

Funding your campaign

Campaigns can be run for very little money. But if you need money to take your campaign to the next level, read on...

In the age of the internet, where you can communicate with people through websites, blogs, social networking sites, a lot of campaigning work can be done virtually for free. However, even very small campaigns may well need financial resources. This section of the website explores how you might get financial support for your campaign.

As there is already a lot of useful information about fundraising for campaigning we have kept this section quite short, and provide pointers to further information out there.

Further information

[Wikifund](#) has a wealth of fundraising information on it including:

- Individual giving
- Strategy
- Tax matters
- Governance
- Community fundraising

You can also read the chapter on 'Financing for campaign's' in [The Campaigning Handbook](#) by Mark Lattimer.

Friends of the Earth have written a useful general guide to fundraising for grassroots for campaigners, from which we have just included a few points below. To read it in full [click here](#).

1. Undertake street collections (although you will need to seek permission from your local council or the Police)
2. Organise pub quizzes and raffles (although you will need to register with the Gaming Board of Great Britain), tournaments and sponsored events.
3. Hold stalls at events that are organised by others
4. Auction goods on Ebay
5. Apply for awards that support voluntary endeavour and achievement.
6. Register yourself as potential recipients of funds from events such as rag weeks and marathons
7. Identify individuals who may donate larger sums of money and develop a relationship with them.

Charitable trusts and foundations

There are a range of trusts and foundations that might be interested in supporting your campaign.

By Andrew Moffatt, a freelance fundraising and communications professional, who has been working in the voluntary sector for over twenty years.

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Depending how your campaign is set up, you may be able to apply to a charitable trust or foundation. These are independent bodies that provide funding for not-for-profit organisations, including charities or friendly societies.

Most charitable trusts have clear criteria of who and what they fund. As long as your overall campaign and purposes can be defined as charitable, and you fit within their criteria, then you should be able to apply. Many will fund local, grassroots causes and groups and many are interested in alleviating poverty or disadvantage.

Here are some ways to find charitable trusts and foundations:

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Your local library or local CVS (Council for Voluntary Service) should have a copy of the Directory of Grant Making Trusts. This is published each year by the Directory of Social Change (DSC) and is a list of over 2,500 trust funders.

NCVO runs a website called [Funding Central](#) where you can search for funding for your campaign.

Many areas also have Community Foundations that you or your group may be able to apply to: one example is the South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau. The easiest thing to do is to search online for local funding opportunities or ask your local CVS if they have a funding portal.

Once you have identified a suitable potential funder, most will require an application by post. Many have deadlines throughout the year and some will specify the format of the application. Make sure you follow their guidelines – many charitable trusts still receive far too many applications that don't fit their criteria and thus can't be funded.

Write a short focused letter about the nature of your campaign and what you are trying to achieve. Be clear about what impact you hope the campaign will have, in what timescale and where. Be clear about your targets and why you are doing the campaign. Also be clear about how much it will cost and how much and what you are asking them to fund. As they may not fund your whole campaign, have a budget with all your costs clearly set out.

Some charitable trusts may not be able to fund you if you're not a charity or perhaps it's just you and they don't fund individuals. Your local CVS may be able to accept the funding on your behalf, so do check.

Here are some quick pointers towards what makes a good application. You can also find further guidance from the Association of Charitable Foundations and from the Institute of Fundraising.

- Write between two and four pages of A4, and include a budget
- Ensure it reads well, with good grammar and correctly spelled
- Try to say what you actually do - avoid jargon and don't use sophisticated language
- Ensure the first paragraph grabs attention, encapsulates what you do and explains why you need the money

- Make sure you answer the questions "who?", "what?", "why?", "when?" and "how?" in your application
- Be realistic with the budget - not too small, but not padded out
- Make sure you include your name, telephone number and address
- Ask for a specific amount of money
- Include a paragraph about a case study demonstrating who will benefit from the money - "it brings it to life"
- If you have received money from a local trust before, indicate this - it is a good sign
- Use the name of the administrator or correspondent - don't say "Dear Sir/Madam"

Non-charitable foundations

While most trusts and foundations are themselves charities, and can therefore only fund work that can be described as charitable, there are a few that aren't. For some of these funders the reason they chose to forgo charitable status is specifically so that they are able to fund work that isn't charitable – freeing them up to fund more overtly political, campaigning activity, such as that undertaken by pressure groups.

Government funding

Can government funding help you? Or do you think it might compromise your independence?

Given that so much campaigning is actually about opposing Government, it might sound counter-intuitive to be trying to raise money from Government!

Actually, there are a range of potential sources for funding. Most Government departments have funding programmes for charities and voluntary groups. Depending on what the nature of the funding programme is, it would be perfectly legitimate to apply for Government funding.

There is a lot of debate about whether Government funding actually co-opts and in effect silences opposition from those that accept it. [The Compact](#) between Government and the voluntary sector means that, in theory at least, the independence of charities and voluntary groups remain, even if they do receive

Government funding. Some charities argue that receiving Government funding actually makes their voice effective (i.e. 'you give us money, so you must think we do something valuable, and therefore you should hear what we've got to say as well!'). There is certainly no definitive answer about this, but campaigns do need to consider the issue.

Some campaigns will not accept Government funding as a point of principle. For example:

"[Greenpeace](#) does not solicit or accept funding from governments, corporations or political parties. Greenpeace neither seeks nor accepts donations which could compromise our independence, aims, objectives or integrity."

Membership

Membership is a very good way of raising campaigning funds and for engaging with your supporters.

Please read [The Campaigning Handbook](#) by Mark Lattimer for more details. Membership can be a very important income source for campaigns. It can be a long term, stable and flexible funding base. As well as providing income, having 'paid up' members to your campaign sends out a powerful message about the amount of support there is for your campaign (especially when compared to certain other methods of evidencing support for your campaign, such as signatories on petitions).

Let's look in turn briefly at different types of membership income.

Subscriptions and donations

You can set this at any level that you think people might be willing to pay and can afford! Whether it's £2 per month or £200 per year you will need to consider what, if anything, you can give back to members. It might be no more than giving them the confidence that you are working hard to achieve your campaign goals, but it might mean having to provide member benefits, such as invites to events, receiving newsletters etc.

Let's look at an example:

The [Cuba Solidarity Campaign](#) has a membership scheme. They have a [member offer](#), whereby if you sign a friend up to the campaign, they will be sent a book about Che Guevara. They will also be sent a member's back that contains four issues of the campaign magazine. They charge £15 for one year's membership.

Direct mail

This is another important way of getting income from both members and non-members. To do this well you really need to have a good understanding of who your (potential) supporters are. Depending on their profile (e.g. age, gender, income etc) you will need to communicate with them in different ways. And depending on the diversity of your audiences (e.g. a campaign about school bullying might want to target both young people and parents), you might need to 'segment' your communications, so that you have slightly different content, tone and 'asks'.

'Rattling tins'

It might not be the most efficient form of fundraising, but street based collections are another method to consider. They can be useful in raising your profile, and giving you direct, face-to-face contact with potential supporters.

However, the most successful street-based collections tend to be for well known 'household name' charities, and a campaign that doesn't have a high profile may struggle with this approach.

If you are going to do street-based collections you will need to get permission from your local council, even if you are a registered charity. You would normally have to apply at least a month in advance of the proposed collection date. If you are a charity, and if you plan to collect in numerous parts of the country at the same time, you can apply to the Charity Commission for an exemption order – so that you don't have to apply to each individual local authority for permission.