

# Congratulations! You've been awarded a grant!

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There is nothing quite as exciting as the good news that all your hard work has paid off and your application has been successful! Well done.

It is tempting to rush out and book venues, order materials and equipment and hire guest speakers right away. **But before you start spending the grant there is still a bit of work you must do.**

## Wait until the money is in the bank before you start spending

Firstly, check whether you have been paid the grant yet, or not.

- Some small funders will simply send you a cheque as soon as they award your grant. As soon as you've paid the cheque into your group's bank account, and it is credited to your account, you will be able to start using the money.
- Some funders will pay the money straight into your group's bank account, and send you a letter to notify you – so check first that the money has been credited to your account. If there is a problem, you will need to contact the funder and tell them you haven't received the money yet. **But you must not start spending the grant before you are certain you have received it.**
- Some funders will send you an *offer letter*. So although you get a letter telling you that a grant has been awarded, you're not there yet! You must read the letter carefully – it will be telling you the conditions you must agree to. You might have to send some final information to the funder before the grant is paid. You might have to sign a *grant agreement* and return it before the grant is paid. **You MUST wait until the money is in the bank before you begin spending it (including making orders and bookings).**
- Some funders might award you less money than the amount you requested. Check how much you have been awarded, and decide whether your project can go ahead. If you can't do what you planned with a smaller amount of money, contact the funder and explain – perhaps you could agree with them that you can use your grant in a slightly different way? Or perhaps you could do *some* of the things you planned but not all. Make sure your group and the funder are both in the picture and have agreed how you are using the grant.

## Check what conditions you have agreed to when you accepted the grant

Obviously, you must only use the grant for the purposes you said in your application. But most funders will also expect you to comply with other conditions, for example:

- They will probably require that their grant is listed as a *restricted fund* in your end of year annual accounts.
- Some funders require that you open a separate bank account for their grant.
- Some funders require you to acknowledge their grant in your publicity and may specify how they expect you to do that – e.g. by using their logo on publicity for your project.
- The bigger the grant awarded, the more conditions you can expect that you will have to agree to.
- The bigger the grant awarded – and the longer it is paid for - the more probable that it will be paid in instalments. You need to know how much money will be paid, and when. You might need to negotiate a payment schedule with the funder, e.g. you might need larger sums at a particular point in the life of the project rather than equal amounts are regular intervals.
- Virtually all funders will require you to report on how you used their grant at the end of the project (and possibly - if the grant is for more than one year - also at set periods during the project).

All the people who will be involved in this project need to know what the conditions are, and what you can and cannot do with your grant, so one of the first things you need to do is get everyone together (i.e. your treasurer, committee members who will be responsible for the project, any staff and volunteers involved) and talk about how you will run the project to meet the funder's conditions.

## Set up your monitoring systems

Before you start delivering your project, you need to think about what information you need to gather and what records you need to keep. Don't wait till the end of your grant to think about this.

A starting point is to look at what information you will have to report to the funder. If your funder has a report form that they require from you, ask if you can have a copy now.

- Check what you will be expected to report to them, and think now about how you will gather the information you need to make your report.
- Decide whether you think you already gather that information anyway, or whether you need to set up new system to gather it.

Here are some examples of things you might need to report, and ways you could gather the information you will need:

What you spent the money on	<p>Keep detailed records of your expenditure – and keep these in such a way that this grant can be tracked by itself separately from other funding (e.g. have a separate spreadsheet if you use a computer, or a separate section in your ledger.)</p> <p>Set up a file for this project and save all your invoices, receipts, and orders together.</p> <p>Keep all documents e.g. contracts with suppliers, quotes and correspondence. Keep a note of serial numbers of equipment e.g. laptops.</p>
What activities you ran	<p>Keep a file with information about your events including dates, titles, and a description.</p> <p>Keep a list of your events.</p> <p>Make sure you keep separate information about events paid for with this grant from events paid for with other grants.</p>
Numbers of people who attended events, or who received your service	<p>Keep signing in sheets, make sure everyone signs in.</p> <p>Keep a list of referrals/enquiries. Keep correspondence, e.g. emails.</p>
Eligibility of people who received your service (for example the funding might only be for children of a certain age, or unemployed adults etc)	<p>Have some kind of application or referral process so that you can get confirmation from people that they are eligible. You will need to keep this information securely.</p>

You might already routinely do some of these things. If you don't, you might need to set up some systems to start doing them.

## Monitoring Outcomes

Funders *always* want to know what difference their grant has made to people's lives. You may already have agreed some *outcomes* in your grant application. This means, you have told the funder what difference your project will make for people. For example:

- you might be running some social activities – the outcome will be that *isolated people feel less lonely and get more involved in the community.*
- or you might be running classes – the outcome will be that people *increase particular skills or feel more confident.*

Just because people come to your activities, you can't assume that they do feel less lonely or more confident. Somehow, you need to find this out from people. This is going to require a bit more thought and creativity on your part.

Here are some ways you can find out what difference your project has made to people's lives:

Evaluations	Just ask people – e.g. on an evaluation form, or in a discussion. You can ask people <i>open</i> questions e.g. “How do you feel you benefitted from this activity?” or you can ask <i>closed</i> questions e.g. “On a scale of 1 – 10, how much do you think your confidence has increased as a result of this activity?”
Informal feedback, e.g. comments, thank yous, complaints	If people make comments, try to capture this – keep a diary after each event and note what different people say. Keep letters, thank you cards, emails etc.  Set up a facebook page, and keep a printout of people's comments.
Managed feedback	Set up a suggestions box or a comments book at all your events, and encourage people to make comments in it.
Measure “distance travelled”	You can ask people to use simple questionnaires at the beginning of the project, to show how they feel, what skills or knowledge they have etc, and then ask them to complete <i>the same</i> questionnaire at the end and see if anything has changed.
Make note of what people go on to do after your project	For example, if you run a class to build confidence, how many people go on to enrol on a college or university course after it? Or get a job? Or start doing voluntary work?
Case Studies	Ask a couple of people to volunteer to be a case study – then they can tell their story – what their lives were like before, and how your project has helped them. (You don't have to identify them.)

### Where can we get more information?

For help with financial record keeping, have a look at the CASH website – Community Accountancy Self Help, at [www.cash-online.org.uk](http://www.cash-online.org.uk).

You can also contact the community accountancy service at ERVAS, Morley's Yard, Beverely, HU17 9BY, 01482 871077.

For information about monitoring and evaluation, have a look at the website of the Community Evaluation Service at [www.ces-vol.org.uk](http://www.ces-vol.org.uk).

HANA can help your group with setting up some of your systems to help you manage your new grant.