Community Capacity Autumn 2024 Application guidance

Community Capacity grants

We are launching a third round of Community Capacity Funding, thanks to £341,250 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.

Last year, 24 organisations received a share of **£325,000** from the Community Capacity Fund.

Key information

Amounts available	£5,000 - £20,000
Group annual income	Under £1million
Type of cost	Ongoing running costs, including full cost recovery, project, capital and promotional costs
Closing date	14th October (Midday)
Grant period	Applicants can choose 12 or 24 months to spend the grant from date of award (December 2024). If the applicant chooses the 24-month option, they cannot apply for additional funding from the Community Capacity Grants during this period.

Grants round opens – 16th September

Grants round closes – Midday on Monday 14th October

Funding decisions announced – w/c 2nd December

Successful applicants provide required financial and governance evidence – by 9th December

Grants paid – by 31st December (contingent on financial and governance evidence being received and due diligence being completed)

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 the wellbeing of the whole community to stay well, live independently, increase physical activity, reduce individual isolation and loneliness, promoting emotional resilience and reducing demand on services
2. Addresses inequalities and improve quality of life
3. Support neighbourhood-led NHS social prescribing
4. Empower people to forge their own networks and structures
5. Create self-sustaining enterprises targeted at diverse communities
6. Support redevelopment or use open green spaces to support the wellbeing of whole communities

Types of schemes we would like to see:

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

- Schemes/projects that fill gaps and therefore increase the options available to community connectors and social prescribers
- Schemes where a grant would help to increase existing capacity, increase volunteering, support collaborative working and opportunities for mutual aid
- Schemes that are innovative: e.g. help mitigate digital exclusion; work across different generations; aspiration building; unlock value in our use of space and place etc
- Schemes that work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic, and social benefit
- Schemes that are intergenerational
- Schemes that support underserved groups that find it hard to find support through traditional services

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. For intergenerational schemes, it is acceptable for under-18s to be involved but the target beneficiaries to report on 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.

This round is exclusively for beneficiaries who are Oxfordshire residents, and we will be **prioritising applications from <u>outside</u> these ten wards**: Abingdon Caldecott, Banbury Cross & Neithrop, Banbury Grimsbury & Hightown, Banbury Ruscote, Barton & Sandhills, Blackbird Leys, Littlemore, Osney & St Thomas, Northfield Brook and Rose Hill & Iflley. Organisations working in these wards may still apply but are unlikely to get funded due to the volume of applications expected. The Oxfordshire Place Inequalities fund has been established for 2023-2025 to cover these 10 wards and will operate through the [Well Together Programme](#) funded by Oxfordshire County Council.

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 (i.e. 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

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The following costs ARE eligible:

- Costs incurred from grant award (December 2024) until 30 November 2026
- Ongoing running costs, including full cost recovery

- Project costs
- Capital costs
- Promotional costs

External requests for any of the following are <u>not</u> eligible for our funding:

- Costs which have already been incurred
- Contributions to general appeals or circulars
- Activities where the primary benefit is the advancement of religion
- Activities where the primary benefit is to enable a public body to conduct its statutory obligations
- Activities where the primary benefit is the advancement of animal welfare
- Activities which have already taken place
- Grant-making or equivalent gifts in kind by other organisations (although we can fund provision of necessary goods for a service e.g. food parcels or activity packs)
- Applications from privately owned and profit-distributing companies or partnerships.
- 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.

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 16th September to midday on 14th October.
- Read this **guidance document** to help you with your application

- Read the full **list of questions** required for this 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 six 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**, **accounts** of the most recent financial year (preferably audited) and **management accounts or income/expenditure document**. This must include financial data at least up until 30 September 2024 or more recent.

- 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 and, for those who choose to spend the funds over 2 years, an additional report will be required after 24 months.

Notes on panel discretion

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

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 will require successful organisations to report on the number of 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.

Grant recipients will be required to provide an end of year grant report by 12 January 2026 at the latest on the delivery of their grant, which must be spent by 30 November 2025. If providers choose to spend the funds over 2 years (by 30 November 2026) then an end of year 2 report will also be required by 12 January 2027.
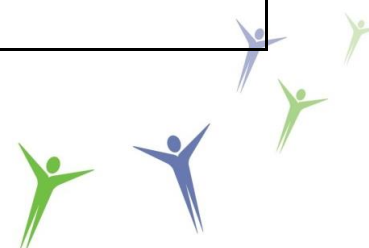
This must include:

- Total number of people engaged in activity
- 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.

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 • 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 • 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 • 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:

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.

- Monday 23rd September 2 - 3.30pm Join the Zoom meeting (Meeting ID: 852 2937 5145 Passcode: 963873)
- **Physical drop-in session at the OCF office:** Pop in to meet the team and ask any questions you may have about your application.
- Monday 30th September, 5pm – 6.30pm. 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 ways to 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 an example of a completed application form to help everyone know what types of responses we are hoping for.
- 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.
- Providing a full list of questions contained on the 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