

LEEDS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT-MAKING HANDBOOK

1. ABOUT LCF

The Leeds Community Foundation (LCF) is an independent grant-making body that works with local individuals, families, companies and organisations to raise money that is then used to make grants to local voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises. We also work with national organisations to distribute grants, on their behalf, in Leeds.

We were established in 2005 and have now given out over £30 million in grants to over 3,300 community groups and charities, making us the largest independent grant-maker in Leeds. We primarily support small community groups and locally-based charities and social enterprises in the Leeds Metropolitan District, although some of the programmes we run support activity in the Bradford Metropolitan District or the wider Northern England region.

2. PRIORITIES FOR FUNDING

We run several different grants programmes on behalf of our donors, most of which have specific criteria. This may be in terms of the issue the programme seeks to address, geographical location of the activity, age of beneficiaries, type of activity, size of organisation etc. You can apply to whichever programmes you believe your group is eligible for. In general, however, we prioritise projects that:

- Are run by local people, for local people
- Are relevant to local needs and have a direct impact on the community
- Support people living in disadvantaged communities
- Help people who are most vulnerable
- Can demonstrate that there is a need and demand for the project or activity
- Help people to help themselves

We prefer to be a major contributor to a project (at least 30-50%, depending on the programme) and will rarely make a small contribution to a very large appeal. We prefer to support ongoing projects or activities, as opposed to one-off events, unless you can demonstrate that the event will have a longer-term or wider community benefit. We also like to see how your project might be sustainable after our grant has ended. Most of our grants are for up to 12 months but we do make a small number for two to three years.

3. SIZE OF GRANTS

The size of grants available depends on the specific grants programme. Most of the grants we make are for less than £25,000 and more than half are for less than £5,000. Our average grant size is under £10,000, however, some of our programmes do offer significantly larger sums.

4. VOLUME OF GRANTS

Over the last few years we have awarded over 500 grants each year, with over 700 in 2016/17. The proportion of applications which are successful in each grants programme varies significantly depending on the amount of funding available and the quality of applications received. In the last few years just under half of the applications received were successful.

It is very rare for a particular programme to be undersubscribed - indeed some of our programmes are fifteen to twenty times oversubscribed. This does mean that we are not able to fund every application we receive, no matter how deserving the project is. We do understand that it is disappointing if we are not able to make a grant offer to you but sometimes we simply do not have sufficient funding available to support every application that meets the criteria.

5. WHO WE FUND

Your organisation does not have to be a registered charity to apply for a grant. However there are some basic criteria which apply to most of our programmes.

- You must be a not-for-profit, voluntary or community group or social enterprise – this includes registered charities, companies limited by guarantee, community interest companies limited by guarantee, charitable incorporated organisations and unincorporated community organisations. We do not usually fund companies or community interest companies limited by shares.
- You must have a governing document (constitution/set of rules/memorandum and articles of association as applicable) that show how your group is run or managed.
- Your organisation must be established for charitable / social aims and this should be clear from your governing document.
- The governing document must clearly show what would happen to any assets if the group winds up / dissolves.
- You must have at least three unrelated people on the governing body, management committee, board of directors or board of trustees.
- You must have a separate bank account under the name of your group with at least two unrelated signatories.
- We are committed to equal opportunities and ask organisations to have a written Equal Opportunities Policy and be able to demonstrate their commitment to equal opportunities.
- Groups working with children and/or vulnerable adults will be required to have a Child Protection Policy and/or a Vulnerable Adults Policy.

Some programmes may have more specific criteria e.g. in relation to the type of organisation. There are also a few programmes which make exceptions to the above. Please make sure you read the guidance notes for each scheme to check you are eligible.

6. GENERAL EXCLUSIONS

Unless otherwise noted in the guidance for a particular fund, applications **cannot** be accepted where:

- Projects have already taken place or applications for retrospective funding.
- Activities would normally be funded from statutory sources e.g. local or central government or health bodies. We can fund Parent Teacher Associations and 'Friends of' organisations. Our Looked After Children's fund does support young people in care.
- The request is for deficit funding or repayment of loans.
- Projects are primarily for the advancement of religion or politics (though we do fund community groups operating out of faith centres and secular activity run by faith groups).
- The main beneficiaries are animals (except for the Mars in the Community Fund).
- The organisation's aim is to make profit for members/shareholders (unless you are a social enterprise reinvesting profits for a social aim).
- The request is for sponsorship, advertising, support for fundraising events for a third party or a contribution to a general fundraising or large capital appeal.
- The application is for an individual (other than for the Looked After Children Fund, Ann Maguire Arts Education Fund or Solutions for an Ageing Society programme).
- The application is from a regional or local office of a national organisation (unless you can show that you are independently managed and operated).
- The request is for medical research or medical equipment.
- A group has had a previous grant which has not been managed satisfactorily.
- The organisation has access to other significant funding sources, including those with substantial fundraising teams.
- The project is for activity outside of the fund's geographical area (usually Leeds Metropolitan District, though there are some exceptions).

Applicants who have previously been awarded a grant from LCF are welcome to re-apply once the activity funded by that grant has finished and we have received a satisfactory monitoring report.

7. APPLICATION PROCESS

We publicise our grant programmes through a range of sources. The best place to find out about our programmes is the Leeds Community Foundation website (www.leedscf.org.uk/grant-making). We also use the Doing Good Leeds website (www.doinggoodleeds.org.uk) where you can also find out about other potential sources of funding. We notify relevant forums and networks of grant opportunities so it is a good idea to make sure you're linked into the relevant networks. Some grant programmes are also promoted in the local press, in particular the Yorkshire Evening Post.

Some programmes are one-off schemes, others run several times throughout the year. We try to give at least six weeks' notice from launching a scheme to the deadline for submitting applications. We encourage you to submit an application as soon as it is ready rather than wait until the last minute when things such as IT issues can cause problems.

Most of our programmes use an online application process. This means you can save the application as you go, share it with others in your organisation for comments, work on it and submit it at any time. As part of the online process you will receive various emails – your spam filter may put some of these in your 'junk' or 'spam' box so please make sure you check there as well as your normal inbox.

If you find using a computer difficult then for most programmes we can provide a hard copy of the form for you to complete.

For some programmes we will also provide detailed guidance notes to help you complete the application form. The online application process has built-in help and guidance notes.

As part of the application process we ask you to send us various supporting documents. These may vary by scheme but the guidelines will tell you what to send. Documents can be attached through the online application form or emailed/posted. For most schemes we require:

- a copy of your governing document (i.e. constitution, rules, memorandum / articles of association)
- a copy of your latest published accounts (or income / expenditure information for smaller organisations) and in some cases management accounts to cover the period from your latest published accounts; we appreciate that organisations under a year old cannot provide this
- names and addresses of directors / trustees / management committee members
- quotes if any large items of capital expenditure are requested

The other documents we require for some programmes may include:

- business plans and cashflow forecasts
- copies of policies such as child protection, vulnerable adults, equal opportunities

If you are successful in being awarded a grant, we will require the following:

- **signed, hardcopy** of the Funding Agreement (terms and conditions) which we will email to you (please note we cannot accept photocopied, scanned, or electronic signatures)
- **hardcopy** a recent bank statement; this can either be a photocopy / online printout signed by two of the account signatories or an original, which does not need to be signed (please note we cannot accept photocopied, scanned, or electronic signatures)

If we ask for a certain piece of documentation it is because we need it to complete our assessment. If you are not able to provide us with any of the documentation then please get in touch and tell us why.

The deadline for submitting an application and all the supporting documentation will be made clear in the publicity, webpage and criteria. The deadline is important – as above please allow yourself time to complete the application and get all the supporting documentation to us by the deadline. If we don't have the information we need then we will not be able to assess your application. At best this will delay the process, at worst it will mean we cannot consider the application at all and your application will not be processed. Please note, we do not have an external post box so if you are dropping items off in person, you will need to come during normal working hours.

Please also make sure you put the correct postage on any documentation you are mailing to us as otherwise it will not reach us. Posted documents must be addressed to Leeds Community Foundation, First Floor 51a St Pauls Street, LS1 2TE specifically as we share our building with other organisations.

8. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

We will acknowledge your application (either automatically through the online system or by email) once it is received. We will then carry out an initial review of the application and supporting information to ensure all the basic requirements are met.

We will then carry out a more detailed assessment. This includes a review of questions such as:

- Do your organisation and project meet the priorities of the fund?
- Does the group have the capacity to deliver the project?
- What is your track record like in delivering similar projects?
- Does the project make sense in terms of what you want to do and when?
- Does the budget look reasonable?

This is all done our grants team and other colleagues who, between them, have over 35 years of experience in assessing grants applications.

In some cases we may need to ask you further questions about your application, to gather more information or help clarify any queries raised. We do this with many of the applications we receive, especially for larger grants, so it does not necessarily mean that there are any issues with your application.

Once this assessment is complete the applications are all considered by a panel who have the responsibility of taking decisions on which applications will be funded. The panel is independent of Community Foundation staff. There is usually a different panel for each scheme, with representatives from the funder, the local community, experts in particular fields where relevant, along with representatives of the public and/or private sector as appropriate. The panel will usually meet within two months of the closing date and timescales are usually given on our website. It is important to stress that Leeds Community Foundation staff **do not** take the grant decisions.

The panel's decision will be one of the following

- Yes: a grant is approved (this may sometimes be a lower offer than the amount applied for depending on the nature of the scheme).
- Conditional yes: a grant is approved but there are certain conditions the panel have made before the offer is confirmed. We will make these clear and tell you what you need to do before we can release the grant.
- Defer: we will make reasons clear and set out what needs to be done before we could reconsider the application.
- Decline: we will give as clear a reason as possible as to why the application was not successful. However, as mentioned above, we are not able to fund every application we receive, no matter how deserving the project is. We do understand that it is disappointing if we are not able to make a grant offer to you but sometimes we simply do not have sufficient funding available to support every application that meets the criteria.

All grants made by the Foundation are discretionary. We welcome feedback on our process and we do also have a complaints procedure. However please note that we can only consider appeals

or complaints about how the application was processed, not about the decision as to whether a grant was awarded.

9. MONITORING AND IMPACT REPORTING

If your application is successful we will ask you to demonstrate what you achieved with the grant and to confirm how it was spent. It is important for us to know how the grants we distribute make a difference to the community. By giving us the information showing what you have done, you help us measure our impact and we use this information to encourage funders to support us further.

When we make the grants payment, we will tell you what information we need you to provide. We do this so you can gather evidence and information as the project proceeds. If you have any questions please call us to discuss as it is easier to clarify at the beginning than rectify misunderstandings at the end of the process.

We will also tell you when you need to send us the information. We suggest you make a note of this to remind you. We will usually send you a reminder a few weeks before the due date. If you have completed the project you can send us the information earlier – you don't have to wait until the final deadline. We welcome being sent other reports or documents if you have them.

It is very important that we receive the monitoring and impact information from you. As above it helps us measure the impact we make. If you do not send the information to us by the date given then we will not be able to consider you for another grant. Copies are available on our website

We will publicise the grants we make and we also encourage funded groups to publicise their work, including acknowledging support from Leeds Community Foundation and the funder if appropriate. Logos and guidelines for using these are available on our website.

If you encounter any problems delivering the project funded by the grant, please do tell us when they occur. We may be able to help, for example by extending the project period or agreeing a change to the spend profile, but can't help if we don't know.

10. SUPPORT AVAILABLE

We are very happy to be contacted about: any general queries you may have regarding a particular grants scheme; the grants process; to explain particular questions on the form; or what kind of support documentation we need.

We will also try to help with any technical queries regarding the online process where we can. However we can't tell you what to put in your application and we can't review applications before you submit them as this would be unfair to other applicants.

11. COMMON REASONS WHY APPLICATIONS ARE NOT SUCCESSFUL

If we are not able to make a grant we do try to explain the reasons why the application was not successful. Listed below are some common reasons why applications are not successful, not just to LCF but other funders as well.

- Vague or unclear plans which are not clarified when queried – we need to know exactly what activities you plan to undertake with the grant.
- Wrong geography – some programmes have a very specific geographic focus e.g. the Jimbo's Fund will primarily support projects delivering in certain areas of East Leeds. Applications for that Fund from projects in West Leeds, for example, are very unlikely to be successful.
- Insufficient evidence of need. Please provide specific evidence as opposed to a broad statement such as 'we know that....'. This might be by the use of relevant statistics (you can find information on the Leeds Observatory or through Leeds City Council) but statistics are not everything. We need to understand how you know there is a need / demand for what you want to do – including telling us about the people you're supporting and why specifically they would benefit. Have you done any research or surveys? Has it been suggested by your users / beneficiaries?
- Projects with restricted beneficiaries – some grants programmes will not support applications where the target group of beneficiaries is very limited or narrow.
- Impact and outcomes – you need to be able to show how you know that what you want to do makes a difference to the people you're supporting and meets the aims of the programme.
- Poor planning – e.g. rushed or unformed plans; projects which would start before the closing date for applications or finish after the date when money must be spent.
- Applications where the budget is not detailed, does not match the application and/or does not add up.
- Duplication of existing services – we are unlikely to fund something which is already being delivered by someone else in the same area.
- Poor value for money – e.g. requests for £1,000 to fund trips for 4 people, lunch clubs costing £25 per head
- Not providing the required supporting documentation / information by the deadline.
- Repeating an application – different programmes have different objectives and you need to make sure your application is tailored to the specific aims of the programme rather than using exactly the same information across different programmes.

12. WHAT TO DO TO IMPROVE CHANCES OF SUCCESS

We wish that we had more money to spend and could fund more projects! However we do only have limited funding and panels will prioritise those applications that provide the information required and demonstrate that they most closely meet the aims of a particular programme.

Below you will find some tips to improve your chances of success (although we cannot guarantee that your application will be successful given the limited funding we have available).

- Plan in advance – don't leave the application until the last minute. Usually there will be around six weeks between a programme opening and the deadline.
- Make sure you have everything you need to apply – you will usually have to send supporting information as mentioned above – by the deadline.
- Read the guidelines carefully.
- Read the criteria and aims of the fund.
- Read the exclusions.

- Make sure your project fits – what fits one programme won't necessarily fit another, what you had funding for before may no longer be appropriate for what the fund wants to achieve now.
- Read the questions before starting to fill in the form and make sure you understand.
- Answer questions fully but be clear and concise.
- If you are not sure, get in touch, we are here to help.