



BIG SOCIETY GRANT FUND 2012-13

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Leicestershire County Council has re-launched its Big Society Grant Fund for 2012-13. The Grant Fund is aimed at supporting organisations/projects to develop ideas and initiatives which will help to deliver the Big Society at a local level.

The 'Big Society' Grant (totalling £340,000) will therefore make funds available for eligible projects which:

- enable communities to identify and meet their own needs – “helping them to help themselves”
- provide the best local solutions to tackle local problems
- demonstrate local community commitment and involvement
- create active and empowered citizens

Projects which also meet the following key Leicestershire Together and Leicestershire County Council strategic priorities will be strongly considered for funding:

- An ageing population (including vulnerability and mental health)
- Troubled Families
- Unhealthy lifestyles
- Economic Growth (including worklessness/unemployment)

However, grant applications which reflect identified local issues (supported by evidence of need/demand) will also be considered for funding.

Below are some Frequently Asked Questions related to the Grant Fund.

1. What will the Big Society Grant Fund pay for/fund?

The focus of the fund is on preparing or developing ideas for future projects/activities and the structures which may be needed to establish these, rather than the ongoing delivery of existing services. It is therefore aimed more at supporting communities/community organisations to identify new priorities or new ways of delivering existing priorities, and to help them to establish the best way of achieving these priorities.

Any project/activity will need to demonstrate how it meets the needs of, and makes a positive difference to the local community, particularly through *helping communities to help themselves*.

Grant funding will therefore focus on supporting the development of ideas for *new* projects/activities, or ways of providing old activities in a new or different way

In particular, we are looking to support the following types of projects/activities:

- Workshops/training/consultation events for communities to discuss issues and agree priorities together

- Specialist support for the preparation of a community/parish/neighbourhood plan (or other community participation process) to identify community needs, resources and priorities (Applications for funding to support Neighbourhood Plans will be limited to £10,000).
- Technical/legal advice on the most appropriate structure to establish and/or run a new community project/initiative or enterprise
- Specialist advice on running a specific service or facility e.g. a community shop, transport scheme or volunteer supported library or museum service
- A feasibility study to establish the viability of a project, service or facility
- The development of a feasibility study or business plan to ensure the longevity of a new project, service or facility
- Specific in-depth funding support e.g. assistance in writing a large funding bid

2. Is the Grant Fund only for consultation activities and feasibility studies, or can it also pay for direct project costs?

The main priority is to support the development/preparation of project ideas, e.g. community consultation, identification of local needs and priorities etc, rather than the direct implementation or delivery of projects. We believe there to be a range of other funding out there that could be accessed to support direct delivery/implementation of projects.

However, if an organisation has already undertaken comprehensive consultation and identification of local needs/priorities, and developed a project idea which they feel meets their community needs, then funding will be considered for the initial set up costs/implementation or piloting of such projects, but only up to a total of £15,000, and provided that there is compelling evidence to demonstrate the feasibility and viability of such projects.

3. Can Grants be used to pay for capital projects?

Yes, but only up to £15,000, and on the understanding that any funds from the Big Society Grant will be part of a funding package which includes a range of different funding sources, each of which contributes towards the overall project costs. There will also need to be sufficient evidence that the project is needed, viable and will be of benefit to the local community. However, as above, the priority is to fund the development of initiatives, rather than direct/on-going implementation. Repair work or maintenance will not be funded, neither will the retrospective costs of activities which have already taken place.

4. What is the process for applying for Grants?

Electronic applications are available to download from the County Council's website: www.leics.gov.uk/bigandsocietygrantfund. Support and guidance will be available throughout the application process from the Grants Officers at Leicestershire County Council. Completed applications need to be emailed or posted to the Grants Officers for initial screening, before being forwarded for consideration by the bi-monthly Grants Panel. We are happy to provide feedback to applicants, before a final draft of the application is submitted, and indeed this is recommended. Guidance notes including detailed eligibility criteria for the Grant Find are also available on the website.

5. When is the deadline for applications?

There is no deadline as such. It's a rolling programme, with applications to be assessed by a Grant Panel every two months, until 31 March 2013, or until the financial allocation for the current year is spent. It is however, worth contacting the Grants Officers to confirm the date of the next Panel meeting, along with any relevant closing dates for applications or supporting documents to be submitted by.

6. Do grant applications need to be supported by Elected members?

It is generally expected that applications for projects in a village, parish or neighbourhood will be supported by the relevant local County Councillor(s), to ensure there is appropriate and inclusive local support for the project. If your application is for a project that covers a wider geographical area and targets a particular community of interest e.g. young people, it would strengthen your case if it is supported by the relevant Lead Member i.e. in this case the Lead Member for Children and Young People. It is also good practice to discuss the project/activity with your local Parish/Town Council.

7. How are grant applications assessed?

Applications will be assessed on a bi-monthly basis, by an independent panel made up of a County Councillor (who will Chair the Grants Panel); representatives of the Voluntary and Community Sector; and Parish Council representatives.

8. Can the Grant Fund be used to pay for consultancy support, including business advice?

Yes it can. The Grants Panel will consider applications for community groups to commission external/independent consultants to undertake work for them, e.g. undertaking community consultation and developing business plans and/or feasibility studies.

A list of consultants and other relevant support organisations has been developed for the purpose of the Grant Programme and this can be requested from the Grants Officers.

9. Can Community Organisations based in Leicester City apply to the Grant Fund?

The Grant Fund is only open to organisations who work with residents of Leicestershire County. However, if an organisation is based in Leicester City, but the majority of beneficiaries of the project are from Leicestershire County, then applications for such projects will be considered, but payments may be made on a proportional basis. For example, if 60% of the beneficiaries live in the County and the total project costs are £10,000, then a grant up to a maximum of £6,000 may be appropriate.

10. Are there any restrictions on the types of organisations who can apply?

Applications need to come from formally constituted organisations who operate a 'not-for-profit' business model, i.e. voluntary/community sector organisations, registered charities or other charitable organisations, social enterprises, community interest companies, or any other organisation which re-invests any income back into the social aims of the group/community.

Parish/Town Councils are also eligible and applications for less than £1,000 from non-constituted groups will be considered. Schools/academies or other educational institutions are not eligible to apply, but Parent Teacher Associations may submit applications.

We are unable to accept applications from individuals, private businesses or statutory organisations, or any organisations with an annual income of over £500,000.

Further Information

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