



The Funding Network Oxford (TFNO) Guidance for Sponsors and Charities

The Funding Network brings potential individual donors together to support social change projects. By hearing direct from people involved in the projects, our aim is to make our charitable giving well informed – and fun.

Up to five charities/social change organisations will be given the opportunity to make a pitch at the event to raise about £4,000. The audience pledge their donations (minimum £50) to the charity or charities of their choice.

What is involved in being a sponsor?

All projects need to be sponsored by someone who is prepared to come to the event and publicly pledge the first £250. This demonstrates that they personally are confident that the project is sound and the money would be wisely spent. In London the sponsor needs to be a TFN member but this is not the case in Oxford – but the sponsor does need to know you and feel able to vouch for your work. Sponsors must not be in the paid employment of a project that they sponsor. Other kinds of relationship with projects, for example in the form of trustee, mentor, or volunteer, are common.

We open for applications approximately 4/5 months before an event (ie, our events are typically held in May and we start accepting applications from December) The charity is asked what they would do with a grant of up to £4,000 (sometimes we raise less for a project, sometimes a bit more, but we ask each project to pitch for the same amount). All applications submitted by the deadline are considered by the selection panel which usually takes place in February. We may ask you for a telephone interview as part of the selection process.

The TFNO selection panel is responsible for choosing the projects that will be given the opportunity to present at the Oxford Gives event. We select projects against the criteria but also to ensure we have a range likely to appeal to our audience. You will be informed at the around 2 months prior to the event as whether or not your project has been selected to present.

If you have never been to a TFN event we strongly recommend that you look at the website www.thefunding.network.org.uk. If you would like more information about the way in which TFN Oxford works or want to talk through your application please contact Sue Raikes at sue.raikes@appleinter.net.

What kind of charities will be considered?

TFNO supports projects that aim to achieve social change: in other words, they have the potential to enable lasting positive transformation for individuals, communities and/or society & the environment over the long term. For example they may be projects which;-

- address issues of inequality and disadvantage;

- offer advocacy/campaigning/dissemination with the potential to change society for the better;
- seek to change attitudes, behaviour, laws and/or public policy;
- attempt to find a new/better solution to an underlying problem;
- focus on personal development to widen their opportunities and encourage their participation in society
- pilot solutions with the potential for expansion to support many more people.

Priority is given to small or medium-sized organisations where up to £4,000 would make a significant contribution. We like to support new, innovative and emerging initiatives and to help ideas get off the ground. We are proud of our record of supporting initiatives at the early stages when funding is tricky – and watching them develop and grow. Charities with a turnover of over £500,000 or significant reserves are unlikely to be selected, because in our experience, individuals pledging their money at an event want to know that their relatively small contribution combines with others to make a tangible difference.

Whether your charity gets a slot is not just a question of whether your application is ‘good enough’, but whether it makes a compelling case and whether it contributes to a good overall balance of projects. With more applications than slots available, this is a competitive process.

Most projects at TFNO work in or near Oxfordshire or have their national or international base here. If you are not in Oxfordshire we suggest you check on the TFN website to see if there is a Funding Network in your area.

Charities previously funded by TFNO may apply to us after three years (but even then our preference will generally be for new ideas rather than an application to repeat the earlier work). If an application is not successful at the selection panel in one year it may be re-submitted the following year - but only once.

TFNO does not support projects which involve the promotion of a particular religion or affiliated to a political party.