

Community Capacity Autumn 2023 Application guidance

Community Capacity grants

We are launching another round of Community Capacity funding, thanks to £325,000 from Oxfordshire County Council. Grants will be made to help Oxfordshire's residents to live independently and healthily for as long as possible in their lives.

This builds on the first round of Community Capacity grant funding held in the winter of 2022.

Key information

Amounts available	£5,000 - £20,000
Group annual income	Under £1million
Type of cost	Ongoing running costs, project, capital and promotional costs
Closing date	28th September

Grants round opens – 6th September

Grants round closes – Midday on Thursday 28th September

Funding decisions announced – by 1st December

Successful applicants provide required financial and governance evidence – by 8th December

Grants paid – by 22nd December (contingent on financial and governance evidence being received)

Desired outcomes for this grants round

The Community Capacity grants support the Council's [Oxfordshire Way](#) vision: "to support the people of Oxfordshire to live well in their community, remaining fit and healthy for as long as possible: to build community resilience and increase independence".



Local community organisations play a huge role in supporting people to thrive with less need for government services. This can help people have a much better quality-of-life.

We are seeking grant proposals which deliver these outcomes:

1. Support people to live independently
2. Reduce individual isolation and loneliness, and promote emotional resilience
3. Increase people's mental health to address preventable conditions
4. Enable people to engage with physical activity to address preventable conditions

Example activities

The following are examples of the types of activities we are looking to see in applications. However, we welcome applications for activities beyond these.

- local groups, activities and social afternoons, including volunteering opportunities
- befriending, community meals and transport
- counselling, advice and support groups
- interventions addressing digital exclusion
- redevelopment or use of open green spaces for mental and physical well-being

Further notes

We welcome:

- Collaboration between groups on joint or linked proposals
- Schemes which are led by the community and build on existing networks for mutual aid
- Social enterprises, and schemes which work with local businesses and partners, to provide financially sustainable solutions
- Schemes which fill gaps and therefore increase the options available to [social prescribers](#)

Beneficiaries

The grant is intended for vulnerable adults and those experiencing inequality and exclusion, including underserved groups that find it hard to find support through traditional services.

The target beneficiaries must be over 18. Schemes which include under 18s (e.g., nursery visits to care homes) are welcome but the target beneficiaries must still be over 18.



This list is not exhaustive, but examples of beneficiaries include isolated older people, people with mental/physical health conditions and disabilities, those on low incomes, people experiencing homelessness, minoritized ethnic groups, asylum seekers or recent migrants, and people with a nomadic lifestyle such as Gypsy, Traveller and Roma.

The estimated number of beneficiaries will be considered in the evaluation, alongside value for money.

This round is exclusively for beneficiaries who are Oxfordshire residents **outside** of the 10 most disadvantaged wards. Organisations based in these wards can still apply as long as they provide evidence in their application form that they will be serving beneficiaries outside of those wards.

The previous round of funding prioritised the 10 most disadvantaged Oxfordshire wards: Abingdon Caldecott, Banbury Cross & Neithrop, Banbury Grimsbury & Hightown, Banbury Ruscote, Barton & Sandhills, Blackbird Leys, Littlemore, Osney & St Thomas, Northfield Brook and Rose Hill & Ifley.

Eligibility

Applicants must fulfil the following criteria:

- Registered Charity, Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Charitable Company (Limited by Guarantee), Community Interest Company, a Constituted but Unincorporated Club or Association (ie it has a constitution but is not one of the other entities listed above)
- Operating in Oxfordshire
- Income under £1 million
- At least one year of operation; if constituted for less than one year but active for longer, evidence should be provided
- Have a bank account in its own name with at least two unrelated signatories, open for three months or more
- Have at least three trustees/committee members/directors who are not related to each other
- Have at least three months' running costs in reserves (if they are more than 12 months, an explanation will be requested)
- Be open to people of all religions and political affiliations, and must not attempt to convert people
- Up to date monitoring and reporting to OCF for any previous grants received from OCF

The following types of applicants are NOT eligible:

- Individuals
- National charities (or financially integrated branches)
- Public bodies or statutory organisations (including parish/town councils) however Parent Teacher Associations or 'Friends of...' organisations may



apply provided they meet the criteria above and the funding will be used for activities outside the statutory curriculum e.g. family wellbeing.

- Charities where the beneficiaries are solely animals

The following costs ARE eligible:

- Costs incurred from grant award (December 2023) until 30 November 2024
- Ongoing running costs, including full cost recovery
- Project costs
- Capital costs
- Promotional costs

The following types of costs are NOT eligible:

- Costs which have already been incurred
- Changes to land/buildings which do not belong to the applicant
- Purchase of buses or other vehicles
- Large-scale construction projects (including fixed structures e.g. playgrounds)

Limits on public subsidy

As these funds are 100% public money, we cannot give a grant to an organisation specifically to fund activities which will be charged to the public and where there is an existing economic market for such activities i.e. there are other providers of such activities currently offering them to the public for a charge and where that organisation has received more than £315,000 (including the value of the grant) from public authorities in the current fiscal year and previous two fiscal years (running 6 April to 5 April).

We do not expect this to be a common issue, based on previous grants rounds. We will use the answers in the questionnaires to identify where this is a possible issue and will be in contact with individual organisations to clarify if required.

How to apply

- [Apply online](#) from 6 September to midday on 28th September.
- Read this **guidance document** to help you with your application
- Take a look at the [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- We are able to offer two applicants the option to **apply using video** rather than the online application form. This is a pilot as part of our efforts to make our processes more accessible. Please contact us on ocf@oxfordshire.org or 01865 798666 if you would prefer this approach. We will prioritise requests based on need.



- All applications must set out how they would deliver one or more of the four desired **outcomes** listed above, including what **activities** they would do.
- All applicants must submit an **itemised budget**.
- Successful applicants will be required to supply **specified documentation** showing evidence of good governance to receive funds. This includes **bank account signatories**, a **bank statement**, and **accounts** of the most recent financial year (preferably audited). If the most recent year is not yet available, management accounts or income/expenditure document will be accepted. This must include financial data at least up until 31 March 2023 or more recently.
- Successful applicants will be required to provide a **safeguarding policy** to receive funds.
- Successful applicants will be required to use the **OCF online monitoring form** to be returned after 12 months.

Notes on panel discretion

The panel will use their discretion to reward collaboration between organisations.

The panel will use their discretion to ensure grants are allocated across these four themes:

- Delivering cultural assets
- Support increased physical activity
- Developing community assets
- Mental wellbeing

An asset is defined here as 'skills, knowledge, capacity, resources, experience or enthusiasm'.

The panel will use their discretion to allocate grants to ensure service provision across district council geography.

Monitoring and evaluation

It is important that we can capture the results of any funded applications. We have reflected on feedback from the previous round and in this round we have a lighter touch approach which still seeks consistent data across all grants. We will require successful organisations to report on the number of the people they have worked with, their demographic data, and to ask 1-6 questions to a minimum number of beneficiaries once towards the end of the implementation of the grant. Organisations will also be encouraged to report on lessons learnt, successes and challenges, and stories of change.

Please see below for full details.

Grant recipients will be required to provide an end of year grant report by 12 January 2025 at the latest on the delivery of their grant, which must be spent by 30 November 2024.



This must include:

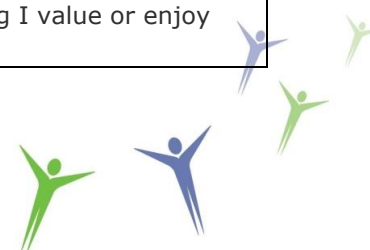
- Total number of beneficiaries
- Demographics of beneficiaries
 - Age
 - Ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Disability
 - Caring responsibility (yes/no)
 - Living alone (yes/no)
- Questionnaire response summary (see questions below)

The grant recipient should ask beneficiaries to select a question from the table below. The grant recipient should invite beneficiaries to complete more than one question, where they feel they are able to collect the data and where it is appropriate to their activity. This is an optional request and no beneficiary should be forced to answer a question they are not comfortable with.

This data should be collected once towards the end of grant period.

These questions have been drawn from national and county questionnaires and have been chosen for being tested, relevant and also appropriate to the context.

No.	Question	Answer
1	How strongly do you feel you belong to your immediate neighbourhood?	Very strongly / fairly strongly / not very strongly / not at all strongly
2	How often do you feel that you lack companionship?	Hardly ever or never, Some of the time, Often
3	Thinking about how much social contact you've had with people you like, which of the following statements best describes your social situation?	Please tick one box <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have as much social contact as I want with people I like • I have some social contact with people but not enough • I have little social contact with people and feel socially isolated
4	If I needed help, there are people who would be there for me?	Definitely agree/ Tend to agree / Tend to disagree / Definitely disagree
5	Which of the following statements best describes how you spend your time? When you are thinking about what you do with your time, please include anything you value or enjoy, including formal employment, voluntary or unpaid work, caring of others and leisure activities.	Please tick one box <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm able to spend my time as I want, doing things I value or enjoy • I do some of the things I value or enjoy with my time but not enough • I don't do anything I value or enjoy with my time



6	Thinking about how much time you have to look after yourself – in terms of getting enough sleep or eating well – which statement best describes your present situation?	Please tick one box <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I look after myself • Sometimes I can't look after myself well enough • I feel I am neglecting myself
---	---	---

Additionally, we will encourage grant recipients to report on:

- What was done: successes and challenges
- Stories of change
- Lessons learned

Application guidance

Supporting documents

The following documents are available to help you complete your application form:

- Our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document
- An [example of a completed application form](#) to give you an idea of the type of response that the assessors are looking for. By providing this type of information the assessors are best equipped to review your application.

Support and guidance sessions from our team

We want to make your application process as easy as possible. We will be holding a variety of sessions to talk you through the application process and to help resolve any issues or questions you may have.

No booking or registration is required, just drop in at the times below:

Launch webinar: Claire Hughes, Head of Grants and Inclusion will talk through the grant and the application process.

- Monday 11th September 2pm – 2:45pm [Join the webinar](#)

Virtual drop-in sessions: The Grants team will be available online between these times for you to ask any specific questions relating to your application.

- Tuesday 12th September 11am – 12pm [Join the drop-in](#)
- Friday 22nd September 12pm – 1pm [Join the drop-in](#)
- Tuesday 26th September 4pm – 5pm [Join the drop-in](#)



Physical drop-in session at the OCF office: Pop in to meet the team and ask any questions you may have about your application.

- Tuesday 19th September, 2pm – 3:30pm. [Find us](#) at 3 Woodin's Way, Oxford, OX1 1HD. We are located a 5-minute walk from the Westgate shopping centre, Gloucester Green bus station and Oxford train station.

Accessibility

We want to make our grant application process as straightforward as possible for everyone and to be fair and equitable to all. We are looking at how we can improve the process for all applicants, and have introduced the following for this grants round:

- Trialling video applications for two applicants who would benefit from this format.
- Providing a sample completed application form to help everyone know what types of responses we are hoping for.
- Offering a launch webinar to talk through the application process. This will be recorded and available to view on the [Community Capacity grants page](#) of our website after the event.
- Offering online and face-to-face drop-in sessions to answer any individual questions you may have or to help you complete your application form.

Using accessible technology

If you could benefit from additional tools to help you use a PC or laptop more easily, for example if you have need additional vision or hearing needs, [Microsoft](#) have a useful page that provides information on all of the settings and functionality that is available through all Microsoft software (Windows, Microsoft 365).

Translations

Google can be used quite easily to automatically translate our grants webpage and guidance document. It will work best on a Chrome browser. [See advice here](#) on how to set this up.

Alternative ways to apply

If you are finding it hard to complete the online application form due to your accessibility needs, please get in contact to chat to us about how we can help. Depending on the issue you face we may be able to offer a printed application form, a larger print version or a video application process.

Contact our Grants team on 01865 798666 or email ocf@oxfordshire.org

