GRANT APPLICATIONS

This information sheet is designed to help schools with grant applications.

It has been created by the Essex Gardens Trust Education Coordinator
This advice is based on the assumption that you have applied for grant-aid and requested and received an application pack or form. You may well now be feeling rather daunted by the task ahead. Don't be discouraged – just take it one step at a time. Despite appearances the application process has been designed to be as simple as possible but if it does look a little complicated remember - help is always at hand from your funding advisor.

Here are some points to consider before you start making your application:

☞ Take the time to read the whole pack to know and fully understand what is required

☞ If there is a deadline, know when it is and plan to meet it.

☞ Pay special attention to the guidance notes.

☞ Read the pack again noting anything you do not understand.

☞ Discuss and clarify with the funding advisor and your team.

☞ Check the format required *e.g. hard copy/email/fax, letter, email*

☞ Be neat and tidy, your application will be in competition with many others

☞ Don't assume the funder has any knowledge of you or your project – they almost certainly don't and they may not even be familiar with your subject area.

☞ Don't try to build a project around the criteria. Do answer your questions in line with the criteria.

☞ Remember that funders too have to meet their objectives, consider how your application might help them, and hopefully they will be able to help you.

☞ Provide as much information as succinctly as possible

☞ Ensure that any information you give can be backed up in some way

☞ Make a copy of the application form (applies especially if you are applying on-line) and make a first draft in pencil.

☞ Don't rush, allow plenty of time.

☞ Be clear, concise and unambiguous, don't use jargon.

☞ Discuss fully with the project team and any partners and redraft if necessary.

☞ Check, check and check again before you submit your application.

☞ Never start a project before it is approved and you are given the go ahead.

Generally speaking, all funding bodies will require the same information, albeit in slightly different formats. They may well want to know:

- **What your project is about**
  Give a full but concise description of the project. *For example: To design and build a vegetable garden and small orchard within the school grounds. We plan to enclose the vegetable garden with chain link fencing to make it secure and create fully accessible hard landscaped pathways so that the garden can be used by the whole school community at all times of the year. We hope to purchase a tool store, tools and other gardening equipment.*

- **Who will be involved**
  List all partners or individuals involved in the project. Most funders are looking for evidence of close partnership working and the involvement of the wider community. Partners might be the local Horticultural Society, Parish or Borough Council, a Primary Care Trust. The wider community could mean parents, local groups, clubs, societies or organisations, youth groups, disabled people, older people, ethnic minority groups.

- **How you know it is realistically achievable**
  Demonstrate that you have the right levels of support for the project – what sort of help has been pledged

- **How you know your project is needed, why you want to do it**
  An example: Local indices show area of high deprivation. Many children within school do not have access to own garden, have only poor quality public open space and have expressed desire, through whole-school survey, to spend more time outdoors. There is currently little scope within the grounds for children to learn to garden. Will help school in meeting its Healthy Schools target. Provides excellent opportunity for Extended Schools programme. Provides opportunities for learning outdoors. Parents and the wider community can become involved.

- **How your project will develop**
  Provide a simple phased project development plan. This might be planned over a year and involve diaries and photographs.

- **How much it will cost**
  Once you have completed your project plan you should be able to work out what you need to implement the project. Obtain quotes for professional services. Cost up other materials/purchases. If you need to pay for staff you will need to show how you worked out their salaries. Add 20-25% to the final figures for contingency.

- **What the outcomes and outputs are, how it will make a difference**
  An outcome is something tangible e.g. purchasing trees for the launch event, the output is an intangible result e.g. 20 people now know how to plant a tree. Outcomes are easier to measure, outputs less so but you may be asked to predict them anyway.

- **Who it will make a difference to**
  It is not enough to say everyone – you need to be specific. List the people who have been involved in the project and anyone from the wider community who will have access to it or will directly benefit from it *e.g. parents can become involved in gardening with their children for*

the first time or you could send your excess fruit and vegetables to an older persons home.

- **How your project will be managed**
  Through regular team or multidisciplinary meetings, production of schedules, careful budgeting, properly prepared accounts, cashflow forecast, using project management software.
- **How you will monitor progress**
  You are almost certain to be asked to provide frequent progress updates to your funder to reassure them that your project is on track (as defined in your project plan). You will also monitor progress through your regular team meetings. The children could produce a timeline and diary charting the project milestones.
- Check you have all the supporting documentation / evidence
- Read it through
- Get someone who doesn't know about the project to read it through
- Make any necessary changes
- Make sure it is signed by the appropriate person/people
- Make a copy for your records
- Note the results date and pencil-in a meeting for that time
- Send the application off

☺ **If your application is successful:**

☺ Read the terms and conditions of your contract carefully.
☺ Make sure you understand what you are signing up to, if in doubt speak to the funder
☺ You may be asked to sign and return an official agreement, contract or copy of the acceptance letter
☺ Note any interim deadlines e.g. return of quarterly monitoring forms
☺ Ensure your acceptance letter gives you the necessary approval to start your project.

😐 **If your application is unsuccessful** don't think you have failed! Ask for feedback and try again.