

★ Introduction

Community Cinema and film society finances are a delicate balancing act; while you don't need huge surpluses to pay for large numbers of staff or facilities, you do have numerous ongoing expenses to consider and to budget for, and occasionally you will need a larger sum of money for capital expenditure or a specific project or event.

There are numerous options available to a community group seeking such funding. BFFS offers advice and assistance to film societies and community cinemas on operational matters including fundraising and financial planning. Here we set out some current fundraising strategies you may employ and some of the sources available.

This briefing note covers some general principles, funding and sponsorship, with some local, regional and national opportunities explored.

★ 1. General

You should already have a constitution that sets out your management structure, states that you are non-profit making and says what will happen to your assets and any money you have, should your organisation cease to operate. This and a bank account will help establish your 'credentials' with any potential funder.

You should already be carrying out good financial practices and governance, with an annual budget set and reviewed and annual accounts produced and independently checked, if not fully audited. Special requirements and monitoring are in place for registered charities.

It is possible to apply for funding on an ad hoc basis but you are much more likely to be successful if you have thought about what your organisation is trying to achieve, and have generated a fundraising plan. This plan will answer many questions you'll be asked by a funder, even if they don't require it as part of your application.

It should encompass:

- what your organisation aims, objectives and activities are overall
- what you are raising money for specifically
- what it will cost
- where to find the money to make it happen
- who you will work with for funds and services
- how to ask for money successfully
- what to do after your request has been answered
- what to do when your request is granted and how to report back

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The latter is often neglected but is vital to complete successfully both your project and the fundraising process – it will increase your chance of being successful at fundraising in future.

For further details on aspects of funding see:

Voluntary Arts Network Briefing 12: Raising Funds Locally: Fundraising for small groups and organisations

www.voluntaryarts.org/uploaded/map210.doc

Sustaining Grants: A helpful leaflet produced by NAVCA that argues that grant aid is an essential part of the local funding mix for community organisations and remains essential for thriving local communities

www.navca.org.uk/publications/sustaininggrants

★ 2. Funding applications for specific projects

Be prepared to:

- draw up a budget for your project expenditure: possibly different budgets to highlight different parts of the project for different funders
- put together several sources of funding, sponsorship, in-kind contributions and donations for the same project – funders like to know they are not the only source of funding
- research carefully what funders will fund, eg what their current or regional focus is
- think about your application from the funder's point of view
- emphasise how the funding will deliver their objectives as well as yours
- be in competition with other worthy applicants
- establish your organisation's credibility with the funder
- establish mutually beneficial partnerships, eg with media, business
- fill in forms: formal applications inevitably involve the completion of many forms both before and after – and possibly during – the process being funded
- read the guidelines carefully and ensure you complete all forms exactly as stipulated
- develop a detailed marketing plan for how your project will be promoted – including opportunities for funders and sponsors to get their contribution noticed
- include a covering letter with your application and provide all the materials asked for
- adhere to all the funder's requirements, including acknowledging them in your publications
- gather information for any final report on your project
- apply well in advance of your 'need-by' date
- phone to check the application has arrived
- follow up & wait!
- keep records of who you have approached, when, and their response
- write and thank the funder for their support in response to a positive reply
- keep the funder up to date with your project
- find out if a 'no' response might still consider funding you in future

★ 3. Donations and sponsorship: companies and individuals

Some hints and tips on approaching these:

- think about your cause and application from their point of view
- package your information and request for funding attractively to gain their interest and support
- be able to express what they will get out of it
- what benefits and privileges can you offer them: tickets to your first night or season, name something after them, offer them membership or the use of equipment
- express how your aims and objectives match with theirs
- ascertain whether they will want exclusive rights of sponsorship
- consider promotional possibilities of the sponsorship, eg advertising space in your programme booklet
- seek backing for a special event
- how will it enhance the sponsor's reputation?
- how will the geographical location or type of event or organisation help in reaching their market target?

★ 4. Other ways of generating help and finances for your project or organisation

- fees for services you provide
- 'in-kind' assistance from professional and volunteers with relevant skills and donation of professional consultancy time
- grants for your running costs (as distinct from money for a specific project)
- donations of specific items of equipment or products
- shared equipment, products or resources
- negotiating discounts on equipment, products or services
- special events such as screenings designed to raise funds
- sales of food and drink and DVD bring-and-buys at your showings
- raffles, jumble sales, auctions, sponsored walks

★ 5. Sources

This is not an exhaustive list of sources but is designed to get you thinking creatively in researching for the right sources for your project or activity.

i) Local: Grants or assistance from statutory bodies, for example local authorities, town councils. Contact the Arts Officer (or equivalent) who may be based in an Arts or Leisure Services Department. Some local authorities have local grant funds though this is getting rarer.

The establishment of local partnerships may be the way to go for specific projects, and alignment of a project with a screening could provide box office income that could self-fund projects.

Partnership organisations include schools, Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, Round Table, church groups and other community groups.

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ii) Regional: Regional Screen Agencies in England have traditionally supported regional film activities through the Regional Investment Fund for England (RIFE), providing a variety of resources aimed at developing public access to, and education about, film and the moving image. The role of these agencies is currently being folded into the work of the new creative agencies for the Nations. For more information on the changing face of film exhibition funding and contact details, go to: <http://bffs.org.uk/links.html>

Arts & Business: 12 regional offices, connects business and the arts communities to provide information, resources and advice to help arts organisations develop: www.artsandbusiness.org.uk

iii) National:

Awards for All: the National Lottery grants organisation for local communities www.awardsforall.org.uk

The Big Lottery Fund: responsible for National Lottery funding to health, education, environment and charitable purposes, especially to communities: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

The Heritage Lottery Fund: distributes a share of the money raised by the National Lottery for Good Causes to heritage-related projects: www.hlf.org.uk

BFI: the lead agency for film in the UK. For information on available funding streams go to: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/about/funding/>

Trusts: a full list of grant-making trusts can be found in Directory of Grant Making Trusts (see Publications list), published by the Charities Aid Foundation and revised every year. You can find this and other reference sources on companies and charitable giving in your local reference library.

The four **Arts Councils** of the UK manage National Lottery funds for the arts; and while film is not currently a priority in all areas, priorities vary and change so check with your relevant Arts Council.

★ 6. Other useful references and sources

Publications:

Directory of Social Change (including catalogue of Grant Making Trusts), www.dsc.org.uk

The Arts Funding Guide, Susan Forrester & David Lloyd

The Complete Fundraising Handbook, Nina Botting & Michael Norton, in assoc with Institute of Fundraising

Community Fundraising, The Effective Use of Volunteer Networks, Edited by Harry Brown

Effective Fundraising, An informal guide to getting donations and grants, Luke FitzHerbert

Fundraising from Grant-making Trusts and Foundations, Karen Gilchrist & Margo Horsley

Writing Better Fundraising Applications, Michael Norton & Mike Eastwood, in association with ICFM

Building a Fundraising Database Using Your PC: A Step-by-step Guide for Voluntary Organisations ("How To" Guide) by Peter Flory

National Council for Voluntary Action (NCVO) supports the voluntary and community sector: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk
Sustaining Grants: for a pamphlet that argues that grant aid is an essential part of the local funding mix for community organisations and remains essential for thriving local communities: www.navca.org.uk/sustaininggrants

★ 7. National funding sources

UK Villages: for the Community Kitty supporting small community-based projects www.ukvillages.co.uk

The Wakeham Trust: provide: grants to help people rebuild their communities: www.wakehamtrust.org

Community Development Foundation: Government-backed multi-million pound funding programme to boost local community organisations with much-needed access to small grants and long-term financing www.cdf.org.uk

GRANTnet is a straightforward FREE-to-use service from GRANTfinder and can help small businesses, charitable and community groups to find suitable funding www.grantnet.com

Yapp Charitable Trust: makes small grants for running costs and salaries to small charities in England and Wales to help sustain their existing work: www.yappcharitabletrust.org.uk

The **Access Funds** site aims to provide the latest funding information from Government, National Lottery, Charitable trusts, and the EU. It also contains directories of funding programmes and guides to funding. www.access-funds.co.uk

Easy Fundraising: FREE service where you shop online and at no extra cost raise funds for any charity, good cause or group: www.easyfundraising.org.uk

★ 8. Appendix: Equipment sources

The BFFS Scottish Group works with RSS and has sets of DVD Projection Equipment available to BFFS members and start-ups in Scotland. The Group can also put you in touch with some film societies that have successfully applied for match grant funding from the UK-wide and regional schemes and their local authorities www.bffs.org.uk/communitycinema/scotland/group.html

The BFFS South West Regional Group has sets of DVD Projection Equipment available to BFFS members and start-ups in the region. The Group can also put you in touch with some film societies that have successfully applied for match grant funding from the UK-wide and regional schemes and their local authorities www.bffssouthwest.org.uk

The BFFS Yorkshire Group has sets of equipment available to BFFS members and start-ups in Yorkshire:
<http://www.yrg-bffs.org/>

The BFFS Central Office can also put you in touch with other film societies and community cinemas in your area who may be interested in sharing or hiring out their own equipment: www.bffs.org.uk

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About Film First

NatWest & RBS Film First are working with the British Federation of Film Societies (BFFS) to support local film societies and community cinemas across England, Wales & Scotland, providing much needed assistance to ensure all communities, in particular those in rural areas, have access to film.

To find out more about the Film First programme visit www.natwest.com/filmfirst or www.rbs.com/filmfirst