

The February Foundation

Additional Application Guidelines

As the fundraising landscape remains very difficult, and the number of applications to funders continues to increase, we thought it would be useful to provide some additional information on what we like to see in applications. Of course, these ideas are subjective, though we find this is the process which works best and is a process which is applicable across the Third Sector.

You may be asking yourself why we don't just have an application form on our web site if we're going to give you additional guidelines on how to apply, as well as those on our web site. In our view, application forms are intimidating and don't allow you to express your passion and commitment to the ultimate stakeholders of the charity you're raising funds for. That's why we don't have an application form.

We're not fundraisers but grant makers, and we read over 600 applications every year. We realise what hard work fundraising is, so our aim is to provide you with a blueprint for all your applications, not just a specific way of applying to us.

Precision and conciseness are really important.

Please keep your sentences short and clear.

Don't use tiny fonts and tiny margins.

- **Don't be shy** – *tell us in your first paragraph how much funding you are looking for*, and the full cost of the project you're applying for (or your total core or operating costs if that's what you're applying for). This is a much better approach than leaving your ask for the last line of your final paragraph.
- You don't need to include emotive words – funders do understand the tragedies of life that charities like yours are dealing with.
- You don't need to include photographs; they waste valuable space.
- Similarly, text boxes are unnecessary and distracting.
- Your second and subsequent paragraphs can tell us about what you do and why you do it, how many people you serve, and what the positive impacts are.
- Please include as much data and comparative data as you can. Data is not the be-all and end-all, but it's an important foundation on which to base everything else, including anecdotal evidence. And please remember that funders will never have the time to read your accounts cover to cover, line for line, so summarise any service data from your accounts in your application.
- Please provide comparative data for at least two years. Define precisely what years you're referring to – just saying "last year and the year before" could mean your last complete financial year, or the last 12 months up to your application date, or the last calendar year, so please give the actual dates for the sake of clarity.
- If you use beneficial outcomes measurements such as GAD/PHQ, Warwick-Edinburgh, Paediatric Quality of Life Inventory, or your own, please include data from these in the application. Don't just tell us which measures you use.
- If your accounts don't give an overall fundraising cost, please give it in your application (for the past 2 audited years). If it can't be ascertained, please say so. Also, if your accounts give any "Other" figures in the Debtors and Creditors notes, please give us the details so we don't have to ask you what that "Other" includes.
- Please let us know if you have used AI to generate your application.
- Please check your application follows all our guidelines before you email it.

Richard Pierce-Saunderson – Version 2 – updated 22nd September 2025