Top tips for funding applications from CEF2023 Workshop

19/06/2023
Thanks to Tara Bowers of ECOE, Dan Curtis of BHESCO and Nicola Davidson of Community Energy South and MaidEnergy. Watch the YouTube video of the event here: https://youtu.be/If0-6bRfx4Q

Good notes of the workshop, provided to us for anyone to use by Alban Thurston, are here

Top Tips for Funding Bids for Community Energy

★ Contact your local authority and see if they have anyone that helps with writing funding bids.

★ Talk to the funder or attend their webinar if they have one for some useful insights into what they want.

★ Read all the criteria and application advice before you start.

★ If the bid is for a large amount of money and/or has multiple partners, write a project plan for the bid itself.

★ If your organisation is small or has no reserves to cover you being paid in arrears, partner with a bigger organisation or one that the funder has funded before.

★ Write your own project or business plan for the project before you start completing the application form, including:

1) Clear rationale and objectives

2) Provide lots of stats – not just what you have done, but also industry data to prove your point that there is a need

3) Give examples of the challenges faced and how your project will solve the issues

4) Create a budget, and ensure your budget makes sense

5) The right staff in place with the right experience and qualifications and detail these

6) Make sure you cover off risks and mitigation in detail if they ask for this.
★ Answer the questions fully and individually - like an exam.

★ Use bullet points to reduce word count.

★ Give lots more detail than you think is necessary.

★ Include every little you’ll do for the ££s even if you think it’s obvious from the description.

★ Repeat the key points as often as you can.

★ Ensure you use lots of key phrases that show you know what you are talking about.

★ Have a copy editor to edit the bid.

★ Don’t give up! By their very nature most applications fail so don’t let it get you down or take it personally when yours does.

★ But if you are successful, apply to the same fund next year with the same bid (with minor changes if needed)!

As you watch or rewatch the Workshop video please add bits of advice that we failed to record in comments and we will incorporate into the document. This will be ultimately shared on our Funding Page.

1. Key Highlights and takeaways - identify the key highlights and takeaways from the event - these can be insights or main talking points from speakers, or lessons learned/ key actions.

- Read funding guidelines. Meet all the requirements.
  - Break them down. Answer each one in the application separately.
- Review draft with the team
- If an application works, use it again for the same fund next year.
- Work in partnerships with organisations known to a funder you’re applying to for the first time. Big partners are good for the Energy Redress Fund where you have to have a good financial track record and the first quarter’s costs already in the bank as they pay in arrears.
- Know your overheads and allocate them out calculated on a daily basis over the life of the project
- Include additional data in Appendices with reference in the main text, if they don’t essentially answer an application question.

Useful resources
- Dan Curtis - BHESCo: Here is the Govt Contracts Finder: https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search/Results - "energy"
- Michaela Cryan - Younity: Younity will be opening the next round of Powering Communities Fund soon, small pots of grant funding for community energy groups: https://www.younity.coop/energy-producers/powering-communities-fund
Keep an eye on our socials for details of when the next round is open…

- Younity also have a 'bridging loan' fund to help get projects built in a timely way. [https://www.younity.coop/funding/community-energy-kickstart](https://www.younity.coop/funding/community-energy-kickstart)  
  
  Connie Muir : email connie@younity.coop for more info about the bridging loan