

Community Capacity Autumn 2025 Application guidance

Community Capacity grants

We are launching a new round of Community Capacity Funding, thanks to just over **£520,000** from Oxfordshire County Council. Grants will be made to help Oxfordshire's adult residents to live independently and healthily for as long as possible in their lives.

Last year, we received 82 eligible applications, of which 67 were rated good or outstanding, and 24 organisations received a share of £341,000 from the Community Capacity Fund. This represents a 29% success rate for applicants.

Please note that groups who received funding in 2024 and requested a two-year spend are not eligible to apply for this round of funding.

Key information

Amounts available	£5,000 - £20,000
Group annual income	Under £1 million
Type of cost	Ongoing running costs ('core costs'), capital costs, costs for a particular project (capital, staffing, insurance, venue hire etc),
Closing date	15 th October (Midday)
Grant period	Applicants can choose 12 or 24 months to spend the grant from date of award (December 2025). If the applicant chooses the 24-month option, they cannot apply for additional funding from the Community Capacity Fund during this period.

Grants round opens – 12th September

Grants round closes – Midday on Wednesday 15th October

Funding decisions announced – 20th November

Successful applicants provide required financial and governance evidence – by 25th November

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 independent and healthy for as long as possible. This includes building both individual emotional resilience and community resilience, addressing health inequalities and addressing preventable conditions.

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 one or more of these outcomes for disadvantaged adults:

1. Increased physical activity levels
2. Reduce isolation and loneliness
3. Improved mental wellbeing
4. Development of local community spaces and organisations

Types of schemes we would like to see:

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

- Tried and tested solutions, and also new, experimental approaches
- Schemes that fill gaps and therefore increase the options available to community connectors and [social prescribers](#)
- Schemes that focus on unpaid carers.
- Schemes to tackle causes of loneliness, ranging from physical isolation to digital exclusion. These can include intergenerational schemes.
- Schemes that support underserved groups that find it hard to find support through traditional services
- Schemes that help to increase mutual support led by local communities (eg volunteering, self-sustaining enterprises)
- Schemes that work with local businesses and partners, tapping into their Corporate Social Responsibility Policies.



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 Oxfordshire residents 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, minoritised ethnic groups, asylum seekers or recent migrants, and people with a nomadic lifestyle such as Gypsy, Traveller, and Roma.

Please note that priority weighting will be given to schemes addressing beneficiaries experiencing rural isolation and deprivation.

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 may be requested)
- Up to date monitoring and reporting to OCF for any previous grants received from OCF

The following costs ARE eligible:

- Costs incurred from 1 December 2025 until 30 November 2026*
- **Running costs**, these are costs that keep your organisation running, such as salaries, rent, utilities, etc. Often known as "core costs".



- **Capital costs:** these are costs related to any physical assets your organisation may need, such as equipment or IT support.
- **Project costs** these are both core and capital costs directly associated with the delivery of a specific project.

**Groups that choose to spend funds over 2 years, will have an extended grant period until 30 November 2027*

External requests for any of the following are not eligible for our funding:

- 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 before 1 December 2025
- 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.

Please note that groups who received funding in 2024 and requested a two-year spend are not eligible to apply for this round of funding.

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 this grant) from public authorities in the current fiscal year and previous two tax 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 12th September to midday on 15th 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 [example completed application form](#)
- Read the [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- All applications must:
 - Describe their target beneficiaries against the criteria set out above.
 - set out how they would deliver one or more of the desired **outcomes** listed above, including what **activities** they would do.
 - submit an **itemised budget** – we have provided a [budget template](#) you may choose to use.
 - 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 2025 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 allocate grants to ensure service provision across Oxfordshire.

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

The panel will use their discretion to ensure funding organisations of varying sizes and specialisms.

Monitoring and evaluation

To help us understand the impact of funded projects, successful organisations will be asked to:

- Report the number of people they have worked with.
- Collect and share demographic data (age, ethnicity, gender, disability, caring responsibilities, home occupancy) once
- Ask three survey questions to beneficiaries once, towards the end of the grant period.
- Share lessons learnt, successes and challenges, and stories of change.

Organisations must submit an **end-of-year grant report** by **31 December 2026**, covering delivery and use of funds (which must be spent by **30 November 2026**).



If the organisation chooses to deliver over **two years** (spending funds by **30 November 2027**), a second report will be required by **31 December 2027**.

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

This must include:

- Total number of people engaged in activity
- Demographics of beneficiaries (anonymous)
 - Age
 - Ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Disability
 - Caring responsibility (yes/no)
 - Living alone (yes/no)
- Questionnaire responses (see questions below)

The grant recipient must ask beneficiaries to respond to questions from the table below. Distributing the survey is a mandatory requirement for grantee organisations, although no beneficiary should be forced to complete the survey if they do not wish.

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

Outcome Monitoring Questions (anonymous)

Statement	Response Options
Please rate your agreement with these three statements:	
I am satisfied with the support I received from XXX charity/organisation.	Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
I feel more connected to others in my community since joining in with the activities provided by XXX charity/organisation.	Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
I feel my general well-being has improved because of joining in with the activities provided by XXX charity/organisation.	Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
Question	



Is there anything else you would like to share with us to explain your answers, or offer any other comments?	Free Text Box
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Application guidance

Supporting documents

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

- Our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document
- [A budget template](#)
- 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.

For general enquires you can contact the Grants team directly on 07927 539699 or email them at grants@oxfordshire.org. Alternatively, you can call the main office on 01865 798666.

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 22 September, 2pm - 3.30pm ([book a time here](#))

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 29 September, 5pm – 6.30pm ([book a time here](#)). [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:

- 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 grants@oxfordshire.org

