

2024

Grantmaking Principles & Minimum Requirements

CHESHIRE
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



What we fund

Work which reduces the impact of poverty and/or disadvantage.

The criteria for each individual programme will guide you on specific details, but these principles apply to every project we fund.



How we fund

You've told us we should be focused on:

- Building community assets - growing things which are already working well
- Supporting you to collaborate with partners to achieve outcomes
- Supporting core funding where we can
- Continuing to make some smaller, shorter-term grants in line with our priorities - supporting newer and smaller grassroots projects.



We recognise that...

Multi-year funding which helps VCFS organisations to take a longer view, embed work more effectively and plan for their sustainable future is one of the single most important things that we can consider as a funder. We're keen to do more of this.



What makes a strong application?

Clarity about what you want to do, why you want to do it (the change you want to make or influence), how that fits with the programme criteria and how you've planned your project. Evidence of your understanding of the people who will benefit from your project – and how you've involved them in your thinking and planning.

Clarity on how you'll analyse what your project achieves. If measuring the impact of your work isn't your thing, we might not be the right funder for you. Larger programmes will have more substantial requirements for impact reporting.

Theory of change is a really useful planning tool and can be used on projects of all shapes and sizes, from a one-off event to your organisation's annual plan. There's a useful ten step guide [here](#).



To apply for a grant, you must meet our minimum requirements.
That means you must:



Be a non-profit organisation with its own constitution or other governance document. You don't have to be a registered charity. You'll get great guidance on this from your local infrastructure organisation or try this guidance [here](#) and [here](#).



Show us your governance: **you must be able to provide:**

- Copies of your constitution or governing document (if your organisation is a community interest company, your governance document should describe your asset lock)
- AND your most recent set of annual accounts OR (if you're a new organisation) your financial plan for the year
- AND a bank statement for your organisation dated within the last three months
- AND your safeguarding policies.



You can't submit an application for funding without these, and we can't process incomplete applications.



Minimum requirements continued...

- Have well-run finances and be able to tell us about your reserves (we look for 3-12 months of free reserves, but if your organisation doesn't have this, you'll need to show us your healthy cashflow) and financial procedures which are right for your size of organisation. This must include at least two, unrelated, signatories for payments.
- Name your key people: you must have at least three unrelated trustees, committee members or directors, depending on your constituted structure.
- Be able to tell us who leads on safeguarding in your staff team and on your board if you're seeking funding for work with children and young people, or with vulnerable adults. There's great help on this [here](#) and [here](#).
- Be able to tell us how you've thought about the environmental impact of your project. We want to know that you've thought about it, taken any action that you can to minimise any negative impact, and what support would be useful to you in this area.



We can't progress an application from you if you can't meet these minimum standards – please don't apply until you can.



Local infrastructure organisations



Cheshire West Voluntary Action



Community and Voluntary Services Cheshire East



Warrington Voluntary Action



Cheshire Community Action





What we can't fund...

- Work which isn't for the benefit of people living in the local authority areas of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington, delivered locally, unless otherwise stated in the programme criteria.
- Organisations providing statutory services such as nursery schools, schools, parish councils or hospitals, or for-profit business.
- Activities which are primarily about delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage or National Curriculum
- Counselling or other mental health therapeutic activities unless delivered by qualified, BACP-registered or accredited professionals using an established ethical framework
- Smaller contributions to much bigger projects. For applications for £10,000 or more, you're unlikely to be successful if CCF's grant would contribute less than 50% of your total project cost. You must be able to tell us which element of your project you're applying for, show where the rest of your funding is coming from and how you'll secure it in time to deliver the project you've described.
- More than one application for the same project.





What we can't fund...

- Continuation funding for a project for which you've already been receiving CCF funds, unless and until your end-of-grant monitoring report for the previous grant has been submitted and closed.
- Individuals, or fundraising campaigns by individuals
- As a funder, we usually prioritise smaller organisations who are embedded within the communities with whom they work. We do not frequently fund organisations with an income of greater than £3 million in the most recent, complete financial year. If your organisation's income does exceed this, we will seek to understand why they are the best placed organisation to deliver that work, and that they have an exceptional understanding and track record of working with their target beneficiaries
- Promotion of politics/political activity or religious belief
- Work which isn't accessible to everyone, unless it is targeting a specific group based on clear evidence of need in line with the programme criteria





What we can't fund...

- Capital works or kit (in most cases), unless you're applying to our small grants programme and your request forms at least 50% of a capital project which will unlock clear outcomes in line with our grant-making priorities above
- Leisure, sport or arts activities for their own sake – eg the annual running costs of a football club or the public opening of a community garden for the summer. We seek to fund activities which, through their delivery, are working to achieve an outcome in line with our priorities above and particularly those which can reduce the impacts of inequity or prevent them in the future.
- Procurement of goods or services for your project which don't give due consideration to principles of ethical and environmental purchasing. This approach by Marie Curie is a useful starting point.



Who decides on the success of my application?

Your application will be assessed and scored against these principles and the specific criteria of the programme for which you're applying. A grants panel will then consider all applications to a programme and make recommendations on those which are fundable. All decisions are ratified by trustees representing our Finance, Risk, Operations and Grants Committee.



How often can I apply?

You can apply as often as you like, but you can only have one grant in delivery for any given programme at one time. If you've had an unsuccessful application and want to reapply, have a good look at the feedback and address any issues raised before you apply again. We aim to provide helpful and constructive feedback to everyone who applies for a grant, and we'll always seek to link you to sources of advice or help wherever we can. We work closely with the infrastructure organisations supporting the voluntary sector here and they are fantastic sources of advice.

[Cheshire West Voluntary Action](#)

[Community and Voluntary Services Cheshire East](#)

[Warrington Voluntary Action](#)



Can I appeal a grant panel decision?

Trustees from our Finance, Risk, Operations and Grants Committee can only veto or alter the recommendation of a grants panel if they feel there has been a breach of a duty for which they are responsible, or if they receive information to which the panel was not privy. If you want to make a formal complaint about a grant panel decision on those grounds, you can email our Chief Operations Officer confidentially.

We look forward to your application!