

[2] Fundraising for your project

Faith organisations, whether places of worship or faith-based charities, often need to seek funding beyond their immediate membership to meet community needs.

This section focuses on two primary sources of funding commonly used by churches and faith groups: **grants** and **community fundraising activities**.

KEY FUNDRAISING PRINCIPLES

Every project has unique requirements, but here are some fundamental principles to consider before getting started.

Section 1 of this guide has more information on establishing a vision and creating a project plan.

- **Establish your vision:** Whether applying for a grant or engaging your community in fundraising, you need to communicate your project's vision clearly (see Section 1). Ideally, your vision should be summarised in one paragraph.
- **Create a plan:** Your project plan should explain how you will achieve your vision, including who will benefit, your aims and objectives, key activities, targets, and budget. Depending on the funder's requirements, you may need to include additional details. (Covered in more detail in the next section.)
- **Identify your Unique Selling Points (USPs):** Why should a funder or sponsor support your project? Your selling points could include your location, the social needs and challenges you tackle, the age and background of your project's beneficiaries, or something particular about your faith or the style of work you provide. Typically, it is a combination of these factors. Ultimately, what most funders and sponsors are interested in is the impact you make on people, and if they are involved in the decision-making process.

- **Identify the most appropriate funding source:** There are various sources of funding available, including sponsorships, community events, grants, and government contracts. Each source has conditions and expectations. It's essential to assess which funding options will require the least effort in terms of time and expenses while providing the most benefit for your project. Often, a combination of funding sources can be effective. For example, a church might raise some funds through community fundraising activities like sponsored runs or coffee mornings while also applying for grants. Few funders cover the entire cost of a project, and many prefer to see that other sources of funding are being pursued as well.
- **Consider the timing of your fundraising activities:** Securing funding often takes longer than you might initially expect. Many projects face challenges in meeting the deadlines set by funders, which can negatively impact their effectiveness. To avoid frustration and enhance your chances of success, plan ahead. This approach will help you build strong, lasting relationships with funders and encourage their ongoing support.
- **Tell your story:** Funders and supporters connect with projects that feel personal and compelling. Your story should highlight why your project matters, the challenges it addresses, and the impact it has on people's lives. A well-told story can help secure

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funding, attract volunteers, and strengthen relationships with your community. See Section 3 for guidance on effectively communicating your impact.

- **Think ahead:** Too many projects wait until funding is nearly depleted before seeking additional support, leading to last-minute crisis appeals. This not only causes unnecessary stress for project staff and management but also negatively impacts those who benefit from your activities and leaves a poor impression on funders. Instead, treat fundraising as an ongoing process to ensure sustainability and stability. Building a continuous relationship with funders and expanding your fundraising experience will facilitate ongoing support in the future. While some projects may be more challenging to fund than others, there are numerous funding opportunities available if you look diligently.

SECURING FUNDING FROM GRANTS

Tips to get started:

- **Plan your project first:** Before applying for grants, conduct a thorough consultation and project plan including the project's needs, activities, budget, and evaluation plans. This preparation makes applications easier and prevents your project from shifting its focus to fit a funding application (but not the need).
- **Do your research on the funder:** Understand fully what the funder wants to achieve, whether your project aligns with their priorities, and whether they have funded similar projects and organisations. Check for match funding requirements and ensure you can meet any grant conditions. It is also important to understand the timescales for

the application and make sure that these fit with your project plans.

- **Speak to the funder:** Funding applications can be lengthy and complex, so it's important to ensure your project has the best chance of success and that you're not pursuing the wrong opportunity. Many funders will be happy to talk to you about your project before you submit your application. This allows you to explain what you aim to achieve and they will give guidance about whether your project will be right for them as a funder, and they may also give you advice on improving your chances of success.
- **Read the application questions carefully:** While this may seem straightforward, it's crucial to understand what the funder wants and is asking for, rather than just telling them what you want them to hear. If the funder provides guidance notes for the application, be sure to read them thoroughly, as they often contain helpful tips on the type of information expected.
- **Complete your application offline first:** Many applications are submitted online, which can make editing and collaboration difficult. Draft your responses in Word first, then copy and paste them into the application portal while being mindful of character limits.
- **Get feedback on your application:** Share your application with someone else to ensure you are being clear and getting your point across effectively.
- **If unsuccessful, ask for feedback:** While not all funders provide feedback, it's always worth asking. Their insights can help you refine future applications and improve your chances of success.

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COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING IDEAS AND TIPS

Community fundraising events are a fantastic way to engage people in your fundraising efforts while also raising awareness of your organisation or project. These activities help bring communities together while generating much-needed financial support. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Active challenges



- **Sponsored walks, cycles, runs, and adventure challenges:** Make a standard sponsored event more meaningful by linking the distance to your fundraising goal (e.g., 20 people walking 20 miles to raise £20,000). A church group could also walk or run around their parish boundary as a symbolic challenge.
- **Adventure or endurance challenges:** Organise an endurance event such as a 24-hour relay, cycling across a set distance, or a long-distance hike. Encourage participation by organising team-based challenges.
- **Third-party events:** Participate in organised charity events such as marathons or the Three Peaks Challenge. Be mindful of any administration fees associated with these events.
- **Sports tournaments:** Host a friendly football, golf, cricket, or tennis tournament with an entry fee and prizes for winners.

Sociable events



- **Raffles and auctions:** Ask local businesses to donate prizes and consider auctioning services (e.g., lawn mowing, and car washing) alongside physical items.
- **Sleep out or sleep in:** Popular with youth groups, participants get sponsored to spend a night sleeping under the stars or in a church hall to raise awareness of homelessness.
- **Quiz nights:** Partner with a local pub or venue to host a quiz night, charging an entry fee for teams to participate.
- **Board game or bingo night:** Organise a family-friendly event where participants donate to join the fun.
- **Concerts, recitals, or gigs:** Showcase local talent and sell tickets to raise money while entertaining your community.
- **Bake sales, food festivals, coffee mornings:** Sell homemade cakes and pastries, or host a cultural food festival where community members prepare and sell traditional dishes.



Other fundraising ideas

- **Sponsor a brick:** For building projects, ask supporters to donate the cost of a brick (or multiple bricks) to contribute to construction efforts.
- **Sell branded merchandise:** T-shirts, mugs, tote bags, and umbrellas featuring your organisation's logo can be a great way to fundraise while promoting your cause.
- **Hold a special gift day or one-off appeal:** Encourage supporters to make a one-time donation to support a specific project, urgent need, or community initiative.
- **Community car wash:** Gather volunteers to wash cars in return for donations, creating an easy and fun way to raise funds.

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By selecting fundraising activities that align with your project's goals and community interests, you can increase engagement, boost financial support, and strengthen relationships with supporters. A well-planned event can also raise your organisation's profile and attract long-term donors and volunteers.

Tips for community fundraising events

Once you've decided on a fundraising activity, careful planning is essential to ensure success.

- 1. Set clear goals:** Consider how much money you aim to raise. Make sure your fundraising target is achievable for you or your group. Think about how many people will join your event or sponsor you.
- 2. Plan the details:** Determine if you need to create a training plan, purchase supplies, book a venue, or if you will need volunteers. Importantly, give yourself plenty of time to raise funds before the event.
- 3. Create a fundraising page:** Setting up an online fundraising page simplifies the process of sharing your story and planned activity, receiving donations, and thanking donors. You can create a page as a group, charity, or individual. Some platforms allow individuals to create their own fundraising pages, which can be linked together on a team page to contribute to an overall total.



Gift Aid: If you are registered as a UK charity, you can reclaim an extra 25% in tax on every eligible donation made by a UK taxpayer.

4. Spread the word: You can't raise money if people don't know about your efforts! Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Use social media effectively:** Share your plans across different social media platforms and include a link to your fundraising page. Regularly update your followers with progress and upcoming milestones.
- **Engage local businesses:** Even if they can't donate, ask them to help spread the word through their networks, shopfronts, or newsletters.
- **Reach out to local media:** Inform newspapers, radio stations, and community websites about your challenge; they might cover your story and help you gain more exposure.
- **Encourage sharing:** Ask friends, family, and supporters to share your fundraising page and event details within their networks to extend your reach.
- **Create printed materials:** Design posters and flyers to put up in community spaces, churches, cafés, and libraries. You can use QR codes to add an easy link to your fundraising page.
- **Leverage email and newsletters:** Contact local organisations with e-newsletters and ask if they will feature your fundraising activity.
- **Use word of mouth:** Talk about your event at community gatherings, church services, and group meetings to get more people involved.

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Additional tips for holding safe and successful fundraising activities

- **Assess your risks:** For example, if you are organising a sponsored walk, research the route and prepare for potential safety concerns.
- **Collecting money:** You cannot collect money in a public space or street without a licence.
- **Permits and Licences:** Check with your local council or authority for necessary permits or licences, especially if holding entertainment or selling food or alcohol.
- **Be prepared for emergencies:** Have a phone available and a first aid kit on-site.
- **Follow food safety guidelines:** Take extra precautions when handling and serving food, and make sure to check for allergies.
- **Protect personal data:** If collecting donor details, ensure secure data handling and comply with data protection laws.
- **Supervise under-18s appropriately:** Ensure safeguarding policies and procedures are followed and that young participants have appropriate supervision at all times.
- **Get consent for photos:** If taking photos at the event for social media or your website, make sure you get written consent from participants first.