

Welcome to the ESF Community Grants Applicant Q&A!

This document attempts to answer the questions posed by our grant applicants.
It will be updated regularly, so please do check back.

Please read this document alongside the ESF Community Grant Guide.



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1. About ESF Community Grants

What are ESF Community Grants?

ESF Community Grants are small grants of between £5,000 and £20,000 available to Third Sector or small organisations to enable them to support unemployed and economically inactive people into or towards employment, education or training. The Grants are funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), and managed in The Marches by Landau Limited.

Who can apply?

Organisations must be Third Sector organisations, OR small organisations with fewer than 49 full-time equivalent staff, and a turnover or balance sheet equal to or under 10 million Euros (CURRENTLY APPROXIMATELY £8.6M).

How much can I apply for?

Applicants can apply for grants for projects costing between £5,000 and £20,000.

Will ESF Community Grants be affected by Brexit?

No. The UK government has guaranteed that all projects funded under the ESF 2014-2020 programme period will have their funding honoured following withdrawal from the European Union, even if the UK exits without a deal. For more information, please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-social-fund-esf-grants-if-theres-nobrexit-deal/european-social-fund-esf-grants-if-theres-no-brexit-deal>

Does my bank account need to have two signatories?

Yes - we cannot make a payment without this. Setting up a second signatory should be fairly straightforward however, and we encourage small organisations with only one signatory to explore this. Where an organisation with only one signatory applies for a grant, a grant may be awarded on the condition that a second signatory is put in place prior to any funds being drawn down.

What costs can the fund cover?

- Staff costs including employer's National Insurance and pension contributions, and any taxable incentives linked to pay
- Reasonable overheads – you must tell us how you have worked these out
- Staff expenses such as travel or allowances
- Volunteer costs such as travel and subsistence
- Consumables such as stationery or essential software
- Venue hire
- Small items of equipment costing up to £1,000
- VAT that cannot be reclaimed from HMRC

IMPORTANT: One representative from all successful projects will be required to attend a mandatory briefing event between accepting their grant and starting delivery. You may wish to build in your staff time and travel costs for attending this event into your budget.

What costs can't the fund cover?

- Activities that will not contribute to the delivery of the targets we have identified on the project outline
- Activities or staff costs that do not represent good value for money
- Anything that is a statutory obligation or will replace statutory funding
- Anything you start or spend money on before we confirm our funding

- Equipment costing more than £1,000 per item
- Furniture and refurbishment or landscaping work
- Fundraising appeals, endowments and registration fees
- In-kind contributions of unpaid voluntary work
- Loans, fines, bank charges and interest payments
- Projects that generate income or revenue
- Purchase of land or buildings
- Redundancy costs
- Finance leases (for example, where the equipment becomes the property of the leasee at the end of the agreement)
- Second-hand equipment
- VAT you can recover
- Vehicles

What kinds of activities can be funded?

Activities can include, but aren't limited to:

- Engagement activities – for example visits to colleges etc. to raise awareness and increase participant familiarity with more formal settings.
- Activities to improve confidence, motivation and social integration (for example, sports, gardening, music and so on)
- Development of local groups and networks to support people to get a job or access learning (e.g. Jobs Clubs)
- 'Soft' Skills Development – for example anger management, assertiveness or motivation
- Innovative approaches to attract under-represented groups into learning

What kinds of activities are not eligible for funding?

- Core costs of running your organisation other than those directly associated with delivery of the project
- Activities promoting religious beliefs or political activities
- Activities that the state has a legal obligation to provide
- Fundraising activities for your organisation or any other group or activity

Who should the funding support?

We particularly want to fund projects that will include support for eligible people who are unemployed or economically inactive and:

- are over 50 years of age
- have disabilities
- are from ethnic minorities
- are women
- have been unemployed for more than 6 months

If your project supports people outside of these priority groups that isn't a problem! Please just be aware that during the assessment process priority will be given to those projects that include some participants from priority groups.

Who can we work with?

All participants you work with must be eligible to receive ESF funding. You can access the ESF National Eligibility Criteria

here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/626878/ESF_national_eligibility_rules.pdf. You will be given

template forms and accompanying guidance to capture the eligibility of those you are working with.

Why do you need to know financial information about my organisation?

Landau Limited are required by the funder to perform a due diligence check on all applicant organisations to ensure they have adequate systems and structures in place to be able to receive and spend the grant appropriately, and to evidence how the grant has been spent.

How long do I have to spend the grant?

You will have 6 months to spend your grant. If you require longer than this, you can speak to one of our team once the grant has been awarded to request an extension, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Can I apply for more than one grant?

Yes, organisations can receive more than one grant from the Fund. Please note however that organisations can only have one 'live' grant at a time. Where a second application is received from an organisation, priority will be given at the Grant Panel to organisations making a first-time application.

Can I apply if we have already received ESF Funding?

Yes. The only restriction is that this grant must be for a discrete project, and not used as match funding or to top up funding on another project you are delivering.

Can Parish Councils apply for an ESF Community Grant

Yes. If the Parish Council meets the criteria for a 'small organisation', then they are eligible to apply.

Is support available to help me complete my application?

If you have a particular support need during the application process please do let us know to see if this is something we can help you with.

2. The Grant Application Process

Can I apply for a grant at any time?

Yes, you can apply at any time until end of March 2022

How do I apply for a grant?

STEP 1: The Eligibility Checker

The Eligibility criteria will help you to understand if your organisation and your proposed project are eligible for funding. Page 3 of the Community Grant Guide in the section titled 'Who can apply for an ESF Community Grant?' will let you know whether it's possible to proceed with an application.

When you have completed the Eligibility Check successfully you can proceed with the application straight away.

STEP 2: Completing the Application Form

You've passed the Eligibility Checker? Great! The next step is to complete your full application form this is done via a survey monkey application found on the Grants website. www.landaugrants.co.uk .

The application is designed to tell us the key things we need to know about your project in order to decide whether we can fund it. You can find some notes on completing the application in Appendix 1 of the Community Grant Guide (see page 14). You will need to complete the application form on survey monkey.

You'll also be asked to upload four documents relating to your eligibility when you submit your application:

1. Your organisation's Constitution
2. Memorandum of Association or Articles of Association
3. cent signed audited accounts
4. Letter f reference (if Applicable)

STEP 3: Submitting the Application Form

Once you're happy that you have completed all the information onto survey monkey, submit the application which we will review in the timescales explained below.

Receiving correspondence from Landau Ltd

To ensure you successfully receive email communications regarding your application, please save this email address – landaugrants@landau.co.uk - to your contacts or safe list. This will prevent emails being filtered into your spam or junk folders, where they can easily be overlooked.

How will my application be assessed?

Your application will be assessed by an experienced grants officer using a scoring matrix available in the application guidance. A summary report on applications will be submitted to the monthly grants panels along with a recommendation as to whether or not the project can be funded. The grant panel will review and endorse the recommendations, or raise queries and requests for further information where needed.

When are the grant panels taking place?

Applications need to be in by the last working day of the month. Panel meetings take place 3rd week of the following month.

Here are the application due dates for 2021.

Application Deadline	Planned Panel Meetings		Application Deadline	Planned Panel Meetings
26 th February	24 th March		31 st August	24 th September
31 st March	24 th April		30 th September	25 th October
30 th April	27 th May		29 th October	24 th November
26 th May	24 th June		30 th November	tbc
30 th June	26 th July		31 st December	tbc
30 th July	25 th August			

If I'm unsuccessful, will I get feedback on my application?

All unsuccessful applicants will receive written feedback on their applications, along with guidance on whether a further submission is advisable.

If I am unsuccessful, can I apply again?

Yes. Where your application has the potential to be fundable, you will be offered advice and guidance if required to help with your subsequent applications.

3. After a Grant has been awarded

I have been successful – what happens next?

We'll write to you to confirm the amount of grant you have been awarded, and to let you know if there are any additional conditions attached to the funding (for example, putting a particular policy in place). If you are happy to accept the funding, you will be asked to accept the grant and complete the Due Diligence requirements. These will check that your organisation has the policies and financial systems in place to manage the funds. Landau will check these details and let you know if there are any queries. Once you have passed the Due Diligence, Landau will write to you to let you know, and will release your first grant payment (40% of your total grant).

How are grants paid?

Grants are paid in three instalments by BACS transfer into your organisation's account:

- Payment 1: 40% on acceptance of grant and satisfactory completion of Due Diligence
- Payment 2: 40% After 3 months delivery, subject to satisfactory performance against your key milestones and participant profile
- Payment 3 20% on acceptance of your final report, financial evidence, case study, and satisfactory overall progress against your key milestones and participant profile.

If I am successful, are there any reporting requirements I will be expected to fulfil?

Yes. You will be required to provide an interim report at the halfway point of your grant period, as well as a final report at the end. In addition, you will be required to update us on enrolments and progressions of your participants on a monthly basis. You will be asked to upload scanned copies of each participant file once when they enrol, and again when they exit your project. You will do this via OneDrive.

Are we able to see the participant form before we apply?

A draft participant form is available on request from the Community Grants Teams

What happens at the end of my grant?

We will prompt you to complete a final report and case study on your project, ask you to submit evidence of your expenditure across the project, and to ensure that all completed participant forms have been uploaded to OneDrive. We will provide you with templates and guidance to help you with this. You will also be asked to deliver your hard copy participant forms to your local Landau office.

What happens if I am struggling to meet my targets?

Don't panic! Please get in touch with us as soon as possible at landaugrants@landau.co.uk or call 01952 245015 and ask to speak to a member of the ESF Community Grants team.

The earlier you can tell us about a potential problem, the more likely we are to be able to help.

What happens if I don't meet my targets?

If you aren't meeting your targets we will discuss next steps with you. We will work with you wherever we can to make sure your project is a success. If things aren't working out however we may need to take further action. Depending on the point you are in your grant, the amount of funds you have spent, and the extent of your underperformance, we may:

- Offer you an extension
- Withhold your next payment until your performance improves
- Reduce the overall amount of your grant
- Ask you to pay back some or all of the funds you have received.

It's really important that you let us know as soon as possible if your project is struggling to ensure we have as much time as possible to help get you back on the right track.

I have a compliment / complaint

You can contact a member of the ESF Community Grants team at landaugrants@landau.co.uk or by telephone at 01952 245015. If you would like to talk to someone outside of the Grants team, please contact info@landau.co.uk.

4. Working with Participants

What is the eligibility criteria for participants?

All grant recipients will need to make sure that the people they work with are eligible to receive ESF funding. You will need to ensure that all participants are able to provide you with evidence that they:

- Have the right to live and work in the UK
- Are aged 16 years or older
- They are unemployed (preferably 6 months+), or economically inactive and not in education or training.

A full list of the preferred evidence will be provided in the Grant Process for successful applicants, and a 'Participant File' will be provided which will guide your staff through the evidencing process.

Are participants who are already working with the Job Centre eligible?

Yes – as long as the participant meets ESF eligibility / programme eligibility criteria, it doesn't matter if they are also working with the Job Centre.

What evidence will participants need to provide to demonstrate they are unemployed?

The participant will need to confirm their employment status, how long they have been unemployed, and what (if any) benefit they are claiming. Wherever possible they must also provide a letter from the DWP or Jobcentre Plus confirming their status.

What evidence will participants need to provide to demonstrate they are economically inactive?

Participants will need to self-declare they are inactive and you will need a signed statement to that effect. They may also be able to show you supporting evidence, such as being in receipt of new-style ESA, or a referral from a third party.

Is there a minimum / maximum number of contact hours for participants?

No – we do not specify a maximum or minimum number of contact hours with participants. We do expect however that your grant application will demonstrate that participants will make good progress through engaging with your project, and that it represents good value for money in line with the guide 'per head' value set out in the Application Guidance.

Do all participants have to move into employment, education or training?

No – we expect projects to move 31% of their participants into employment, education or training, but accept that there will be some variance in this depending on the type of project you are running.

What if my participants will progress after my grant has completed?

Where a project may need additional time at the end of their grant to evidence that participants have progressed they will also be able to request that from their Grant Officer. Please note that to claim a progression, participants will need to have achieved the progression within 28 days of the completion of the ESF funded activity. Grant recipients will then need to report a progression and provide evidence of the progression within 3 months of the end date of the learning activity.

What is classed as a progression?

A participant will be considered to have progressed if they enter into employment or education/training after completing your project. All forms of employment are counted, including zero hours contracts. To be considered a progression, education or training must be a level higher than they completed during your ESF project, or a minimum of 20 guided learning hours (GLH) at the same level.

5. Definitions

Disability

The main national definition is as defined in section 6 of the Equality Act 2010. See link. <https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010> . It refers to a person who: (i) has a physical or mental impairment; and (ii) the impairment has a substantial and long term negative effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Economically Inactive

This means not in employment and not registered as unemployed. Please note that although students are considered as inactive, they are not eligible for this provision, as they are not available for work.

Employed

People are employed if they perform work for pay, profit or family gain. People are self-employed if they work in his/her own business for the purpose of earning a profit, even if they are not making a profit or are just setting up. This also includes individuals on zero hour contracts.

Small Organisations

For the purposes of these grants, the ESF describe small organisations as organisations that employ fewer than 49 full time equivalent staff and have an annual turnover equal to or under EUR 10 million or balance sheet equal to or below EUR 10 million.

Third Sector

Third Sector is the part of an economy or society comprising non-governmental and nonprofit making organisations or associations including charities, voluntary and community groups.

Unemployed

'Unemployed' refers to persons who are without work, available for work and actively seeking work. Persons considered registered unemployed would be included. Where the period of unemployment is greater than 6 months for a person under 25 years old and greater than 12 months for who is 25 years old or older then the persons are classed as long-term Unemployed.