Funding and Understanding the Needs of your Community

Did you know that when applying for funding, grant funders will want to know how well you understand the needs of your community?

Many organisations have seen changes to their user groups since the pandemic.

As organisations continue the recovery process from Covid-19, some are still experiencing lower numbers of users than expected while others have seen an increase of people in their community who need their services for the first time.

Having fewer participants or seeing an increase in users with no additional resources adds to the concern of those managing organisations, to ensure they have sufficient income to cover the necessary costs associated with running their organisations. This is being made harder with the increased costs associated with inflation, energy prices and the cost-of-living crisis in general.

Grant funding is one option to generate income and can help cover a wide range of costs, including core costs and new initiatives, such as a new service, activity or improving energy efficiency in a community building.

It's well known that each funder wants to make a difference and have an impact with their funding and that they each have different priorities on what they would like to fund.

However, it's important when applying to a funder that you:

- Know and understand the need in your community
- Have evidence to prove and illustrate the need you've identified
- Ensure the funding you have asked for (including the purpose and the amount requested) is in line with your chosen funders' priorities

Gathering the views of those in your community is the best way of understanding their needs. As a result of the changes in our society, the needs of the community may have changed. This may be contributing to the lower number of people engaging in traditionally popular activities and contributing to an increase in need in other areas. It's important to understand this in more detail, so services can be adapted to meet the change and become more sustainable for the future.

You can gather views and understand your communities needs through an engagement survey, in conversation with the local community or by using data sources with statistics for a particular area.

Whatever method you choose, it's important to demonstrate that you have done your research and present a strong application to a funder.

Here at DCA we offer a range of development workshops all designed to support you to manage your organisation.

We have courses that explore the process of applying for funding in more detail and engaging with your community.

For more information, please visit our Training page here

If you would like to find out more, please don't hesitate to get in touch. If you have been working directly with one of our Community Support Team, you can contact them in the usual ways or email info@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk and your enquiry will be directed to a member of the team.