

# Building Strong Communities Fund – /clarifications/amendments for round 3

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## Clarifications

### Eligibility

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London based voluntary and community sector organisations are eligible to apply if they have annual turnover of £50,000 or under. Turnover must be between £0 and £50,000 in the applicant's last year's accounts or financial document equivalent. For rounds one and two, applicants with turnover of £200k and under could also apply (for a small grant) but only microgrants are available in this final round and so that is no longer the case.

Only organisations permanently based in a London borough and with a London based correspondence address can apply. Organisations that are working with participants from a London Borough(s) but are not permanently based in London and/or without a London address are ineligible to apply. If you have a query about your organisation's eligibility, please contact [bscgrants@rocketsciencelab.co.uk](mailto:bscgrants@rocketsciencelab.co.uk) before beginning an application.

### Funding available

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We have a total grant pot of £200,000 in this final round. We expect to fund approximately 33 microgrants.

## **Non-constituted organisations**

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If your organisation is not legally constituted (e.g. mutual aid group or unincorporated association) you must apply through a registered sponsor organisation who meets all eligibility requirements except annual turnover (turnover may be larger than the maximum requirements, i.e. over £50,000) who will support your application as your sponsor. Regardless of the sponsor's organisation type, the sponsor organisation must be registered with either Companies House or Charity Commission, have received income in their last financial year and will need to have three Trustees/ Directors/ Management Committee members who are not related.

## **Newer organisations**

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If your organisation is a new/newer organisation without all required paperwork such as organisational policies, insurance, or a full year's worth of finalised financial accounts, you must apply through a registered sponsor organisation who meets all eligibility requirements except annual turnover (turnover may be larger than the maximum requirements, i.e. over £50,000) who will support your application as your sponsor. Regardless of the sponsor's organisation type, the sponsor organisation must be registered with either Companies House or Charity Commission, have received income in their last financial year and will need to have three Trustees/ Directors/ Management Committee members who are not related.

## **Community-led definition**

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Expanded definition of what we mean by the term 'community led', for which all projects should meet one or more:

- Activities designed and led by the community, e.g. a neighbourhood group on a street)
- An organisation where staff/volunteers are from the local community ('community' participants based on a shared interest or by location)
- An organisation that has co-designed activities with the local community

## **We won't fund**

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- Individuals, or organisations applying on behalf of individuals
- Unconstituted groups without a sponsor
- Companies with a legal status of Limited by Shares
- For profit organisations including those who apply with a non-profit sponsor
- Sole traders including those who apply with a non-profit sponsor
- Organisations who do not have a charitable dissolution clause in their governing document
- Local Authorities
- Schools or formal educational settings (though we are happy to accept applications from small community education groups, e.g. library homework club, ESOL groups, after school projects)
- Project activities that generate profits for private gain
- Projects that practice or promote religion, or any activities actively promoting certain belief systems (or indeed the lack of belief). Faith Based organisations can apply but the activities funded under the GLA Building Strong Communities Fund must not fall under this stated exclusion
- Projects for retrospective costs, including any costs incurred in community consultation and/or submitting your application
- Projects involving large-scale capital costs or routine repairs and minor improvements to community buildings
- Loan repayments

- Recoverable VAT – if you are not VAT registered, you will need to include VAT costs as part of the funding you request for your programme
- General organisational staff costs (but will fund project management related costs for employed staff members). Only employed staff members or a legal entity/entities acting as formal sub-contractors can be paid management fees and/or or delivery costs. Volunteers cannot be paid hourly or daily rates. Volunteers can be paid reasonable out-of-pocket expenses.
- Although we will consider funding projects such as food banks, applicants must be able to explain how this relates to the chosen project BSC outcome and why it's not possible to get funding from more targeted funding.
- Organisation overheads, NB we will fund overheads in relation to the project delivery, but not cover general overheads.

**Documentation that applicants will need to submit within the application and/or confirm at application stage:**

## **Memorandum and Articles of Association or constitution**

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This must be your organisation's governing document. This may be articles of association or constitution. If you have both, please use the articles of association. These should be fully completed, not in draft or template form, and appropriately signed if required to be.

## **Dissolution clause**

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You will be asked to provide this from your governing document. This may also be stated as a 'winding up' clause. This shows who the organisation would give any assets,

including money or property, remaining after payment of all outstanding debts and liabilities should the organisation be wound up or dissolved. This may either be a generic statement such as 'a charity with similar purposes to this one' or 'by transfer to any charity or charities for purposes the same as or similar to the charity' or may confirm in some documents, such as the governing document of CICs, a named asset locked body, such as another charity.

## **Bank statement**

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Bank statements provided should be within the last 3 months with the organisation name clearly stated.

## **Financial documentation**

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Last set of financial accounts for the organisation's last full financial year. These accounts must not be for a partial year. If you do not have a set of accounts, please provide your organisation's income and expenditure sheet or financial document equivalent. If your accounts do not include your last income, such as with a company micro-accounts, please provide an income and expenditure document.

## **Confirmation of organisational policies: safeguarding and insurances**

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Documents that are not required for eligibility checks will be requested should you be provisionally awarded a grant. This will allow us to undertake necessary organisational checks. No funding will be awarded without these documents in place.

## **Applying through a sponsor organisation**

If you do not have all the required documentation listed above, because you are a newer organisation with only partial accounts or no bank account or are a unconstituted group, you can still apply to deliver the project by applying through a sponsor.

If the applicant is an unconstituted group or new organisation, you must apply through a sponsor organisation. It is expected that the sponsor organisation and the delivery organisation are known to each other. We will need to see the above listed documentation for the sponsor organisation, but any relevant safeguarding documents must be from the organisation/group running the project. If the organisation/group running the project does not have public liability insurance, this will need to come under the sponsor organisation's insurance policy.

The sponsor must provide a letter to confirm that they are aware of the application and happy to hold and receive the grant on behalf of the applicant. A template sponsor reference letter is provided in the application form.

## **Making decisions on which projects we fund**

We expect a high level of interest in the Fund, a large number of applications to be received and the ability to only fund a small proportion across the three rounds. We have carefully considered our assessment criteria for this Fund with the above issues taken into consideration. Please see the below assessment criteria areas that we consider when reviewing applications:

- The strength of the project idea and how much of a good fit it is for this Fund

- How involved the targeted benefitting community have been and/or will be
- Whether the impact of the project for those taking part is clear and if it appears to be good value for money
- How accessibility to the project has been considered and factored into the budget
- Whether appropriate project risks have been well considered, along with clear actions to mitigate (lessen) those risks
- Whether the organisation is equity-led (meaning at least 75% of the organisation's Trustees and 50% of staff members have personal experiences of the issues they are tackling).
- If an organisation has not been funded by the GLA in the last three years or whose funding has been received from the GLA over the last three years amounts to £50,000 or under. Funding from the London Community Response in 2020 does not count towards this total. Organisations that have received funding from the GLA in the last three years, including in excess of £50,000, can still apply and may be funded.

If required during the decision-making stage, such as when there are similar projects and/or applications that have scored the same, we will review the portfolio of applications against an additional set of criteria'. This is focused on:

- Whether the project is going to address the Cost-of-Living Crisis.
- Ensuring a geographical spread of applications are considered from across London
- Ensuring a spread of project themes, e.g. we are keen to fund projects across themes of Arts and Culture, Children and Young People, Food, Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Considering if there are projects with a greening angle (please see the FAQ for further explanation on this)
- Considering if there are projects that involve volunteers to increase participation.

## **Project accessibility**

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By accessibility to a project, we mean how you include everyone in the community group/s so they can take part in your project in the best way possible. This could mean additional barriers (i.e. the physical environment, practices, and ways of communicating) for disabled people. Essentially, we want to know how you ensure that everyone's access needs (name for arrangements or equipment) are met, so no one in the target group is excluded from either delivering or participating. Applicants should include budget lines to show the projects' accessibility costs where appropriate, e.g. providing information in different formats or community languages, providing a British Sign Language Interpreter at events.

## **Amendments/Updates**

### **Funded groups/organisations must be equity-led.**

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For round one, the majority of projects that we funded had to be equity-led. For rounds two and three, we will only fund organisations that are equity-led or there is a good reason why it is not possible to be equity-led. Our definition of equity-led is: Organisations where at least 75% of the Trustees and at least 50% of staff members have personal experience of the issues they are tackling, or the communities that their project is supporting.

We do recognise that it isn't always possible to be led by those that the project is there to support, e.g. a project that supports toddlers. If an applicant's answer to this question is 'not possible' there is space for the applicant to tell us why that is and how decision makers have relevant skills and experience.

For example, for a project that supports toddlers, the organisation might consider themselves to be equity-led if parents are represented as Trustees and staff members.

If the applicant is not able to be equity-led but provides a clear answer as to why it is not possible and the alternative representation they have in their leadership, which is appropriate, the application will still be considered. If this is not made clear, then the application won't progress.

## **Microgrants**

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We recognise that the financial and economic pressures have taken its toll on small organisations. In light of this, we have decided to increase the maximum amount for microgrants in this round to £6k.

- Only microgrants of £1000-£6,000 are available for round three 3 (the Tier 1 option of £1000 was removed after round one and for round two the amount was between £1000-£5,000).
- All microgrant projects for round three must be completed by 28th June 2024
- Microgrant projects must align to one Building Strong Communities mission outcome.

## **Small grants**

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- There are **no** small grants available for this third and final round
- Applicants cannot apply as a partnership as this was for small grants only

## Cost of Living Crisis

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In this final round we would also like to know if your project is going to address the Cost-of- Living Crisis (COLC).

We know that Londoners have been significantly impacted by the Cost-of-Living Crisis (COLC) and any project that enables groups to 'do something nice', e.g. attend a knit & natter group, children attending an arts class, or elderly people attending a lunch club, all meet the COLC criteria. Isolated people who are potentially on a low income and have less disposable income, are able to leave their homes, to meet others, in a warm environment and 'do something nice', which they would be unable to do due to the COLC.

**The COLC can be an indirect outcome of a project, but this should be explained in the application.** Please see our FAQ document for a few examples of projects that might also support the COLC alongside one of mission outcomes.

If there are two very similarly scored projects and only one of them is going to address the COLC, the application that is addressing the COLC criteria would be prioritised to be funded, as this is now a Mayoral priority.

## Dates

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- Round three opens for applications at 1pm on 16th January 2023 until 1pm on 13th March 2023
- Decision notification for applicants will be w/c 26th June 2023
- Project earliest start date will be 24th July 2023

## **Assessors ‘reserve criteria’**

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Within the ‘reserve criteria’ for assessing projects list, ‘environmental projects’ have been replaced with ‘greening projects’ for rounds two and three (see glossary for further information).

## **Information sessions (pre-application stage)**

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We will be holding some information sessions so that organisations can hear about this opportunity and have the chance to ask questions. These will happen virtually. Further dates will be shared once confirmed on our webpage, but two confirmed webinars will be on:

- 24th January, 10:00-11:30
- 1st February, 14:00-15:30pm Please email Rocket Science at [accessibility@rocketsciencelab.co.uk](mailto:accessibility@rocketsciencelab.co.uk) to book your space

## **Pre application query support**

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Having already read the fund’s guidance and FAQ documents, applicants who still have queries about their application are able to contact our partner, Rocket Science who will be happy to talk with you for a 20-minute support call via the telephone (through a Teams, google call or zoom video call. Please come prepared with specific queries about your application. Please note that Rocket Science cannot help you refine a project idea but can provide you with guidance on the remit of the Fund, answer any eligibility queries and any technical queries submitting a form you may have. Please contact Rocket Science by phone on 020 3291 3026, or email at [accessibility@rocketsciencelab.co.uk](mailto:accessibility@rocketsciencelab.co.uk) to book your 20-minute support call for any Tuesday, during the application period, between 2-4pm.

## **Application process**

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Shortlisted applicants for a microgrant **may** have receive a follow up call or e-mail for the assessor to gain more insight about the project and clarify any answers provided.

## **Glossary additions/amendments:**

### **Asset-locked body**

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An asset-locked body is a registered CIC, charity, permitted IPS or an equivalent body established outside the UK (in which case, evidence of charity status must be provided).

### **Equity-led organisation**

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Led by the communities that they serve with at least 75% of the organisation's Trustees and 50% of staff members having personal experiences of the issues they are tackling. These organisations are working particularly with communities with protected characteristics (e.g. race, gender, sexual orientation, disability). This Fund aims for all funded groups/organisations to be equity-led. Where this is not possible due to the type of project, other arrangements will be considered if the explanation is clear and appropriate. (This is a Fund priority. See FAQ document for further detail on this).

### **Greening projects**

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Some examples of projects with a greening angle are projects that create new green spaces; projects that improve existing green spaces (like parks, community gardens, housing estates, streets or school playground); projects that support equity-led

groups/ communities to access and feel more comfortable using green spaces. Project themes could include garden creation projects, community gardening and food growing and workshops to help children to access nature, outdoor play and learning.

## **Governing document**

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A governing document is a legal document which represents the rule book for the way in which a legal entity will operate. The Charity Commission recommend that charity's governing documents contain information about:

- what the charity is set up to achieve (its purposes)
- how the charity can go about achieving its purposes (powers)
- who is involved in the strategic oversight of the charity (individual charity trustees or a corporate trustee)
- what happens if changes to the administrative provisions or purposes need to be made (amendment provision)
- what happens if the charity wishes to wind up (dissolution clause). It should also contain administrative provisions relating to:
  - governance of the charity
  - internal arrangements for meetings, voting and finance
  - membership of the charity (where applicable)
  - the appointment, retirement and removal of trustees
  - if and how trustees can benefit from the charity

Some charity structures are corporate bodies. If you choose a structure that forms a corporate body, the law considers your charity to be a person in the same way as an individual. This gives your charity the legal capacity to do many things in its own name that a person can do, such as:

- employing paid staff
- delivering charitable services under contractual agreements
- entering into commercial contracts in its own name
- owning freehold or leasehold land or other property

## **What do you mean by constituted?**

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The first stage in becoming a formal organisation is often to adopt a 'constitution'. A constitution is a simple set of rules which help make it clear to everyone involved what you intend to do, and how you operate.

## **What is an unconstituted group?**

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Unconstituted groups are groups of individuals who come together normally to undertake activities around/about a shared interest or concern about a particular issue. This shared interest or concern connects them, such as a desire to improve their local neighbourhood or support each other as parents. People often form these groups, sometimes also called community groups (which can include local people or communities of interest) who are committed to doing something, wanting to work together and are aiming to solve a particular problem or meeting a certain need.

Unconstituted groups don't need to be create a formal constitution or be registered with any regulatory body unless it has an annual income above £5,000, (in which case you are required to register with the Charity Commission). However, as they are not a legal entity, they are unable to enter into contracts, buy or lease property, and employ people in its own right.

# Accessibility for the application process

## Applicants from a DPPO (Deaf and Disabled People's Organisation/group)

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