

A funding strategy outlines your plans for how you will resource the operations and activities of your association or group. Your funding strategy should be closely aligned with your strategic or business plan. With increasing competition for government funding, voluntary organisations will need to consider a broad-ranging approach to resourcing the organisation. It is imperative that fundraising be planned and structured in order for your group to meet its objectives and prevent development activities occurring in a haphazard way.

Obtaining funds from potential sources is time consuming and requires careful planning. Having an overall strategy will make your fundraising efforts more efficient and effective, increasing the chances of success. If you are hoping to obtain any grants you will almost certainly need to provide evidence of community support through other contributions to your organisation or project, and of sustainability by showing you are not solely reliant on grant monies.

There are some important steps in developing a funding strategy:

- 1. Identify the purpose of your group and the community need you are addressing.**
- 2. Identify your objectives and the activities you will undertake to meet them.** Before you can determine what resources you will require, you will need to have planned the activities your group will undertake and any resources required for ongoing operation for the planning period. A funding strategy is usually linked to the period of your strategic plan and should be between one and three years.
- 3. Determine the additional skills and physical resources you will require for each activity.** Start by considering what resources will be required and then consider your *organisational capacity* - what skills and resources do you already have? You can then identify the skills that you will need to bring in, either by paying for or through volunteers, and the resources you will need to buy, borrow or develop.
- 4. Identify potential sources for acquiring each (human or physical) resource.** It is important not to put all your eggs into one basket. You will need to consider a range of sources of support, but also, to ensure that if you are unsuccessful in obtaining support from one source that it does not impact on other parts of your plans. Think about which source is most likely to be interested in your plans, which source is likely to have the required resources, and which source your organisation is able to connect with.
- 5. Carry out fundraising or resource acquiring activities.** These could include:
 - Writing submissions for grants from government or philanthropic organisations.
 - Writing proposals for corporate partnership or sponsorship.
 - Developing or enhancing a Membership Scheme.
 - Soliciting private or business donations. These can be donations of time and services, donations of goods (in-kind support) or donations of money.
 - Partnering with other community groups or organisations.
 - Fundraising activities and events.
 - Sale of products and/or services.
 - Social enterprise activities.
 - Volunteer recruitment drives.
 - Negative fundraising.

