Handout 18: The Funding Process Rationale

Funding submissions as a systems advocacy strategy: Government funding is closely related to social policy and funding is usually available to community service organisations in line with the social policies adopted by the governments of the time. Governments rely on community-based organisations to help meet the social needs of people and to help governments achieve their social goals and meet their social obligations – for example, suicide prevention programs and child abuse initiatives.

A typical government funding process can be summarised as follows. Government:

1. Develops social policies (often as a reaction to the issues of the day, such as incidence of children dying as a result of child abuse, the Drug Summit etc)
2. Decides how much money will be available to implement social policies
3. Allocates funding through government budgetary processes
4. Sets priorities in terms of services to be provided and where they will be provided, based on needs based planning
5. Writes service specifications – that is, decides what information they want from organisations to prove that they are suitable recipients of funding
6. Calls for expressions of interest (EOIs) from community organisations - this is a competitive process and governments are looking for value for money
7. Assesses EOIs (this is often done by independent panels)
8. Compiles a report recommending who should get the funding
9. Minister approves funding allocations
10. Government department and community-based organisation sign a funding agreement specifying the target group and the accountability requirements
11. Funding is provided to community based organisation for a set period of time, for example, 12 months
12. Community based organisation accounts for how money is spent.

The Funding Process

A Key Outcome of a Systems Advocacy approach may be a decision to seek funding to develop new services or expand current services.

The Process

The funding application involves more than just filling in the form. Here are a number of issues to consider.

Getting Support

You will need the formal authority of your board or committee or supervisor at the outset. It is also wise to involve colleagues and other stakeholders within your organisation at an early stage to ensure their co-operation and assistance with the tasks that will need to be done. Also useful is the early involvement of organisations other than your own whose support will be needed or useful and who will be able to add their weight to your application.
Start Early

Work through the application form, identify what needs to be done, make a plan, allocating tasks and setting deadlines. It should include:

- Materials that may need to be collected or created for example you may need some of these:
  - certificate of incorporation
  - a copy of your constitution
  - your Annual Report and/or audited financial statements
  - your business plans
  - organisational structure
  - copies of current insurance policies
  - copies of your current policies such as occupational health and safety, equal opportunity etc.
  - job descriptions for the staff you intend to employ
  - resumes of the people who will be employed or who will be important to the project
  - letters of support from other organisations
  - other attachments in support of your case
  - copies of the minutes of the meeting at which your organisation formally agreed to apply for the funding

- Approvals that need to be obtained both from your own board or management committee and from any partners you may have in the project

- Time for an independent reading of the final draft preferably by someone who is removed from the original drafting

- Time for the necessary final signatures and approvals

- A time buffer to allow for the inevitable things that will go wrong

- Allow time for a final detailed reading of the draft by a suitably skilled person writing submissions.