

HOW DO I MAKE A CASE FOR SUPPORT?

Purpose of this factsheet

- To give you a broad overview of the topic
- To help you understand definitions and terminology
- To be aware of the key steps
- To know where to access further support and information

This factsheet is aimed at clients accessing Dorset Community Action's free Information and Signposting Service. Further support is detailed at the end of the factsheet.

What is a case for support?

A case for support is a statement that communicates your group/organisation's work, with the aim of encouraging a funder to support your cause. It should be around a page long. It should be concise, clear and compelling. Writing the statement can also help you to be very clear on your goals and can be shared with staff and volunteers to ensure everyone's communication about the group/organisation is consistent.

Making a case for support

Use existing information collated in your business plans, promotional materials, etc. Include the following:

Information about your organization: Who you are, your purpose, track record and achievements. Refer to your business plan/ website/ monitoring reports for this information.

Why you exist: What is your mission statement? Why are you needed? What community need are you addressing and what is the scale of the problem? How do you know this need/ problem exists? What is your long-term goal or vision? Refer to your business plan and your evidence of need for this information.

What you want to achieve: What are your specific aims and objectives? Who specifically do you want to help and how? Refer to your business plan for this information.

What you will do to achieve your aims: What activities will you run? Who will be involved in the planning and running of the activities and how? Refer to your business plan for this information.

What difference you will make and to who: How will the people you aim to help benefit from your project? How will their lives be different as a consequence? What would happen if you didn't do this work? Will there be any benefits to the wider community? Refer to your business plan and any case studies on your website/ promotional materials. Refer to district council community strategy and talk about the effects felt by statutory providers i.e. police, doctors, hospitals etc.

Why you're the right organisation to do this work: What skills, experience, resources and connections do you have to do this job well? What make you stand out from other organisations doing similar work? Profile your staff's skills and your unique selling point.

What you have in place to give you the best chances of succeeding: How do you manage your finances? How do you monitor and evaluate your work? Refer to your policies and describe your process.

How much money you need to do this work: What is your fundraising goal? Have you raised any money elsewhere? Refer to your fundraising strategy.

A good case for support will:

- Be adapted to the funder's priorities and values;
- Looks at wider issues in society, such as social, geographic, economic and political factors;
- Be accurate;
- Appeal to both the head (e.g. statistics and evidence) as well as the heart (e.g. moving case studies);
- Be brief, to the point, well-organised and meaningful;
- Create a sense of urgency;
- Be based on strengths of your organisation, not its needs.

Be careful to avoid:

- Being too vague about your purpose, be as specific as you can;
- Jargon – don't assume people have the same knowledge as you. Ask a friend to look it over;

- Being over-emotional;
- Level of detail – don't go over the top with detail, but include enough concrete, well-referenced evidence to give your case credibility;
- Being too vague about your plans;
- Misunderstanding the funder's priorities.

Once we have written our case for support, what next?

Next you will need to:

- Find funders
- Check the funding criteria and select a good match
- Write a winning application
- If successful: ensure you have the systems ready to monitor & evaluate, develop a good relationship with the funder and keep them up to date.
- If unsuccessful, find out why

DCA can help with all of these areas.

Further Support and Information

More specific and in depth advice and information can be accessed through DCA's training advice, guidance and consultancy support services:

- Introduction to training on Successful Fundraising and/or Bid Writing
- 1 to 1 action planning for all aspects of funding
- 1 to 1 advice with supported toolkits on including 'steps to financial sustainability' 'developing an income strategy' 'developing financial controls'
- Bespoke services including: bid checking; financial controls checking; writing an income strategy; and bid writing.

To access these services please contact: info@dorsetcommunityaction.org.uk or call 01305 250921

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