

Charitable Trusts

Charitable Trusts are among the main sources of external funding for Community Projects. In the connexional year 2003/2004 Charitable Trusts provided nearly £4 million worth of grant aid to Methodist Churches and their property schemes.

When applying to Charitable Trusts make sure you focus your applications on those activities that will be taking place inside the building, rather than the building itself.

Very few trusts make grants specifically to promote religion. However, this does not mean that you should hide the fact you are a church, but try to concentrate on the valuable role the activities within your building have in the community.

How to find out which Trusts to apply to.

Support Services in Manchester uses the Directory of Social Change 'Trust Funding' website to search over 4000 UK based charitable trusts on behalf of churches.

Some trusts are set up to fund on a national level, while other 'local' trusts target specific areas or regions. Our searches can therefore match churches to local trusts in their area and provide information on the funding criteria for the larger UK wide trusts.

There are also a number of free search facilities which you could access yourself.

Your local **Council for Voluntary Services (CVS)** office should have access to the Funder Finder software which enables you to answer a number of questions about your organisation and project and then produce a list of trusts whose funding criteria match your project needs.

A number of Local Authorities provide free access to the **Grant Net** online funding search. If your church requests information from Support Services in Manchester and you are eligible for free access we will tell you how to register with Grant Net through your Local Authority website.

Forty five councils have also signed up to the **Open4Community** service. This is a free web based funding search. The search results are split into four categories – Government, Lottery, Charitable Trusts and Local. If you request a funding search and your council have signed up, we can tell you how to access the site and register as a user.

Useful Information

- Over 50% of charitable trust grants go to local groups, followed by national organisations, then individuals.
- Charitable Trusts see their grant making role as different to other funders so they tend to concentrate their funding on specific areas such as: new and innovative ways of working, disadvantaged and minority groups, creative responses to new needs and problems, and one-off purchases and projects.

Things to Think About

- If possible, ask trusts for pledges e.g. will they give £5,000 if you can match it?
- Apply well in advance of needing the money.
- Make the most of any visits a trust may wish to make. This is your chance to bring the project to life.
- Try to focus on a small number of applications. It is always better to send 5 well-targeted letters than circulars to 20 trusts.
- If you are looking for a lot of money, apply to the larger trusts first; if you only need a small amount you could try the smaller trusts initially. Making applications to small numbers of trusts in stages can make the job a more manageable task.
- If more than one trust gives money for the same piece of work, try to identify another part of the project which one of them could fund with the same amount of money.