

People and Places development support contract

January 2009 update



Welcome to the third update of the Big Lottery Fund's People and Places Development Support service provided by Tribal Regeneration's Big Hand team.

Since November 2006 the team has provided advice and support to 235 People and Places applicants. The support available includes; a dedicated helpline providing information and advice; access to a dedicated outreach worker; access to the Big Hand website and a range of training events designed to meet applicants' needs.

Findings

During 2008, our statistics indicate that out of 242 organisations invited by BIG to make a full application, the Big Hand team received 110 requests for support from applicants

The greatest demand for the support services came from South Wales (46 per cent) followed by North Wales (21 per cent) with a further 18 per cent from West Wales and 16 per cent from Mid Wales.

The majority of organisations supported in South Wales are based in Cardiff, Swansea, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Neath Port Talbot. Mid Wales referrals are predominately from Powys. The highest numbers of requests for support in West Wales are from Carmarthenshire and in North Wales, from Wrexham and Denbighshire

Understanding, developing and achieving SMART project outcomes continues to be a challenge for applicants. In addition, many organisations have had difficulties ensuring that their project aims and objectives clearly meet the identified needs of their intended target groups. The Big Hand team therefore continue to experience a high demand for support and training in identifying clear outcomes and evidencing the links between the needs of the community and the aims & objectives of the intended project.

Another growing area for support has been to provide additional guidance and training in relation to different approaches to community based consultation. This has included exploring the use of different consultation methods; making links with organisations providing similar services; working with partners; and engaging with local and strategic forums. This support has enabled applicants to obtain a balanced and clearer view of their communities' needs and enabled them to determine the level of demand and resources required to deliver their projects.

There have been fewer referrals for support for environmental focused projects with the majority of referrals coming from projects aiming to improve their communities' access to advice, advocacy, and training and projects seeking to extend or improve local facilities to benefit the community.

Helpline enquiries

Over the past year the helpline has received 110 enquiries; with 19 per cent of calls conducted in Welsh. Overall 98 per cent of initial enquiries (108 organisations) have involved requests for advice about how to respond to feedback received from the Big Lottery Fund after the outline proposal stage. Other requests for support have included;

- successful applicants seeking support and guidance about how to deliver and manage their project effectively
- support and guidance requested in collating and revising information in relation to their application at assessment stage

Big Hand website

The Big Hand website continues to be regularly accessed by applicants. This includes new users to the site and return visits by applicants, including those who registered on the site prior to 2008.

During the last 12 months, the website has been updated to include;

- ▶ New and updated information relating to local community strategies
- ▶ Information in connection with Convergence funding in Wales
- ▶ Frequently asked questions and answers section covering relevant topics identified by the applicants.

The Big Hand Website is currently being upgraded to improve site navigation and ensure greater accessibility for all. Other additions to the site will include useful toolkits to support applicants to plan and deliver their projects and further examples of good practice.

Delivery of one to one support

As stated the Big Hand team have supported an additional 110 applicants during 2008; bringing the total of supported applicant organisations to 235

Of these organisations:

- ▶ 60 per cent of organisations have completed and submitted their people and places application.
- ▶ 32 per cent of the submitted applications have received a successful response and have collectively secured £9.1 million from the Big Lottery Fund's People and Places programme.
- ▶ The remainder are continuing to develop their project ideas and prepare their applications or in some cases are seeking alternative funding opportunities.

Outreach support and developing best practice

Working on an outreach basis in the community, the Big Hand team has developed a good understanding of the issues faced by some applicants in providing sufficient evidence to justify the need for their proposed project. To support applicants to gather local data and information the team has developed a number of support tools. These include; the development of a framework to help scope the activities and services of other organisations in the area and the target groups they engage. The framework also assists applicants to identify gaps in provision and identify how their proposed project will meet local needs.

“The advice and guidance received by the outreach worker was invaluable; not only in terms of developing the application but also in evaluating the organisations’ position within the market. The consultation framework allowed us to identify new opportunities within the community and the need to expand our services with both existing and new partners.”

Another toolkit aimed at supporting applicants to undertake community consultation has helped organisations to seek and evaluate the views of the community and raise the profile of their project. In a number of cases this has resulted in the development of new partnerships and letters of support from the community.

Training events

There continues to be a good response to the applicant training events. The most popular events are; 'Monitoring and evaluating your project' & 'Understanding, developing and achieving SMART outcomes' closely followed by 'Project planning and management'. The feedback has been positive and in addition to supporting applicants to develop and deliver their projects the training events have also provide an excellent opportunity for networking, sharing ideas and exchanging information.

Some examples of feedback include:

"I was grateful for the opportunity to meet with others working in the community and gather valuable information. The event was extremely informative and delivered in an easy, friendly manner. I was glad to have the "tools" to take away with me."

"A very fruitful, positive & enjoyable workshop, which has provided me with extremely useful information which will enable me to not only complete the application form but have a better understanding of the spirit of People and Places."

To date 19 training events have been delivered across Wales; with a further 11 events scheduled to be delivered before the end of December 2009.

Due to the nature of the caseload the majority of events are delivered in the South Wales region. To increase participation from other regions across Wales, the Big Hand Team will continue to promote the benefits of the training events to applicants across Wales.

Representatives from the County Voluntary Councils and other interested third sector organisations will be encouraged to attend the events alongside an organisation that they are supporting in making a People & Places application. Supporting organisations may also attend part of the event to promote their services and engage with the applicants.

Customer satisfaction

We are committed to continuous quality improvement and survey our customers on a regular basis to ensure that our support services fully meet their needs

Customer satisfaction continues to be high. A recent survey indicated that over 88 per cent of applicants who had used the service awarded a rating of good or above and stated that they were satisfied with the level of support and advice provided by the Big Hand team.

Examples of feedback include

"Just to say I was completely won over... If we do another application we would want to access Tribal's Support service."

Community projects sometimes feel a bit disadvantaged and I think Tribal's support helps to level the playing field and gives small organisations more of a chance.

"The Outreach worker was excellent, always available on the phone or by email and understood the pressures of completing the application within the timescale. The outreach worker always had constructive comments and helped us to develop our ideas."

"It was a great help to have support during the application process. It's quite a task!"

"The support I got was very useful and helped me to put in a more focussed bid"

"I am pleased that this service is on hand to assist with the application process. The project plan for our organisation is quite complex, it's great to have a professional service to give advice on what can sometimes be a difficult time for fundraisers "

"Very valuable service that helps the application process immensely"

"Extremely helpful"

"An excellent service in all areas".

Engagement with the Third sector and other stakeholders

Over the last year the Big Hand team and representatives from the third sector have been working together to support applicants. Examples of engagement with other agencies include; working with community development workers; the County Voluntary Councils and regeneration officers.

This collaboration has been effective in assisting and building the capacity of the applicants to develop their project plans and applications and has included supporting applicants to;

- develop policies for issues such as health and safety, disability and child protection
- access local, regional and national research and results from consultation processes.
- identify potential volunteers and how to recruit, support and manager volunteers
- network with local organisations to gauge the level of interest in the project as well as identifying partnership opportunities
- access tools and systems e.g. establishing pay roll systems

The involvement of the regeneration officers has been very beneficial in helping applicants to:

- access information in relation to regional and local community strategies. This included making clear links between proposed projects with forthcoming developments in the county and enabling applicants to express clearly how their project complimented and provided additional benefits to local communities as well as the county as a whole.
- raise the projects profile and facilitate meetings between county and local authority strategic forums, such as, the lifelong learning group, young people and children's forum and the economic partnership forum.

The networking and collaboration has been extremely effective in assisting and building the capacity of the applicants to fully develop their project plans and applications. The Big Hand team ensures that all applicants are made aware of their local, regional and strategic contacts and signposts them to the relevant section of the Big Hand website to access full contact details.

Identified Actions for the next 6 months:

- ▶ Deliver 11 training events across Wales and increase collaboration with the third sector and key stakeholders to ensure effective ongoing support for applicants
- ▶ Re launch the big hand website to include; examples of best practice to stimulate interest, ideas and encourage other examples. We will particularly provide examples of some of the challenges faced and how applicants have taken actions to overcome difficulties or challenges
- ▶ Continue to develop toolkits in response to applicants identified needs
- ▶ Undertake a survey to evaluate the impact of the service on organisations and their projects

If you would like further information about the People and Places development support contract please contact Fflur Lawton, Policy and Public Affairs Manager for Big on 029 2067 8237 or email fllur.lawton@biglotteryfund.org.uk