups; Peak Organisations; Development agencies; State and Federal political offices; State and Federal Departments

Review Promising Opportunities

Hints & Tips! Finding Funding Focus your finding funding efforts - identify and list of potential grant funding programs, do a quick review and shortlist the most promising, then get more information about the programs you have on the shortlist. You can always re-visit the longer list and get more information about those programs if you need to.

Once you have identified a list of potential funding opportunities, review them to decide which ones seem most promising. Look at the basic information for these programs and decide which ones merit further investigation. Then get detailed information about your selected short-list of funding programs.

Most funding programs will produce an Application Form¹ and Application or Program Guidelines²³. Both documents contain further information which will help you to decide which funding program(s) are the most suitable for your project(s). Consider the following when making your selections:

- *Maximum Funding Amount* – Is it sufficient to meet your funding need? Many programs have upper funding limits, some do not, and others have sliding percentages of contribution based on the amount of funding being sought.
- *Typical Funding Amount* – In practice, funding amounts typically granted under a program can often vary from those stated in the guidelines. For example, while the guidelines may state a certain limit a lower 'typical' grant amount may emerge in practice – this usually happens when the assessment requirements become considerably more onerous for applications seeking larger amounts. On very rare occasions grants awarded in practice may exceed the maximum stated in the guidelines (although the guidelines will usually allude to this possibility – normally for 'exceptional projects'). So try to find out about what grants have been previously awarded under the program to see whether the typical grant amount varies from what is technically possible under the program guidelines. Consider whether the typical funding amount meets the funding requirements of your project(s).
- *Applicant Contribution* – Is there an applicant contribution requirement and can you meet it? Some funding programs require a minimum percentage of total project cost to be contributed by the applicant. Some funding programs allow 'in-kind' contributions to count towards the applicant contribution, others only count cash contributions.
- *Project Eligibility* – Most funding programs will provide a listing of eligible and ineligible projects and sometimes, project items as well. Check to see that your project and items fit within these guidelines. In some cases you can gain access to lists of projects that have been previously funded under a program – this is a very good way to find out whether similar projects have been funded in the past.
- *Applicant Eligibility* – Most funding programs will provide a statement about eligible organisations and those that are ineligible. Check that your organisation is indeed eligible.
- *Success Rates* – You can often gain an indication of how competitive a program is by contacting the funding agency or checking other information sources such as the program website. Some programs are very competitive – with as few as 10% of applications being successful in gaining funding. The more competitive the program, the more important it is that your project fits squarely within all the key guidelines and meets the stated objectives of the funding program.
- *Funding Timing* – Does the application assessment cycle and likely timing of funding meet your project timeline? Some programs can take up to 12 months from the date of application to the date of announcement of application results. You should also bear in mind that some programs can be incredibly optimistic in their assessment time claims – if the timing of funding is important to your project, try to find out the 'real story'.
- *Degree of Difficulty* – Some funding programs are extremely complex and have very onerous requirements for planning, research and supporting information; others can be relatively straightforward. Consider whether your project has sufficient planning to meet the requirements of the funding program or whether you are willing or able (e.g. time, resources) to provide the information requirements. Consider also whether your organisation has the resources and skill to meet the requirements for an application to the program.

¹ Jargon Explained! **Application Form** – A structured form produced by the funding agency and providing the basis for applications to a particular funding program. Application forms normally provide spaces for entering details about your project for the purposes of assessment against the program criteria.

² Jargon Explained! **Application Guidelines** – (Sometimes called Program Guidelines). Instructions for the completion of an application for a particular grant funding program. They normally also include key information about the program criteria.

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Hints & Tips! Finding Funding Always investigate funding options under different grant programs. Pick those grant funding opportunities which best meet your needs and which appear most likely to succeed. Completing a funding application is time consuming and difficult so you want to make sure you expend this time and effort on an application which has a good prospect of yielding a funding outcome.

Hints & Tips! Finding Funding You may be able to apply to more than one funding program for different aspects of your project – sometimes referred to as ‘cocktail funding’.⁴ This increases the complexity of the funding task enormously but can also be a good way to gain more funding for your project(s) by ‘leveraging’⁵ the contribution from one program to gain funding from another.

Congratulations! You’ve finished ‘Finding Funding’!

You’re ready for Step 3 – ‘Application Get Set’

FundAssist Quick Guide to Successful Funding Applications - Part 3: Application Get Set

FundAssist is a leading consulting firm providing expert funding assistance services to local governments and community groups throughout regional Australia.

We can help you in all aspects of the funding process at whatever stage you need help – whether it is planning your project(s) and your funding strategies, identifying applicable funding programs, developing funding submissions and briefings promoting your project, preparing grant applications, or completing project management and reporting requirements after you have received funding.

Our funding services have assisted many clients with a wide range of projects.

Contact us to find out how we can help you.

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⁴ Jargon Explained! **Cocktail Funding** – Cocktail funding is, as the term implies, mixing a number of funding ingredients to find the necessary funding for a project. It involves making applications to different grant funding programs for parts of the same project. It increases the complexity of the funding task considerably, but can be the only solution when no single funding program satisfies the funding requirement for a given project.

⁵ Jargon Explained! **Leveraging** - The term ‘leveraging’ means the use of funds from one source to help you gain funding from another source. You ‘leverage’ one program against another to meet the requirements of the different programs and meet your funding target.