

Funding Application Forms

For some people, completing funding application forms is as nerve-wracking as sitting an exam for which they feel unprepared. If you are one of these people, try to imagine yourself in the position of the funders. You have specific funding criteria, and only a certain amount of money to distribute. In order to determine whether an applicant meets your criteria and has a project deserving of your support, you must ask questions that are designed to give you the answers you need to help you decide which projects to fund. What you want are straightforward answers, and a clear project description. The applicants who give you what you need will be further ahead than those who do not. So, with this in mind, go through each question on the form and ask yourself whether you have answered it clearly. There are no trick questions!

Filling out application forms

If there is not enough room on the application form, type out the questions and number them in the same order as they appear on the form. Use each numbered question as a heading for each response. This allows the people on the application review panel to easily compare notes with one another. The judges will appreciate being able to readily see the questions and answers because it reduces confusion and saves them time. When they ask for a 200-word response to a question, keep it to 200 or fewer words.

Make sure that you fully answer the questions and provide all the information requested on the form.

Additional information

Usually, application forms provide a space for you to provide additional information on your project. This is the place to add information that has not been specifically requested. If the form does not provide you with a space for additional details, you can attach appendices.

What are the benefits of the project?

Show the panel that you understand the health and safety benefits of your school grounds project. For example: increasing the amount of shade in the schoolyard to protect children's skin, eyes and immune system from the sun's harmful rays; reducing accidents and aggressive behaviour in the schoolyard by enhancing play and social opportunities; redesigning spaces to meet the needs of children of different ages and abilities; planting trees to create shade and to help filter out dust and vehicle exhaust.

Describe the environmental benefits such as: enhancing local biodiversity; reducing rainwater run-off to storm sewers and surface water such as rivers and lakes by planting and removing paving; helping to offset the effects of climate change by planting to shade paving and buildings, and reducing energy consumption for heating in winter and cooling in summer, etc.

Include the educational benefits to teachers and students of creating hands-on outdoor classrooms on the school grounds, and the benefits of having people in the community participate in projects that improve human and environmental health and the many opportunities for public education that this provides.

How many people are involved in the project?

Applicants are often asked to calculate how many people (students, parents, teachers, community volunteers, professionals, municipal staff, local business supporters, etc.) the project will involve. The more people you involve in your school and community the better. It is particularly helpful to demonstrate to what extent you will include children and/or youth in the planning process and in the implementation of the project.

Visual aids

Pictures say many thousands of words. Take photos of the yard as it is at the beginning of your project. When planting with children, take photos. When children paint or model their visions of a transformed schoolyard, take photos or frame their pictures. If you have made a 3-D model, take photos of it. Submit the pictures along with your written application. Colourful pictures, and evidence of children's involvement work wonders!

Project budget

Provide a budget which shows the full cost of your project. List all costs of the materials, labour, etc., including the value in dollars of in-kind donations and services, and "salvaged" items. Give the total. Your list may include:

- ♦ Asphalt removal and recycling or disposal
- ♦ Removal and disposal of the underlying gravel
- ♦ Top soil: quantity and price per cubic yard
- ♦ Trees and other plants: species, size, quantity
- ♦ Backhoe: cost per hour, number of hours required
- ♦ Mulch: type, quantity
- ♦ Stakes and ties: quantity
- ♦ Planter edging: type and quantity
- ♦ Plant ID signs: number of signs, materials, labour, etc.
- ♦ Tools: wheelbarrow/s, spades, hoes, rakes, hoses, pails, etc.
- ♦ Support from planners, landscape architects, foresters, land surveyors, etc.
- ♦ Contributions from local municipalities, businesses, community groups, farmers, etc.

Provide a list where you subtract the total amount of the in-kind donations and services from the total project cost, and give a list of other organizations you have applied to for project funding. Funders like to see other project partners.

Budget details:	Total project cost:	= \$ 10,500.00
	Donations and in-kind services:	= \$ 3,000.00
	Of the remaining:	\$ 7,500.00
	We have applied to Funder X for:	\$ 1,500.00 (not approved)
	to Funder Y for:	\$ 2,750.00 (approved)
	and to Funder Z for:	\$ 1,250.00 (approved)
	From Funders Y & Z, we have received:	\$ 4,000.00
	(From you) we are requesting:	\$ 3,500.00

Project approvals: State from whom you have obtained the necessary approvals for your project.

Authorizing your application: Make sure you have the appropriate people sign and date the form.

Examples of attachments:

1. Your landscape/planting plan
2. Your maintenance schedule
3. Results of the student brainstorming sessions
4. Results of the site surveys
5. Photos of the school grounds
6. Photos of the model
7. Photographs of students:
 - ▶ doing site survey and measuring activities
 - ▶ building a three-dimensional model
 - ▶ drawing up plans
 - ▶ painting/drawing their vision of the grounds
 - ▶ students planting or maintaining existing projects
 - ▶ students designing and building bird feeders, seating, etc.