

THE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES FUND

A LEGACY OF THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

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1. GEOGRAPHY

Which areas are covered by this funding?

Birmingham, Cannock Chase, Coventry, Dudley, Redditch, Sandwell, Shropshire, Solihull, Tamworth Telford and Wrekin, Walsall, Warwickshire, and Wolverhampton

Will each area in the West Midlands Combined Authority get a fair share of the fund?

We strive to ensure fairness and equity in the distribution of this grant across the region. To achieve this, we have considered factors such as the population size and the indices of multiple deprivation. This approach provides us with the necessary information to effectively monitor and guide our initiatives throughout the entire West Midlands Combined Authority region. We have refrained from assigning specific allocations to areas because we recognise that doing so would hinder our efforts to foster a more inclusive West Midlands that collaborates seamlessly across boundaries.

Redditch is listed individually – does this mean that the rest of Worcestershire is not included?

Redditch is the only local council in Worcestershire that is a member of the West Midlands Combined Authority, so is the only area included. If you are based outside Redditch (e.g. Bromsgrove) but already deliver activities/projects in Redditch you can apply but only to activities/projects that will benefit Redditch residents.

Will the more deprived urban areas have a large proportion than the rural, less deprived areas?

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Can the Large and the Medium Grants cover multiple local authority areas?

Yes, as long as all those areas are included in the list of eligible WMCA local authority areas.

Do you have to work across an entire local authority area to apply for a Large Grant. If so, this could mean medium-sized organisations are unable to apply as their capacity might not stretch enough.

Large Grants are aimed at larger-scale projects, probably with a wider geographical spread. However, it is not essential to work across an entire local authority if you have a project with a deep impact in a smaller area.

In regards to deprivation zones, will equitable resource distribution take into account identity statistics such as religion or ethnicity? What will you do to ensure minority led organisations are not excluded from receiving funding?

Each application form has a questionnaire at the end which we are asking all applicants to complete. This is to capture information about who governs an organisation and the diversity of its governing body. This will help us identify if particular groups are not accessing or being awarded funding with a view to increasing our engagement with underserved groups.

2. HOLDING MORE THAN ONE GRANT

Can we apply for more than one grant from this fund?

You can only apply for one Large Grant, and if awarded a Large Grant you cannot apply for any other grants. In exceptional circumstances, you can apply for a maximum of two other grants **but these cannot run concurrently**. You should complete your first grant before applying again. You will have to make a very strong case to be considered for a second grant.

You could then apply for:

- one Small Works and one Medium Grant, or
- one Small Works and one Small Grant, or
- two Small Grants

Can you apply for a grant as the lead of a consortium as well as individually?

The lead applicant for a consortium bid can only hold that one grant if successful. Other members of the consortia could apply for a different grant but will need to demonstrate they have capacity to work on both projects.

Can I apply for an individual small grant and also be within a consortium grant?

Yes, as long as you are not the lead organisation.

If otherwise eligible and your organisation works in multiple of the geographical areas, can you apply for more than one grant?

A single organisation can only hold one grant at a time. If you work in several areas you can apply for a 'package' of activities.

If we currently have applications pending assessment with the Community Foundation for other grant programmes/funds, will this hinder our application to the Inclusive Communities Fund?

No, other applications won't be affected

Can we be a collaborative partner in multiple bids that are led by other lead organisations in the same or different local authority areas?

Yes, as long as you are not the lead organisation, that there is no duplication of funding for your organisation, and that you have the capacity to work across multiple projects.

Can we apply for a medium grant that covers several community projects, for example similar projects that are geared separately for young people and older people - or would they have to be separate?

Yes, providing you have the capacity to deliver these. You could present the work as a 'package' but you must be able to demonstrate the activities are responding to a need that you have identified within the community.

Can two organisations that operate out of the same venue (such as a parish council and community centre committee) both apply for funding separately?

Yes, as long as this is for different activities.

3. ELIGIBLE ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Can Community Interest Companies limited by shares apply?

If a CIC is limited by shares rather than guarantee the company may be eligible providing they meet other criteria which will include open share distribution from the wider community. We will not fund an organisation where the shares are limited to the Directors or people who are involved/employed with the CIC only.

Can local authorities, including town and parish councils apply?

Local Authorities are eligible where activity is for community benefit and would not have been able to access the funding through community partners, (for example in small rural parishes). In addition, we cannot fund any activities that are part of your statutory duty.

Can a sports club limited company with CASC status apply?

Yes, as long as the organisation is not for profit.

Can companies limited by guarantee apply?

Yes, as long as the organisation is not for profit.

Can National Organisations apply?

The Commonwealth Community Grants fund is aimed at local organisations based in and delivering services/activities within the funding area. National organisations can only apply if they already have an established West Midlands presence; projects would be West Midlands-led; and if they can clearly demonstrate they understand local needs and have community engagement. Grants cannot be used towards the parent organisation unless costs are clearly project related.

Do applicants need to be a part of a formal organisation to apply for a small grant?

Yes. Only constituted organisations can apply.

Can an individual apply for a grant to work with a specific community?

Grants can only be awarded to an organisation, not an individual.

Can we apply via an affiliation? For example, could we apply via Badminton England if they agreed?

Yes, you can use a trusted organisation as a sponsor but you should discuss your proposals with the other organisation before applying.

Can national organisations with a local project apply? We'd be looking at a consortia approach with local community partners.

Yes, but the national organisation must have existing work being delivered in the area and you cannot allocate any of a grant towards the running of the national organisation.

We have been self-funding through memberships and sponsorship. Would you consider an application from us favourably? Who can help with putting the project bid together?

All applications will be considered on their own merit. Your previous type of income might be noted but would not normally affect whether a grant is awarded or not. There are a couple of webinar recordings available about the Inclusive Communities Fund and how to apply: <https://www.unitedby2022.com/resources/>

Can I apply for a grant for work taking place in local schools that is delivered by a charity?

Yes, this is allowed provided that the work is not a part of the statutory provision and the work should be community facing.

Are climate change energy projects included?

We haven't excluded them but there is a more appropriate fund we are managing which we recommend you look at: <https://www.heartofenglandcf.co.uk/community-environment-fund/>

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Does it have to be third sector? Could schools that run projects for community members apply?

See the list of eligible organisations in the Application Guidance Pack.

Would supporting physical disabilities such as Parkinson's and cerebral palsy through physical therapy class as physical activity?

Yes, and it might also align with the theme Mental Health and Well-Being.

Is it possible to fund a project delivered during school time by a charity that is external to the school itself?

Yes, provided that it is not a part of the school's statutory provision.

Can we apply to fund an event to attract new members to our organisation, such as a running club?

Yes, as long as it is a community event that is not-for-profit. We would also be interested to know what will happen after the event and if it is just a one-off?

Will our organization still be eligible for funding if we nominate someone for the community panel?

Yes, your organisation would still be eligible. In this case, the person concerned would need to declare an interest when your organisation's application is being considered and take no part in the decision-making for that particular application.

Can a new organisation apply?

Yes, but they must provide strong evidence of the need and that consultation has taken place with potential beneficiaries.

Are mental health and emotional wellbeing 1:1 and group provision seen as a statutory responsibility in schools?

It is not a statutory requirement but schools have a statutory duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

4. LARGE GRANTS (CLOSED)

Can the large funding pot be used to cover staff costs related to the projects?

Yes. You can include direct project related staff costs and Full Cost Recovery.

Can you include capital spend within a large grant application?

You can include items such as furniture, storage cupboards, sports equipment, ITC that are essential to deliver the planned project or activities. You will need to include quotations for all items of £300 or more.

Is it essential to have matched funding for a large grant?

We would expect to see some match funding for Large Grant applications but it is not essential. Your application will be stronger if you have other funding already secured. Match funding for the other Grant pots is also welcomed.

Will there be any specific outputs that need to be met for large grant applications? (e.g. a specific number of sessions).

There are no set requirements - it is up to each organisation to design their project and outputs to meet the need they have identified.

Are organisations expected to have a minimum level of income to apply for either the medium or large grants?

There is no minimum income level needed to apply, but the maximum income level for small grants is £500,000.

Why is there a closing date/deadline to apply for 'Large Grants' and 'Small Works, Renovations & Refurbishments'?

All grants must be spent and projects completed by the end of December 2024. This means the grant period is likely to be nine/ten months only by the time decisions are made and grants are awarded. The closing date has been set in order to maximise the length of the grant period.

How much match funding is needed for large grants? How much do you expect as a minimum?

There is no set percentage or amount needed for matched funding. We can fully fund a project with a large grant, however your application will be stronger if there is already funding as it shows there is interest from other partners.

Can we include core costs in our budget?

Large Grants are for project funding but you can include Full Cost Recovery. You will need to show your FCR calculations in the budget table.

Is there any income limit for the medium and large grant applications?

No, there are no income limits

5. SMALL WORKS, REFURBISHMENT, RENOVATION GRANTS (CLOSED)

We are applying for a Small Works, Renovation and Refurbishment and we lease our building. How long must remain on our lease?

Your lease must have a minimum of three years remaining on your lease.

Can we still apply for the small works grant if we are not a charity or non-profit organisation?

All applicants have to be constituted, not-for-profit organisations. However, it is not necessary to be a registered charity. Please see the list of eligible organisations in the Application Guidance Pack.

Does the Small Works Grant fund only cover capital works?

The Small Works Grant fund is primarily to fund capital works but you can include Project Management time or Full Cost Recovery required to deliver the work.

Why is there a closing date/deadline to apply for 'Large Grants' and 'Small Works, Renovations & Refurbishments'?

All grants must be spent and projects completed by the end of December 2024. This means the grant period is likely to be nine/ten months only by the time decisions are made and grants are awarded. The closing date has been set in order to maximise the length of the grant period.

Can cost of repairs to prospective premises be included?

No. You will need to already own or rent the premises.

For questions re: Risk Register

Please see Section 9: Supporting Documents.

Can we apply for the minor refurbishment of a sports facility that is council owned because we have community-led activities taking place there?

You will need to be the owner or to hold a lease/rental agreement with the owner.

6. MEDIUM GRANTS

(CLOSING 5th Feb 2024)

What does this mean for my application?

Applicants who have already submitted an application for the Small and Medium Grants are now being prepared for assessment and decision. Those who have started, but not yet submitted their application for a small or medium grant – now have until the 5th February 2024 at 5pm to submit their bid. The application portal will close after this date.

Are medium grants awarded on a rolling basis?

Yes

Are organisations expected to have a minimum level of income to apply for either the medium or large grants?

There is no minimum income level needed to apply, but the maximum income level for small grants is £500,000.

Is there any income limit for the medium and large grant applications?

No

Does the medium grant cover ongoing service delivery, i.e. core activities?

We expect to see mainly new projects/activities for the Medium Grants but you can include Full Cost Recovery.

Concerning medium grants, can we apply solely for the core costs of £15,000 or does that mean a limit with a wider project bid of £15,000?

Medium Grants should be for projects and activities to benefit local communities. Therefore, whilst we have included core costs as an eligible cost, this is a limit and the wider budget should be for delivery of the activities.

7. SMALL GRANTS

(CLOSING 5th Feb 2024)

What does this mean for my application?

Applicants who have already submitted an application for the Small and Medium Grants are now being prepared for assessment and decision. Those who have started, but not yet submitted their application for a small or medium grant - now have until the 5th February 2024 at 5pm to submit their bid. The application portal will close after this date.

Organisations applying for small grants must have an income level equal to or less than £500,000. Is that net income or gross income?

This is gross income.

Why is there an income limit for Small Grants?

We have set an income limit of £500,000 for the Small Grants fund. This is because the fund is intended for smaller community and grassroots organisations. Other Inclusive Communities Grants do not have an income limit.

Will the fund reopen later in the year?

There is a slight possibility that the Small Grants Threshold may reopen after March 2024, but this is not committed or confirmed yet. We will know more as we approach the end of this phase of the fund. If we can reopen the fund after March 2024, we will give groups as much notice as possible.

8. BUDGET

Can I apply for bid writing?

We could consider an application to the Small Grants fund to appoint a professional to help write/create a Fundraising Strategy for your organisation. However, the professional should not be used to do the fundraising you need.

Can we include contingency in the budget?

No, unfortunately contingency cannot be included. You will need to submit an accurate budget. This is because of the tight timescales for this programme and your project cannot overrun.

When you refer to core costs, do you mean revenue/running costs instead of capital?

Yes

Can we include in-kind costs in our budget?

Yes, where the costs are directly related to the project/activity.

Do project costs include salaries for staff members?

Yes

Can I include costs for access in my application?

You can include costs such as BSL interpretation, personal assistance, transport, etc where this will mean your service users can fully access your project.

Would we be able to use the grant to purchase a vehicle?

Yes. However, we can only fund the purchase of new vehicles (no second-hand). You should contact your supplier before applying to ensure an order can be met before the end of December 2024. We will need to know how you are going to insure, maintain and otherwise look after a vehicle, and what your plans are for training/qualifications for people allowed to drive it.

Can we include core costs in our budget?

You can include core costs in applications to the Small Grants Fund and the Medium Grants Fund, up to a maximum of £15,000. Large Grants are for project funding but you can include Full Cost Recovery. You will need to show your FCR calculations in the budget table. You cannot include core costs in a Small Works application.

Can any of the grants help community or sporting clubs to purchase a venue for their physical activity sessions to be held?

No, grants cannot be used to purchase land or buildings.

9. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Can we arrange to meet to discuss our projects/service ideas with someone from United by 2022 or HOECF?

Heart of England Community Foundation, and United By 2022, have been offering webinars. Please [sign up to the United By 2022 website](#) to be notified of upcoming events. If you still have questions, please contact us by email and we will try to arrange a call.

Where can I download the application pack?

The Application Guidance Pack is available from the [Heart of England Community Foundation's website](#)

How do we get access to the tailored support offered by United by 2022?

Please contact them [via their website](#)

What additional access support is there if I have specific access requirements?

Please contact [United By 2022 Legacy Charity via their website](#). We are able to fund some additional support where agreed in advance by United By 2022 and Heart of England Community Foundation.

Can I access the application questions for each grant outside of the live application form?

Word versions are available from Heart of England Community Foundation and from United By 2022 Legacy Charity. These can be used to plan out your application **but cannot be used** to make your actual application, which must still be made using the online forms.

Does the 8-week timescale from submission to decision apply to every grant application?

We aim for all grant applications to take 8 weeks from the initial receipt of the application to the final decision. This may vary for Small Grant applications which may be completed sooner.

Who will make the decision on awarding funding? i.e. who will be scoring each application? Will this be a panel and who will that be made up of?

We will not be scoring applications, they will be assessed on their merits. The final decisions will be made by a Community Grants panel with members selected for their experience, knowledge and skills, which will meet once a month. However, Small Grants or £15k or less can be decided by representatives from Heart of England Community Foundation.

Regarding the question on community consultation in the application form, how much information needs to be gathered, and what would be considered a 'good' pre-application community consultation?

This will vary depending on the size of your organization. For example, a small organization may ask around a local housing estate or school, whereas a large organization might give feedback from a national survey. We would prefer to see feedback from people you know, and evidence that what you would like to do appeals to the local community.

Is there information on the application guidance form regarding applying for more than one round?

No, but please see the answer to the question about applying for more than one grant in these FAQs.

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In circumstances where a smaller sum is awarded than applied for, how is the decision made on how much is awarded?

This would only be the case if you applied for an ineligible cost in your budget. A list of eligibility criteria is available to view in the application guidance pack.

Is it a requirement to submit a document for partnerships on the application?

If you are applying as a partnership or consortium you must submit a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with your application.

Is it a requirement to provide evidence of other funding secured?

Letters confirming funding are only required for Large Grants and Small Works, Refurbishment, Renovations grants.

Is there any preference for funding projects in their entirety vs. matched funding?

No, either is acceptable, although matched funding is welcomed.

Why is GDPR Policy mentioned in the Application Guidance Pack?

All organisations need to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). See <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection> or <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/> for more information.

What is the Subsidy Control Act - and does it affect me?

We're not expecting this to affect many organisations applying to us. It would usually apply to an organisation that has public money from other grants/income from central government or a local authority, and which, in total would together add up to and over £315k. You can find useful information about this on one of the three National Lottery fund websites:

National Lottery Communities Fund - <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/thinking-of-applying-for-funding/who-can-apply/subsidy-control> National Lottery Heritage Fund - <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/about/transparency/subsidy-control> Arts Council England - <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/how-we-invest-public-money/subsidy-control>

What do you consider to be 'significant' financial free reserves?

We don't have a set amount. Please see the Charity Commission's guidance on this <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-reserves-cc19/charities-and-reserves>. As a general guide we consider reasonable the equivalent of 3 to 6 months operating expenditure to be kept in reserve, and up to 12 month for larger organisations.

Why have you asked for a Project Plan?

A Project Plan is required for 'Large Grants', 'Medium Grants', and for Small Works, Refurbishment & Renovation Grants'. The grants assessors will review these as part of their assessment. Your project plan should include who will manage the project; what qualifications/skills do they have; a timetable; a detailed budget; risk assessment; deliverables and outcomes. (This is not an exhaustive list.)

What do you want to see in a Risk Register?

This can be a table including the issue, a RAG (Red/Amber/Green) rating, mitigation, actions, a review schedule, responsible person for any actions.

What is the timescale for the delivery of small and medium grants? When should a project start and finish?

All grants must be spent and projects completed by the end of December 2024. The length of time available to you to deliver your project will depend on when you apply plus the 8-week assessment/decision-making period.

10. GRANTS AWARDED AND MONITORING

Will grant payments be made in one instalment?

This will depend on the grant size. Large Grants will be paid in instalments, to be agreed in advance with the grantee. Most other grants will be paid in advance, in one instalment.

If we are awarded a grant, when will it be paid?

Assuming there are no grant conditions to be met or other reasons we cannot approve a payment, payments will be made within 14 days, usually sooner.

What are the monitoring and reporting requirements on grants?

All grantees will have to complete monitoring forms but the frequency will depend on the grant size and this will be determined when the grant is awarded. All grantees will have to complete an End of Grant Monitoring Report. <https://www.heartofenglandcf.co.uk/monitoring-your-grant/>

How is the £9 million split across the different grant types?

We have an indicative split across the different types but have not set firm amounts because we want to remain flexible and able to consider as many good projects as possible.

Will we get feedback if our application is unsuccessful?

The decision of the Grants Panel is final and not open to appeal. Feedback will be provided to unsuccessful applications whenever possible. You can apply again if advised. In addition, United by 2022 Legacy Charity are working with us to support unsuccessful applicants and we will provide their contact details in your notification email.

Can I speak to someone and reapply if my application is unsuccessful?

We will provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants whenever possible. In addition, United by 2022 Legacy Charity are working with us to support unsuccessful applicants and we will provide their contact details in your notification email. Unsuccessful applicants can reapply.

When will I hear a response on whether I have been successful or not?

We expect that all of those who have submitted an application for a Small Works / Renovation and Large Grant through the Fund will be notified about the outcome of their application from March 2024. Small Grants will be notified on a rolling basis, and we aim for these decisions to be much quicker. Medium Grants will be notified of a decision at the latest by the end of March 2024.

Will the time frame for spending the grant be extended if decisions are delayed?

Unfortunately, it is not possible to extend the spending period of the Inclusive Communities Fund. All funding must be spent by December 2024. If your application is successful, our team will discuss your project timeline and budget spend with you.

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A LEGACY OF THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

