

Funding 102: Grant Writing Lab

You'll spend most of this morning's session drafting and getting feedback from your peers, with me moving between groups to help where it's most useful. This hand out has four parts: how to give and receive feedback well, your feedback round cue card, a Case for Support cue card pulled from our earlier workshops, and language and framing cue cards to help your project land with funders. Keep it beside your draft and dip in and out as you work.

1. Peer Feedback Ground Rules

- Confidentiality: what's shared in your group stays in the room.
- Generosity first: assume good intent and real effort behind every draft.
- Give both warm and cool feedback (what's working, and what could be stronger)
- When you're receiving feedback, just listen and take notes. You don't need to defend or explain, as you'll get a moment to respond after, and you don't have to act on every suggestion.
- Everyone presents and everyone reviews. This only works if everyone fully participates.

2. Cue Card: Giving Warm and Cool Feedback

Warm feedback tells the presenter what's genuinely working, and why. Be honest and generous with this warm feedback as it builds confidence in the parts worth keeping. Cool feedback offers another way of thinking about the draft, identifies gaps, confusions, etc. Please deliver the cool feedback with curiosity. Good sessions need both. Warm feedback on its own doesn't move a draft forward; cool feedback on its own is just criticism.

Sentence starters to help you give feedback....

Warm feedback	Cool feedback
"What's landing well for me is..."	"I'm not clear yet on..."
"I believed the need was real because..."	"I wonder what would happen if you..."
"The moment that stuck with me was..."	"A funder might ask..."
"This made me want to act because..."	"Have you considered..."

Keep feedback useful, not just polite or blunt...

Avoid	Try instead
"This doesn't work."	"I wonder what would happen if you tried..."
"You need to change this."	"Have you thought about..."
Vague praise: "It's good."	Specific praise: "The line about [X] made me picture exactly who benefits."
Rewriting it for them.	Asking a question that helps them find their own fix.

And remember: When you receive feedback you don't have to defend your choices in the moment, and you don't have to take every piece of advice. Write it all down, then decide afterwards what actually strengthens your project.

3. Cue Card: Your Feedback Round

Work in your fixed group of three. Take turns being the presenter. Roughly 20 minutes per person — use a phone timer so everyone gets a fair turn.

Step	What happens
1. Present(4 min)	Presenter shares their project and where they're stuck or unsure. Others just listen — no interrupting.
2. Clarify(3 min)	Peers ask only clarifying questions (“What did you mean by...”) — not advice yet.
3. Warm feedback(4 min)	Peers share what's genuinely working — be specific, not just nice. Use the sentence starters above.
4. Cool feedback(5 min)	Peers offer other ways to think about it, gaps they noticed, or questions a funder might ask. Presenter still just listens.
5. Reflect(3 min)	Presenter shares what landed and what they'll change. Then swap — next presenter.

4. Checklist: Is Your Draft Ready?

Use this to review your own draft, or a peer's.

- ☐ Head (logic): Have you clearly named the problem and shown your solution is the right one, right now?
- ☐ Heart (feeling): Is there a real story, example, or image — not just data — that a funder will remember?
- ☐ Hands (practical): Is it obvious exactly what the money will be used for, and how you'll know it worked?
- ☐ Outcomes: Have you separated the need, the outcomes (change), the activities (what you'll do), and the indicators (how you'll prove it)?
- ☐ The ask: Is it specific — a clear amount, for a clear purpose — rather than a general appeal?
- ☐ Voice: Read it aloud. Is it active (“you change lives”) rather than passive (“lives are changed”)? Is it building momentum, not just describing need?

5. Cue Card: Case for Support Resources

Below is an overview of resources from my previous Workshops to offer additional guidance for your draft.

5.1. The three Hs

Head: Logic. Show you've identified a real problem and an appropriate, worthwhile solution.

Heart: Feeling. Personal stories are the most impactful part of any case since data alone doesn't move people.

Hands: Practical. Show exactly what's needed and how it will be used, so donors and funders feel assured that your solution is achievable.

5.2. Outcomes triangle (worked example)

Aim	Make Taranaki a great place for autistic children to grow up.
Outcomes	Improve ECE educators' knowledge of autism. Increase public awareness of autistic children's needs. Empower carers to advocate for their children.
Activities	Run a full-day education event for 200 ECE educators. Offer a free community education evening. Advertise free community support and services.
Indicators	Post-event surveys. Whiteboard feedback at the event. Attendance figures at the event and at follow-up community gatherings.

5.3. Five reframes for a stronger case (note: this is more suitable for individual giving or sponsorships)

Start with the future, not the past. Paint the world you're building, not the history you're preserving.

Make it personal, not institutional. Use *you* more than *we*. They're the hero, not you.

Create urgency, not guilt, because opportunity expires, not hope. FOMO beats obligation.

Show momentum, not need. Winners attract investment; losers attract pity.

Promise transformation, not transaction. Supporters are not buying services, they're building legacy.

5.4. Pressure test your pitch

What changes if I say yes? What breaks if I say no?

Why me, why now? Who else believes in this?

What happens after I give?

5.5. Active vs passive voice

Passive (weaker)	Active (stronger)
"Lives are being changed every day through the support of our donors."	"You change lives every day when you support [Org]."
"Homelessness can be ended when the community comes together."	"With your donation, we launch a new programme to end homelessness in New Plymouth."

6. Cue Cards: Language and Framing

Funders respond to language that centres people's strength and agency, not just their hardship.

Remember that, even if we talk about need, that we always uphold the dignity of the people we want to serve.

Telling a community's story is a privilege and we have a responsibility to avoid turning people into objects of pity.

The principles and cue cards below will help you using strength based language.

6.1. Five Principles: How to Talk About Child and Family Wellbeing

Lead with a vision. Paint the concrete, better future before you list the barriers or problems.

Name the agents. Say who is creating the problem and who can solve it. Avoid passive lines like "poverty has risen."

Avoid negating or myth-busting. Repeating a myth to knock it down just reinforces it. Tell your positive story instead.

Sell the cake, not the ingredients. Lead with the tangible change in people's lives, not technical or policy detail.

Show people they're not alone. Highlight who else is already acting, rather than focusing on lack of action.

6.2. Mental models to switch off / on

Switch off (unhelpful)	Switch on (use instead)
Individualism / "bootstraps": anyone can escape poverty if they work hard enough.	Grit and determination with better systems: people are resourceful and resilient, but unjust systems constrain them.
Deserving vs undeserving poor.	Better systems: unjust economic, housing and welfare systems can be redesigned to help everyone thrive.
Fatalism: poverty is inevitable, nothing really changes.	Better systems and hopefulness: policy change (income support, housing, wages) makes progress achievable now.
Culture of poverty: ingrained community values or behaviours cause poverty.	Better systems with grit and determination: people are locked into poverty by policy barriers, not by who they are.
Them versus us: helping "them" costs "us."	Together we thrive: poverty affects all of us, directly or indirectly — shared struggles, shared solutions.
Welfare/support is the problem: it creates dependency.	Foundations: well-designed support is a building block for a thriving community, not a handout.

6.3. Words to avoid and embrace

Avoid	Embrace
"Poor people"	"People made poor" / "people in poverty"
"Vulnerable / less fortunate people"	"Problem-solving people" navigating constrained systems
"Stuck" / "broken"	"Locked / unlocked", "overloaded" (name the load, and lifting it)
"We need your help because..." (guilt)	"The time is now because..." (urgency and opportunity)
"Equity"	"Fair and just", paired with what that means in practice

6.4. Frames to avoid and use

Frame to avoid	Use instead
Personal responsibility: framing outcomes as individual choices alone.	Name the external constraints on choice — be concrete ("high rents," not "cost of living").
Economic naturalism: "poverty cycle," as if nothing can be done.	Poverty and disadvantage are the result of systems that were designed — and can be redesigned.
Basic needs vs wants.	Self-determination: the resources and support people need to set and reach their own path.
Culture of poverty / "broken families."	Opportunity: access (or lack of access) to good education, housing, and strong social networks.
Framing services or benefits themselves as the problem.	Lead with the problem your project addresses; frame your programme as part of the solution.

6.5. Bringing it all together: Frame your message specific for your project

WHO	The people in your story — participants, whānau, your organisation, decision-makers.
WHAT	Your vision: the concrete, better future — stated before the problem.
WHY	The shared values this serves (e.g. compassion, justice, manaakitanga, shared responsibility)
BARRIERS	What's stopping this, with human agents named — not "poverty has risen," but who made which choices.
HOW	Your project or solution, tied to evidence of why it will work.
ACTION	The specific ask — sized to match the problem you've described.

The information shared in sections 6.2 to 6.5 are from free online resources from The Workshop. Use whichever structure feels most natural for your project, alongside the guidance on the Outcomes Triangle and Case for Support tools above.