



Managed by the Community Development Foundation
Funded by the Office of the Third Sector



Guidance notes on applying for Grassroots Grants

Where the funding has come from?

The Grassroots Grants Programme has been created to build stronger and more active communities as a result of the 'Third Sector Review' that took place last year. There are two elements to the Programme:

1. A 'Small Grants Programme', and
2. An 'Endowment Match Challenge Programme'.

Organisations across England were invited to apply for funding to deliver the Small Grants and Match Challenge funding for each area. Voluntary Action Leicester (VAL) in partnership with the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Community Foundation (LLRCF) were successfully awarded the funding for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland in September 2008.

1. Small Grants Programme

VAL is running the Small Grants Programme. Funding totalling £1,244,738 is available to small voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Each area has a pre-determined budget. This programme will run from Autumn/Winter 2008 until 31st March 2011.

2. Endowment Match Programme

LLRCF are delivering the Endowment Match Challenge Programme, which will improve the sustainability of local grant-making. LLRCF will approach local businesses and individuals for donations to the Endowment Match Challenge. For every £1 LLRCF raise the Government will match it.

VAL and LLRCF are asking all groups to promote the Match Challenge element of the programme to potential donors to help meet the targets set for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland of £948,592.52. This programme will run from Autumn/Winter 2008 until 31st March 2011

For further information on the Endowment Match Challenge Programme contact Angela Riley, Grants Officer, VAL on T. 0116 257 5052.

Who can apply?

Not-for-profit, voluntary and community sector groups (the third sector) can apply that:

1. Have been active in their community for not less than 12 months prior to 31st December 2007
2. Are set up for charitable, benevolent or philanthropic purposes
3. Have an annual average income, calculated over the last three years, of less than £20,000 per annum
4. Meet the needs of the local community
5. Have a constitution with a suitable dissolution clause (a governing document with a set of rules and a management committee).

Applications from faith groups are welcomed for community-based work but the activity or project must not promote a particular religion, or be for a religious festival or religious activities.

If your group does not have a constitution, contact Dave Sharpe on T. 0116 257 5047 or Email daves@voluntaryactionleicester.org.uk.

Where is funding available?

The Office for the Third Sector (OTS) has set three separate geographic budgets for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, and each area has an annual allocation. This allocation cannot be transferred between areas or financial years.

How much funding is available and how often?

VCS Groups can apply for funding for as many times as needed to a maximum of £5000 in total over 3 years. For example, a VCS group can apply for £5,000 during year one of the programme and if successful they cannot apply again during the life of the Grassroots Grants programme. A VCS group can also submit a funding application that requests £1,000 during Year 1, £2,000 during Year 2 and £2,000 during Year 3. In both of these examples, funding does not exceed £5,000 over 3 years. This will enable VCS groups to apply for funding that lasts until 31st March 2011, and it will remove the pressure of VCS groups having to complete yearly funding applications.

Funding for each year will need to be spent by the end of each financial year. VCS groups will need to demonstrate evidence of progress and the achievements each year in order to receive any further funding for years 2 and 3. Payment of grants will be made in advance of expenditure, but not in advance of need, therefore projects and activities being delivered over a longer period of time need to be paid in instalments. For example a project will receive money in instalments to reflect their planned activities rather than receiving two years money in advance.

Project timescales can range from a few months to two and a quarter years. If funding is for a one off event we would expect that this would be completed with evidence submitted within six months. Where a VCS group is running several activities then we would expect that this would be completed and monitored over a period of one year. In some cases this may be over two years depending on the nature of the project.

What can funding be used for?

The aim of the Small Grants Programme is to respond to the diverse needs of communities. Grassroots Grants are a key element of the Government Strategy for building stronger and more active communities. The funding can be used for the purchase of equipment, for one off events or for longer-term projects.

Examples of what the funding can pay for:

- The purchase of equipment e.g. a computer, oven, furniture etc
- The costs of putting on a local event or workshop
- Staff costs to enable the employment of individuals
- Employing sessional staff
- Venue hire or rental costs
- Contribution to rent costs (related to activities/service delivery)
- The cost of attending a conference or event
- Training for volunteers
- Additional activities to expand an existing funded project
- Activities that support community activity
- Activities that meet an identified need in the local community
- Funding to support an organisation to achieve a quality or other standard relevant to their activities

Groups can apply for revenue and capital costs for their projects. Capital costs are sums of money spent on the purchase or improvement of fixed assets including buildings and equipment that have a life of over 1 year. All other eligible spend will be classed as revenue spend for this programme.

Revenue costs are:

- Sessional pay
- Volunteer expenses travel only
- Room hire
- Training costs
- Costs associated with running events

Capital costs are:

- Equipment, laptops, computers
- Furniture
- Refurbishment costs

These are just examples. We expect that Grassroots Grants will be led by the needs of local people and VCS groups, therefore what can be funded is very broad.

Application process

Applications can be made for grants of between £250 and £5000. Applications for grants of below £900 will be considered by an independent grant panel on a 'light touch' assessment process, based on the information provided in the application form. Applying for less than £900 does not guarantee that you will be successful. Application rounds may be greatly oversubscribed or the standards of applications received may be high.

Applications for grants with a value greater than £900 will be scored against a scoring matrix. The application will be assessed on the need for the project, management committee skills, experience and track record, and whether the budget is value for money. When filling in your funding application you will need to demonstrate clearly the need for your project, how you will meet the criteria, and how you will manage the project.

Give examples of things you have already done, which can include learning from things that haven't worked in the past. The scoring matrix will be available on VAL's website www.voluntaryactionleicester.org.uk or on request by phoning Angela Riley on T. 0116 257 5052.

Successful organisations will be required to complete a short report at the end of their project. Applicants should consider how they will record their successes at the beginning of the project. This will include demonstrating how your organisations capacity to respond to local issues has been built and how your project has helped to build stronger communities.

Deadlines

Financial year 2008 / 2009

Area	Deadline for submission	Approximate decision date
Leicester City	22 nd December 2008	w/c 12 th January 2009
Leicestershire	25 th November 2008	w/c 8 th December 2008
Rutland	22 nd December 2008	w/c 12 th January 2009

For other deadlines or a list of Frequently Asked Questions relating to the Grassroots Grants programme please see the VAL website at www.voluntaryactionleicester.org.uk or contact Dave Sharpe on T. 0116 257 5047.

What the programme is not able to fund

- Statutory organisations, such as Local Authorities, schools and the Police Force
- Regional or local offices of national organisations
- Arms length public sector organisations that are controlled wholly or in part by statutory agencies such as local authorities and the NHS
- Any Party Political activity
- Commercial ventures
- Organisations that are for the sole benefit or relief of animals or plants.
Grassroots Grants are for the direct benefit of communities and people only. This does not preclude City Farms or other groups and other organisations that work with animals and/or the environment to benefit people. The final judgement on this will be left to VAL, based on their knowledge of local needs, organisations and priorities.
- There are some restrictions on the types of activities that can be supported for Asylum seeker groups. This funding cannot be used for the provision of services to asylum seekers when those services are inconsistent with immigration laws or Home Office policy. For the purposes of this fund, an 'asylum seeker' means a person who has brought an asylum or human rights claim in the UK, which has not yet been determined by either the Secretary of State or, as applicable, any relevant appellate authorities. It also includes a person who is a dependant on such a claim. Further information can be found at www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.
- Projects for the benefit of people who are not a resident of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
- Projects should not duplicate or replace existing services or facilities or those that should be of a statutory responsibility
- Grants can not be used for retrospective funding, so can not fund any expenditure incurred prior to the grants award date
- Grants cannot be used for projects that have a solely religious or political aim or that are accessible only by people of a particular faith

What to submit

Please ensure the following documents are submitted for the assessment process, failing to submit this information **will** result in your application being rejected as incomplete:

- Grassroots Grants Application Form
- Copy of your group's constitution/set of rules **signed by a member of the management committee** confirming it is a current copy
- Copies of your group's accounts for the last three years where possible
- A copy of your group's most recent bank statement
- A list of your Management committee's names and contact details