



Outputs and outcomes: guidance for churches



Outputs and outcomes: these two words appear frequently in the world of fundraising and particularly when applying for grants. Being able to understand the difference between outputs and outcomes is key to writing clear funding applications.

These terms help funders to understand exactly what kind of activity or work your church wants to do, the impacts and benefits that it will bring or changes that it will make to your local community.

Having knowledge about outputs and outcomes will also help you clearly identify and plan your project activity. This will help you to focus on the number of activities you want to offer, how much they will cost and what resources you will need. Identifying these key points will help you and your church to shape your project.

An output or an outcome? An important distinction

If you can clearly articulate your project outputs and outcomes, your application is more likely to be understood by a potential funder. In turn, this can make them more inclined to support your project.

Some funders such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) base their entire grant-making criteria (and therefore grant committee decision-making) around outcomes. How well a proposed project can articulate its outcomes will influence the success or failure of an application. NLHF also expects to see clearly defined outputs.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund website has useful guidance about how to meet their outcomes criteria www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/outcomes. The NLHF guidance is relevant when applying to all potential funders.

How to distinguish outputs from outcomes

An output is the services or goods that are delivered. An outcome is the difference the output will make. The examples below provide a quick and easy way to remember the difference between an output and an outcome:

- The output of your church's foodbank may be that 50 emergency food parcels are delivered. The outcome is that families across the community don't go hungry or into debt to buy food.
- The output of your church posting leaflets may be that you have contacted an additional 100 people to connect them to an online Sunday worship service. The outcome is more connected, fewer socially-isolated people with higher levels of wellbeing during social distancing.
- The output of your church's youth programme may be that 10 teenagers talk to a youth worker. The outcome is more young people have increased self-esteem and improved social skills.

Want to find out more?

To find out more or for further advice visit the fundraising hub.

www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/churchfundraising

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www.philanthropycompany.com



Methodist Insurance PLC
St Ann's House
St Ann's Place
Manchester M2 7LP
Tel: 0345 606 1331 Fax: 0345 604 6302
www.methodistinsurance.co.uk

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