

MEETING: 25/09/2014

Ref: 12242

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - English for Speakers of Other Languages

Training Link

Adv: Julia Mirkin

Base: Camden

Amount requested: £46,702

Benefit: Camden

Amount recommended: £34,500

The Charity

Training Link (TL) is a community-based training provider, based in Somers Town, near Kings Cross, which is an area of high deprivation (23% of the adult population have no qualifications, compared to the London average of 18%). TL was established in 1985, with the aim of offering locally-based educational opportunities, especially targeting those who are socially excluded. Currently, 85% of TL's beneficiaries are resident in the London Borough of Camden.

Providing ESOL and adult literacy courses is the cornerstone of TL's work. However, learning opportunities are also offered in subjects that support people to find employment, such as, Food Safety and Hygiene, Customer Care, First Aid, Touch Typing and introductory computing classes. The organisation refers to its ongoing funding relationship with Camden Council as a testament to the quality of its work and its ability to offer a community-based service that complements the more intensive training offered through the adult education service. TL has 18 months remaining of a five-year grant from the Big Lottery, which has allowed it to broaden its range of vocational courses, some of which will be continued if funding is raised.

The Application

TL has applied for funding to deliver one ESOL and one adult literacy course annually for three years that would dovetail with courses funded by the London Borough of Camden, providing opportunities for learners to progress.

The Recommendation

TL is a well-established training provider that is networked with other voluntary and community organisations in its locality, providing a pool of learners from which it can recruit. This application shows the organisation avoiding over dependence on any one funding stream, reflecting an awareness of the financial climate and funding landscape. The recommendation is less than the request as it was confirmed at the assessment meeting that room hire costs were overestimated:

£34,500 over three years (£11,000; £11,500; £12,000) towards ESOL tutor fees, course accreditation and project running costs, up to Level 2 standard.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
25/11/2008	Application was declined as request was for ESOL classes that didn't target any particular hard-to-reach group.

Background and detail of proposal

The request before you is for accredited ESOL tutors, course accreditation costs, room hire and overheads, related to the delivery of two weekly classes for three years. 24 learners will attend classes of approximately three hours in duration for 33 weeks per year, 12 of which will be attending ESOL entry-level one, which is for

beginners and 12 will attend English entry-level three classes, which are for those with greater proficiency. All language courses prepare students for exams in speaking, listening and writing. In addition, ITC support is offered through the free internet café on site. All learners benefit from advice and support from TL, including signposting and employment preparation.

TL's support is designed to suit people with busy lives, including childcare and family commitments, and irregular working schedules. Classes take place during school hours or in the evening and TL regularly consults with beneficiaries about the content and structure of its provision. Current and past learners serve on the organisation's management committee, which encourages students to take active roles in the organisation's operations and their community more widely. The organisation's policies and practices meet the standards of PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations, produced by the Charity Evaluation Service); NOCN (National Open College Network) and the British Computer Society quality standards. TL aims to maintain a high tutor to student ratio, which it believes is reflected in its pass-rates: between 2010 and 2014, 83 students participated in ESOL courses with a pass rate of 83%. As TL offers ESOL provision from beginners' level, there is a constant flow of eager students ready to progress to more advanced courses.

Financial Information

Forecast income in the current year 2014/15 amounts to £73,620, all of which had been confirmed by August 2014.

TL's reserves policy is to hold a minimum of £10K in reserve, which is a modest holding equating to approximately 1.5 months' worth of expenditure. The charity believes that this is sufficient to maintain an appropriate level of working capital and to protect future operations from the effects of any variations in its income or expenditure.

The charity has explained that its 'cost of generating funds' is low because it has benefited from some longer-term grants, i.e. five-year grants and continuation funding, which reduces in-year costs.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Independently Examined Accounts	2014/15 Current Year Forecast
	£	£
Income and Expenditure		
Income	73,675	73,620
Expenditure	72,917	69,855
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(1,779)	3,765
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	2,537	0
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	758	3,765
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	1%	5.1%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	1,150 (1.6%)	1,650 (2.2%)
Free unrestricted reserves		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	14,447	18,212
How many months' worth of expenditure	2.4	3
Reserves Policy target	£10,000	£10,000
How many months' worth of expenditure	1.6	1.7
Free reserves over/(under) target	4,447	8,212