# FAQs

## General

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

Following extremely low interest in the £1,000 microgrants in Round 1, as well as constructive feedback from applicants and our Advisory Board, we have decided to amalgamate the £1,000 tier 1 grant into the tier 2 process. Therefore applicants are now able to apply for £1,000 to £5,000 using the microgrant form available.

### 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.

### 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.

It is important to note that we may need to adapt the grants criteria for subsequent rounds in response to what has been working well or what could be working better from previous rounds. We will be fully transparent about this and amend the BSC Fund guidance and FAQ for future rounds accordingly if necessary.

### 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 round two, all funded groups/organisations must be equity-led. We do still 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, 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 the online checks we can do 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 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.

## 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. 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.

## 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 and have a charitable dissolution clause within their governing document.

## 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?

If the organisation is registered with the Charity Commission, Companies House or another regulator, the registered address must be within London. If you are applying as a constituted group, you will be required to provide proof that your group are based in London. Sponsor organisations for applicants will also be required to be registered to a London address. We are not able to support organisations whose project is in London or staff are based in London, but the organisation’s registered address is not in London.

## 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 a full and finalised 12 months of financial accounts, 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 £200,000 but it is expected that during this current financial year that it will be less than £200,000, can we still apply?

Unfortunately you will not be eligible to apply if your last set of financial accounts show a turnover of over £200,000. 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/**

## Our turnover is less than £50,000 can we apply for a small grant instead of a microgrant?

Yes, small grant applications are welcomed from all eligible applicants with a turnover of £0 - £200,000.

## We are a branch of a larger organisation with a turnover over £200,000 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 the 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 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

## What's the difference between a sponsor and a partnership?

A partnership is when one or more partners are delivering activities collaboratively. 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?

The sponsor organisation must:

- Be an eligible organisation, such as, registered charity, charitable company etc
- 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 if their turnover was higher than £200,000.

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

- You will need a letter of reference from your sponsor organisation to vouch for your work in the local community. Please contact Rocket Science if you would like to see a template letter on 020 3291 3026, or email at **accessibility@rocketsciencelab.co.uk**.
  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 their behalf with two unrelated signatories
- public liability insurance from the sponsor organisation.

## Can the Equity Partners for the Fund act as our sponsor?

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 equity partners cannot act as sponsors generically. If you already have a strong existing relationship with one of the organisations who are an equity partner, please approach them directly.

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

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

# Applying In Partnership

## Can we apply in partnership?

Yes. Applications in partnership are available for Small Grants (£5,001 to £10k). If you believe that working with one or more partner organisations together would add value to your project, then we would support this. The lead partner (i.e., the organisation that will be completing the application) of this partnership must be able to meet our criteria. All partners organisations must meet this core criteria:

- Be an eligible organisation
- Be based and registered in London
- Meet the turnover criteria

The partnership can be existing or new, either formally or informally set up and all partners must agree about applying for the fund and subsequently working together to deliver the project. The lead partner would apply on behalf of the partnership, receive the funding and be responsible for distributing to other organisations within the partnership. Partners should have clear responsibilities for project deliverables, so making referrals to a service for example, wouldn't be considered enough to be a partner. We would like to see genuine evidence of collaboration from partnerships and consideration of sharing of power.

Organisations applying as a partnership will need to:

- Provide a breakdown in the budget of how funding will be divided up between partners
- Specify the role and deliverables of each partner
- Explain how the partnership will be managed to ensure all partners play a role in delivery.

We will support conversations and development of ideas for partnership applications and analyse the number and quality of partnership applications to see whether these applications are strong.

If you are considering applying as a partnership, please contact Rocket Science on 020 3291 3026 or email **bscgrants@rocketsciencelab.co.uk**

# The Project

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

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 evidence it.

- 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 microgrant and small grant 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 will be 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 we have amended the term to ‘greening projects’ and have included some examples of what we mean by greening projects for round two:

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 collate.

# 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?

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?

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. Volunteers' out of pocket expenses can be paid for from the project management costs.

## Can we pay volunteers?

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?

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** to book your 20-minute support call for any Tuesday, during the application period, between 2-4pm.

**The below partner organisations will also be hosting information and support sessions so please contact one of the below if your organisation fits their specialism:**

- **Applicants from a DPPO (Deaf and Disabled People's Organisation/group)**
  Inclusion London - **Ailsa.McWilliam@inclusionlondon.org.uk** / 07935 378564

- **Applicants from LGBTIQA+ groups/organisation:**
  Consortium – **briony@consortium.lgbt** /020 7064 6505

- **Applicants from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups/organisations:**
  Ubele – **Deborah.robinson@ubele.org**

- **Applicants from Women Centred groups/organisations:**
  Women's Resource Centre – **admin@wrc.org.uk**

## Can our organisation re-apply if unsuccessful?

Unsuccessful applicants are able to re-apply once again during round two or three. If you are keen to re-apply for a subsequent round, please contact Rocket Science or one of our four Equity Partners for a support session to discuss your revised application.

Contact Rocket Science by phone on 020 3291 3026, or email at **accessibility@rocketsciencelab.co.uk** to book your 20-minute support call for any Tuesday, during the application period, between 2-4pm.

Or contact one of our four partner organisations (listed in the previous answer) if your organisation is within their focused groups.

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

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.

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