

# FAQs

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## General

### **Previously there was a separate form to apply for a £1,000 microgrant. Why has this been changed?**

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Following less interest in the £1,000 microgrants in Round one, as well as constructive feedback from applicants and our Advisory Group, we decided to amalgamate the £1,000 microgrant into the £1,000 to £5,000 microgrant option for round two.

Round three is for microgrants only. 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.

### **Must all projects demonstrate how they support the Cost-of-Living Crisis (COLC)?**

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Although this wasn't a consideration for rounds one and two, as the Cost-of-Living Crisis (COLC) is very much a current issue with the rising energy prices and the increased cost of food, it made sense for us to include this additional criteria in this final round. This additional consideration acknowledges the COLC and the impact it is having and will have on the communities in London, and how these grants can address the crisis. It isn't essential for every project in round 3 to be able to show this, but it is a new priority, meaning that projects that address the COLC will be prioritised over those that don't. At the decision stage, if two projects scored the same and only one was addressing the COLC, the project addressing the COLC will be prioritised. .

The COLC can be an indirect outcome of a project, but this should be explained in the application. A few examples of projects that might support the COLC could be the following (some of which reflect microgrant projects funded in rounds one and two:

- A lunch club for older residents in Bromley who are socially isolated and are facing financial hardship due to the Cost-of-living crisis. This grant will allow them to get out of their home and go to a warm venue and have lunch and socialise with other members of the community. Due to the cost-of-living crisis, these older people might have less money to be able to afford to do something nice for themselves and might be feeling isolated.
- To increase the reach of smart cooking workshops for asylum seekers and refugees living in Enfield. It includes a walking programme using local greenspace with learnings on how to recycle littered items they find. People who have had their income reduced and are experiencing fear and anxiety over the COLC are able to come together and meet others, whilst learning new skills and have some much-needed time for themselves.
- Counselling and wellbeing sessions for 60 members of the Latin American community. Participants will be offered one-to-one sessions with supervised counsellors, groupwork on how to improve mental health, as well as yoga/ mindfulness sessions. As a result, this community can learn to manage any anxiety they might be feeling as a result of the COLC and can access free and crucial support for themselves at a time when poverty is high and finding money to pay for basic essentials might be extremely stressful.

- A mother and daughter support group providing debt management classes, a book club and fitness classes to those living in Camden and Barnet. This free service reduces social isolation and enables participants to become more knowledgeable about how to best manage finances, especially during the COLC.
- A community food growing hub where the grant will be used to create shared food growing beds at an underused green space outside a community. Volunteer gardening sessions will be supported for local residents to grow fresh, fruit vegetables and herbs. The project will build confidence in food growing, provide a safe, social space to engage with nature and provide volunteers with fresh produce to cook at home. Food grown will also be donated to a local food bank.

## **Can organisations re-apply if successful?**

We will only be awarding one grant per organisation across all rounds of the Building Strong Communities Fund. If you are acting as a sponsor organisation for another application, you can also independently be awarded a grant (as long as your turnover is less than £50,000).

## **Is there a difference between the three application rounds?**

We will be monitoring the community groups that have applied and those that have been successful. We will consult with our equity and inclusion partners to determine whether we are receiving a good spread of application and organisation types and locations and whether we need to do some targeted engagement with certain community groups or certain geographical areas for future rounds. For this reason we want to give applicants time to consult with communities to truly

understand those potentially identified needs and have time to get the application right without having to rush. Having more than one round allows for this to happen.

## **Can we upload a picture of required documents?**

If you do not have a scanner or electronic versions of documents, we can accept photographs of documents at the application stage. Please ensure that these are of a high quality and clearly show the information requested. We may need to request a scan or e-version of the document if the photo does not satisfactorily meet our requirements.

## **Eligibility/Governance**

### **Are there any restrictions on applying if I am already receiving other GLA funding or have done in the past?**

Priority will be given to organisations that have not received a significant amount of funding (over £50k) from the GLA in the last three years (excluding London Community Response grants). Funding from the London Community Response in 2020 does not count towards this total and is exempt.

### **Why have you said that the majority of projects funded will be from equity-led groups/organisations? Why is this a requirement and how will you check?**

For round one, the majority of projects that we funded had 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 projects are supporting.

For rounds two and three, all funded groups/organisations have to be equity-led or there has to be a good reason why it was not possible to be equity-led. We 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 it is not possible and how they ensure that decision makers have relevant experience and skills. Therefore, 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.

In addition to the fact we were very oversubscribed for round one, we have also made this amendment as there wasn't the option for applicants to be clear about how they were equity-led and doing checks on websites like Companies House, Find a Charity, applicant websites and social media didn't provide us with that clear picture. Therefore, we want to give applicants the opportunity to tell us about how they are equity-led, as this can sometimes be hard to know as an outsider. We will also do online checks, where possible, on those projects that are discussed at panel stage.

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

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?**

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 meet a certain need.

Unconstituted groups don't need to 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.

## **What is meant by a charitable dissolution clause?**

A charitable dissolution clause, which may also fall under a 'winding up' clause, shows that that 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, to another not-for profit organisation. This may either be a generic statement, such as 'a charity with similar purposes' 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.

## **Can we apply if we only have one Director?**

All applicant organisations and groups must have at least two Trustees/Directors/Management Committee members who are not related.

## **Can we apply as a sole trader?**

No, unfortunately all applications need to be received from one of the following eligible organisation types and all organisations applying must have at least TWO trustees or directors who are unrelated.

## **Our registered address is not in London, but we plan to work in London for this project. Can we apply?**

You must be permanently based in a London Borough to apply and have a London based correspondence address. If your registered address is not a London based address, please contact a member of the BSC team on [bscgrants@rocketsciencelab.co.uk](mailto:bscgrants@rocketsciencelab.co.uk) to ensure you are eligible to apply. Sponsor organisations for applicants will also be required to be registered to a London address.

## **We are a new organisation and don't yet have a full set of published accounts but have draft accounts / six-month accounts, can we still apply?**

If you do not have finalised financial accounts that cover 12 months, you can still apply to deliver the project, but you will need to apply through a sponsor. Please see the section of the guidance regarding applying with a sponsor.

**Our turnover in our last accounts is over £50,000 but it is expected that during this current financial year that it will be less than £50,000 , can we still apply?**

Unfortunately you will not be eligible to apply if your last set of financial accounts show a turnover of over £50,000 . We have set these limits so that smaller grassroots organisations and informal groups will be encouraged to apply as well as those who may have faced barriers to funding in the past. We know that many smaller and grassroots organisations have annual turnover of between £10,000 - £100,000 (as defined by NCVO – see note 1).

Note 1: <https://beta.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-publications/uk-civil-society-almanac-2021/profile/>

**We are a branch of a larger organisation with a turnover over £50,000 and whilst we are not separately constituted, we do our own fundraising and deliver grants locally, can we still apply?**

Unfortunately if you are a branch organisation or group that is not separately incorporated, including having your own governing document, bank account and financial accounts, you are not able to apply if that larger organisation does not meet all the eligibility requirements.

**We are a CIC; do we need to have a completed asset lock to apply?**

You do not need to have a completed asset lock in your articles of memorandum to apply but you do need an asset lock statement and a statement confirming your organisation's not for profit status.

## **I am an individual with a project idea, can I apply?**

As these grants are aimed at supporting communities and being led by that community, either geographic communities or communities of interest, we are not able to support individuals. We encourage you to look in your local area or online for groups which may already be in existence and with whom you may be able to work with and they apply.

## **We are new and don't yet have a bank account, can we still apply?**

If you do not meet all the eligibility requirements for a grant, including being able to provide evidence of an existing bank account in the name of the constituted group or organisation, you must apply through a sponsor.

## **Applying Through a Sponsor**

If you do not meet the eligibility criteria to apply under your own organisation, you could apply using a sponsor organisation. A sponsor organisation is an organisation that meets the required criteria, knows your organisation and the work you do well and is willing to hold and distribute to you any funds awarded, should you be successful. The sponsor is not involved in any of the project delivery.

## **We only have partial annual accounts; can we apply without a sponsor?**

If you do not meet all the eligibility requirements for a grant, including being able to provide a full 12 months' worth of accounts or financial recording (where you are not required to provide accounts), you must apply through a sponsor.

## **Does the sponsor organisation need to meet the eligibility criteria to apply?**

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The sponsor organisation must:

- Be an eligible registered organisation with companies house or the charity commission in England and Wales. Be based and registered in London
- Have at least three Trustees/Directors or Management Committee members.
- Have received income in the last financial year

The sponsor organisation does not have to meet the turnover criteria and would be eligible to be a sponsor if their turnover was higher than £50,000.

## **What information do you need from unconstituted groups who want to apply?**

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You will need a letter of reference from your sponsor organisation to vouch for your work in the local community. A template letter is provided in the application form.

You must upload your letter of reference at the application stage which outlines they are happy to support and accept funds on your behalf so we can take this into consideration when assessing your application.

We are not able to pay money into an individual's or informal group's bank account, so a sponsor organisation will need to receive the money on your behalf for the purposes of the project.

Our requirement is for the sponsor to submit the following:

- a governing document such as constitution, to confirm they have at least three Trustees or governing members who are unrelated and provide their contact details
- a bank account in the name of your sponsor organisation who would receive and distribute funds on your behalf with two unrelated signatories
- public liability insurance from the sponsor organisation.

## **Can the Inclusion Partners for the Fund act as our sponsor?**

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Your sponsor organisation needs to be an organisation that already knows your group or organisation and can be a champion and provide support for your intended project. Therefore the BSC's Fund Inclusion Partners cannot act as sponsors generically. If you already have a strong existing relationship with one of the organisations who are an Inclusion Partner, please approach them directly.

## **Does the sponsor organisation need to be equity led?**

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No, the sponsor organisation does not need to be equity-led and this won't impact final decisions.

## **The Project**

### **Does the activity for my project have to be new?**

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We believe that if something is already working well and having clear impact, then these activities will be considered for funding. Projects can fall under one of these four headings:

- New – funding supports an idea you have wanted to develop but haven't had the funding to do so, or this funding opportunity sparked a new idea you feel would be impactful.
- More – funding supports work that you are already doing and is evidencing clear impact. You would like to use this funding to expand the service in some way. For example you may want to increase the number of beneficiaries to use your service which requires a new part time post. It is vital that you are clear with us about the added value this additional funding will bring and be able to clearly evidence this in your application.
- Slightly differently – funding supports work that you are already doing and is evidencing clear impact. You would like to use this funding to make a slight change and do things a bit differently. For example you may be running cookery classes for young people in Camberwell and you want to offer this to the Deaf and disabled community now too. It is vital that you are clear with us about the added value this additional funding will bring and be able to clearly evidence this in your application.
- Repeat – funding supports work that is coming to an end, yet there is a need for it to continue. You will need to provide a clear case for why your community group has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and how it meets one of the BSC's Fund outcomes. It is vital that you are clear with us about the added value this additional funding will bring and evidence it.

## **Should all projects be supported by volunteers?**

We know that certain groups are less represented in what we call 'formal volunteering' and that 'informal volunteering' is happening in more places than we all realise. For that reason

we will assume that projects will involve support from 'volunteers' in some way or other. Volunteering is giving unpaid help to other people. It often mutually benefits the volunteer and organisation and includes peer support. This could be to an organisation, a friend or neighbour or someone else, but not a relative. We are very interested to find out about any plans you may have to attract and involve local people as volunteers, who might not usually take part in community activities. You will be asked about this in the application and all grantees will need to report on how many volunteers have been involved in the project supported by this funding.

## **The term greening projects seems to have replaced environmental projects; can you explain?**

For round one of our reserve criteria was to support environmental projects (if for example, two projects had scored similarly, and we had difficulty deciding which projects to fund). That remains the same except for rounds two and three we have amended the term to 'greening projects'. 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.

Projects that are greening projects will have a few additional outcomes to collate but we will ensure these are minimal and simple to gather and report.

# Budget

## **Do we need to raise any other funds for the project before applying and do these funds need to be confirmed or received before we submit our application?**

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We recognise that raising funds is challenging, particularly for new ideas or for groups who face barriers to funding. Match funding is not a requirement of these grants, but we'd like to know what other support you have for your project. This could be donations, sponsorship or other grants. It could also be support-in-kind. These are things you need for your project, but you don't have to pay for, such as: volunteer time or an organisation providing a service or space for free or a heavily reduced rate.

Where an activity or item is being funded by a number of sources, including BSC funding, proof of secured funding for that specific cost will be required before the grant is released.

## **Can we apply for project management costs?**

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Yes, as part of your budget, we will accept a proportion to be allocated against project management costs. We would not expect that this would be the majority of the budget and we would expect that the person project managing the delivery of the programme is either a paid member of staff or a suitably qualified sub-contractor. There must be an appropriate legal entity to be paid through, with relevant insurances where required.

## **Can we pay volunteers?**

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Volunteers, by definition, are not paid for their time as a volunteer, but you may wish to cover expenses they incur when volunteering. This is usually limited to food, drink and reasonable travel expenses. If they receive any other payment for their time, they should be classed as an employee or worker rather than a volunteer.

There are certain employment rights if you're classed as an employee or worker, like receiving the minimum wage and the organisation who hires them has additional obligations. Therefore, your budget should not include hourly, or day rates put against volunteers or individuals. If someone is providing a service such as project management or delivery of part of your project and is required to be paid, they will be required to be a suitable legal entity and paid formally.

## **Support**

### **Can I speak with someone about my application before starting it?**

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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 [bscgrants@rocketsciencelab.co.uk](mailto:bscgrants@rocketsciencelab.co.uk) to book your 20-minute support call for any Tuesday, during the application period, between 2-4pm.

The below Inclusion Partner organisations will also be hosting information and support sessions so please contact one of the below if your organisation fits their specialism or see our webpage for this information:

**Applicants from LGBTIQ+ groups/organisation:**

Consortium – [briony@consortium.lgbt](mailto:briony@consortium.lgbt) / 020 7064 6505

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

Inclusion London - [Ailsa.McWilliam@inclusionlondon.org.uk](mailto:Ailsa.McWilliam@inclusionlondon.org.uk)  
/ 07749 892843

**Applicants from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups/organisations:**

Ubele – [Deborah.robinson@ubele.org](mailto:Deborah.robinson@ubele.org)

**Applicants from Women Centred groups/organisations (meaning they are led by and for women):**

Women's Resource Centre – [admin@wrc.org.uk](mailto:admin@wrc.org.uk)

**Will there be additional support for grantees, other than funding?**

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Aside from grant funding, grantees will have the opportunity to access additional support in the shape of:

- Learning network to share best practice with other projects
- Connections to wider relevant networks in your local area
- Funder collaboration, e.g. a Funder Fair
- Other opportunities for follow on funding to be highlighted.