

Legal Education/Assistance to the Public on Legal Issues

Our current policy restricts funding to national projects rather than regional projects.

How does this impact on your organisation, if at all?

The Federation is an umbrella organisation and all its projects are, therefore, national based. As we represent over 150 Member organisations we undertake projects at the national of which the information is quickly and easily disseminated down through the regional and then local levels.

Funding projects at the national level allows NZLF to work with fewer organisations in a more efficient way. The efficiencies of funding a smaller number of larger projects removes a lot of administrative cost for both parties. Focussing on larger, nationally funded, projects also allows the Federation to focus on the important aspect of getting on and achieving successful outcomes.

The Federation has developed into a well-respected, strong, and sustainable NGO. At this point in our development we are working on establishing long term relationships with our funding partners. Rather than short-term, one-off projects, we are productively working on longer-term projects with much more broader objectives.

In what ways could the Foundation do better to assist with getting legal information to the public?

You might now be aware of the 'Keeping it Legal' document from OCVS and NZFVWO. This is a fantastic format and helping to fund this sort of initiative is probably a good way of getting information out there.

In our situation, we have a large manual that we update regularly for all of our Members. A large portion of this document is legal in nature and we will use sources such as 'Keeping it Legal' to extract the relevant information for our Members and present in a format that they are used to. Certainly, we need funding to continue this process as the writing, updating, printing, and distribution of this manual is a large expense for our organisation.

What are your particular funding needs that you find difficulty meeting?

Our ongoing administrative costs and our training function are the most difficult parts of the organisation to receive funding for. These functions are less project-based, which is the outcome for many funding organisations.

Also, larger projects where we require multiple partners to help in terms of funding are often a lot harder to manage. Ongoing commitments are important for sustainability.

The compliance costs for our Members in terms of Human Resources is also a financial drain. The legal compliances tend to detract our Coordinators from their core function of relationship and client management. This is a hidden cost that is very difficult to find funding for.

What are the key areas you have funding requirements for?

Currently, our administrative function, our training function, our resourcing function, and our Client Voices pilot.

What are the primary difficulties you have in attracting funding?

We do not fundraise as debt crises can be difficult to attract individual donations for. This is an historical fact of the organisation, which has made us more proactive finding different avenues of funding.

Gaming Trusts are notoriously difficult to receive significant funding, if any, from. We believe that our organisation, which deals with many clients with debt incurred from gambling addictions, is an ideal organisation to send the funding element of the phenomenal proceeds of gambling. Yet, this is not the case.

Compliance costs for funding is also a difficulty for us. We are a small organisation with few resources and even fewer staff. Funding is virtually a full time role, which is split between two people. Some applications can take many days to complete.

What ways could the Foundation use its funds to assist your organisation better?

Our Budget Service Manual noted above is being completely overhauled in the New Year. As it is quite legalistic in nature (OSH requirements, employment agreements, tax issues, charities rules, privacy, client's rights, etc.) this would be an obvious match to the work of the Law Foundation.

The second use would be for our new project, Client Voices. We are creating a system of primary raw data collection and analysis. The information we will be collecting will have many ramifications, legally speaking, in the financial sector. In fact, one of our main partners, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, is working with us due to the new Credit Contracts and Consumer Finance Act. This project meets three of your objectives as well as many of the sub clauses in Clause 12 of your Trust Deed:

- To provide opportunities for the acquisition and diffusion of legal knowledge and the consideration and suggestion of amendments to the law.
- To disseminate knowledge gained by such research for the education of legal practitioners, students of law, and all other persons and organisations concerned with the application, administration, development or improvement of the law.
- To protect and promote the interests of the public in relation to legal matters.

Our data will be used to effect policy change at the national level, which will include Government practice and legislative changes and input. This appears to be a perfect fit for your organisation to work with us on and I would very much like to send you some more information on it. As I discussed with you over the phone, we have just recently completed our application to the Community Partnership Fund. This application included a complete project outline that details who the pilot will work in practice. Please get in touch early in the New Year if you would like me to send you this detail to consider.

Application Guidelines

Do you find these clear and easily understood?

Yes, the guidelines are very clear. Perhaps some knowledge of legal jargon is necessary to understand some of the Law Foundation's policies but in the whole there is no problem with the clarity of the guidelines

Is there a better way of presenting this information?

No, I do not believe so. I think that the electronic format is fine. The only improvement I could suggest is having a PDF cover sheet that you can 'step into' and

complete the details online. This can then be printed off and mailed. It is a format that one Trust uses and is very efficient and user friendly.

What aspects of this information do not make sense to you?
Again, it is a very straightforward looking process.

Comments

I am currently less clear on the research element and what would be involved in the full proposal. Research is an area that I am very keen to take the Federation into. Our first foray into this area was unsuccessful, however, we were one of the few organisations advised to resubmit our application next year, at which stage I believe we will be successful. Very few community organisations are considered for research grants. We have the capability to be successful in this area and a quality research project next year will cement this for us. In terms of the Client Voices project, we will be doing considerable internal research on the information we collect and an obvious way to add value to the data would be to seek grants to collate and disseminate the research. This could possibly happen collaboratively with consultancy from an education institution. I would also like to know if this is the sort of area the Law Foundation is interested in funding.

Application Process

Application can now be made at any time during the year rather than being restricted to twice a year. What is your view on this change?

The full year application process is a far better model. It means that the administrative burden on your side is balanced out through the year rather than lumped into certain months. For our side of things, it means that we can be far more flexible with the timing of our applications and aren't restricted to working on them at any particular time during the year. For instance, applications that fall within the weeks our National Board and District Rep forums occur create an extraordinary amount of stress. This is a great way of lessening that burden for organisations.