

Living Essentials 2025 Grants Round

We are launching a new round of Living Essentials funding and hope to have approx. **£200,000** available to award in grants. 10% of the fund will be allocated to grants for less established groups (with annual incomes of under £50k).

Grants will be made to support charitable organisations that are helping people with unaffordable essentials such as homelessness, food insecurity and warmth as well as debt advice.

Last year, **33 organisations** received a **share of £270,000** from the Living Essentials Fund. 45 applications were assessed.

Amounts available: £1,000 - £10,000

Income threshold: Applicant organisations must have an income under **£500,000** per year. 10% of grant funds are ring-fenced for grants to organisations with an income under **£50,000** per year.

Desired outcomes for this grants round:

The Living Essentials Fund will help charitable organisations to provide crucial ongoing support to people in Oxfordshire, working together to ensure people have the basics needed for living a stable and safe life.

The Living Essentials Fund will support charitable organisations that are helping people with unaffordable essentials such as homelessness, food insecurity and warmth as well as debt advice.

We are seeking grant proposals which deliver these outcomes:

- Preventative solutions that help individuals build financial stability
- Support for community resilience, including mitigating summer heat or autumn/winter cold
- Basic services for those in crisis to prevent them slipping into greater need
- Schemes that improve home comfort and efficiency and address housing insecurity

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.

- Debt advice, benefit and practical advice, particularly around reducing energy or housing costs
- Drop-in centres, including thermally comfortable spaces, lunch clubs, social clubs and family support groups
- Practical advice on keeping homes a comfortable temperature (cool in summer or warm in winter)

- Food and meal distribution, clothing and accommodation

Beneficiaries:

We are looking to support those who are already disadvantaged. This list is not exhaustive, but examples include those on low incomes, isolated older people, minoritised ethnic groups, people with mental and physical health challenges, asylum seekers or recent migrants, and people with a nomadic lifestyle, such as Gypsy, Traveller and Roma.

Preferred geography: circa 90% of beneficiaries must be in Oxfordshire.

We encourage applications from across Oxfordshire's diverse communities and geographies, and we particularly welcome applications from communities that have not previously accessed OCF funding opportunities.

Eligibility:

Applicants must fulfil the following criteria:

- Be one of the following: Registered Charity, Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Charitable Company (Limited by Guarantee), Community Interest Company, Community Benefit Society, a constituted but unincorporated club or association (i.e. it has a constitution but is not one of the other entities listed)
- Already operating in Oxfordshire
- Income under £500,000 (note: 10% of grant funds are ring-fenced for grants to organisations with an income under £50,000 per year)
- 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)
- A safeguarding policy and procedures – recommended for all, but essential if you work with children, young people or vulnerable adults
- Up-to-date accounts – annual accounts for the financial year ending 31st March 2025, plus management accounts or an income/expenditure document covering the last 12 months, as provided most recently to your trustees/directors or equivalent, i.e. reporting on data up to at least 30th September 2025.
- Up to date monitoring and reporting to OCF for any previous grants received from OCF

Types of eligible costs:

Costs incurred from 1 December 2025 until 1 December 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.

Please ensure you have understood the types of costs we can fund before proceeding.

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

- Costs which have already been incurred (before 19th December 2024)
- 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 19th December 2024)
- 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

All information on eligibility and desired outcomes can be found on the **guidance document**. Please read this before proceeding.

Dates and timings:

- **Grants round opens** – 29th October 2025
- **Grants round closes** – Midday on 26th November 2025
- **Funding decisions announced** – w/c 12th January 2026
- **Successful applicants provide required financial and governance evidence** – by 19th January 2025
- **Grants paid** – by 31st January (contingent on financial and governance evidence being received and due diligence being completed)

In addition, we are offering these advice sessions to answer any questions you may have about the grants round and your application. [Please book a slot here.](#)

- **Online:** Tuesday 11th November, 2pm - 3.30pm.
- **In-Person:** Friday 14th November, 3pm – 5.30pm. [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.

Other sources of information:

- If you are not sure whether you're eligible for this grants round, our [Eligibility Questionnaire](#) may help
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Application example](#)
- [Full list of application questions](#)
- Our [Grant-Making Policy](#) with full information regarding eligibility

* Indicates required question

1. Email *
-

2. After reading the guidance document, can you confirm you are eligible ^{*} to apply?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No. [If 'no', please do not proceed with the application.]

3. Can you confirm that your organisation either: ^{*}

- Operates solely within Oxfordshire; or
- Operates both within and outside Oxfordshire, but that you are applying on behalf of an independent Oxfordshire branch with its own bank account and local committee?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No. [If 'no', please do not proceed with the application.]

Charity/organisation details

Please complete the information below

4. Name of charity/organisation ^{*}

5. Address of your organisation ^{*}

6. Organisation Website (if applicable)

7. Main Contact Name *

8. Job Title *

9. Contact Telephone No. *

10. Organisation Start Date *

Example: 7 January 2019

11. We are a: *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Registered Charity
- ☐ A Community Interest Company (CIC)
- ☐ Company Limited by Guarantee
- ☐ Unincorporated Club or Association
- ☐ Community Benefit Society
- ☐ Charitable Incorporated Organisation

12. If other please state below:

13. Company Number (if applicable)

14. Charity Number (if applicable)

15. What was your income in the last financial year? *

16. Please provide a postcode which represents the geographic area you will benefit (e.g. OX1, OX12 etc.) *

Your Organisation's Work

Please give us details of the work you do, why it is so important, and how you are having an impact.

17. Please describe the overall aims and objectives of your organisation and the activities or services your organisation provides. *

18. To help us understand the difference you make, please tell us how you have helped an individual in the past and the change your organisation has made to their life. This should be anonymised. *

Your Grant Application

19. **Funding request** *

What does your organisation need this funding for? (Select all that apply)

Tick all that apply.

☐ Project costs: these are both core and capital costs directly associated with the delivery of a specific project.

☐ Core costs: these are costs that keep your organisation running, such as salaries, rent, utilities, etc.

☐ Capital costs: these are costs related to any physical assets your organisation may need, such as equipment or IT support.

20. **Requested funds:** how much are you applying for? *

21. Please provide a budget breakdown of how you will spend the proposed grant below. *

If you would like to provide a spreadsheet, we have created a simple template that can be downloaded here: [Grant Budget Template](#). This should be submitted to grants@oxfordshire.org.

If you have submitted a spreadsheet to our email address, please type 'Submitted via email' below.

22. **Funding Purpose:** How will you spend this grant to deliver one or more of the 'desired outcomes' outlined in the grant criteria? Please include what activities (if applicable) you intend to deliver, and why you think they will lead to the desired outcome i.e. a positive change: *

23. Who are the main people who will benefit from this work? Please describe their characteristics, needs, and why they are considered disadvantaged or underrepresented. *

24. **Which one of these outcomes will the funding meet? ***

Please choose which outcomes your funding will meet

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Preventative solutions that help individuals build financial stability
- ☐ Support for community resilience, including mitigating summer heat or autumn/winter cold
- ☐ Basic services for those in crisis to prevent them slipping into greater need
- ☐ Schemes that improve home comfort and efficiency and address housing insecurity

25. I understand that the grant period will be the 1st December 2025 to 1st December 2026. *

Note: any changes to this grant period will need to be approved by OCF.

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Yes

Future Plans: Monitoring and Targets: What does success look like to you?

Grant recipients will be invited to submit a grant report detailing the delivery of their grant. For more information, see the 'Monitoring & Evaluation' section in the guidance document.

In addition we want you to tell us what success looks like to you - **please propose an outcome and indicator that are relevant to you and that you will be able to report on.**

This will help us analyse the potential impact of your application and, for successful applicants, it will go into the grant agreement. Bear in mind that some indicators will require that you collect the information from the beneficiaries, probably by survey or questionnaire.

Outcomes: Please set 1 outcome you will deliver if you receive funding. An outcome is the result or change caused by the funding, usually the benefits that individuals or groups receive from your activities.

- E.g.: young people experience better mental health [by attending weekly sessions].

Indicators: For your chosen outcome you should propose at least one indicator. An indicator is something measurable which can track whether your intended outcome has happened.

- E.g.: the number of young people who report better mental health after 1 year of participation.

26. Outcome 1 *

27. Indicator 1 *

Further Information and Consent

28. Would you accept part funding? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

29. **Please read the terms and conditions below carefully** *

Tick all that apply.

☐ We agree OCF may share this application with members of the OCF grants panel and their assessors

☐ We agree OCF may share this application with potential donors/funders

Supporting Documents

Please note we are not requesting documents to be attached to this application but will ask for these should your application be successful.

Please confirm that these documents would be available to be submitted.

30. Bank statement in the name of the organisation dated within the last *
three months showing the name of the organisation, the sort code
and the account number

Tick all that apply.

☐ Yes

31. Signed Child Protection/Vulnerable Adults Policy *

Tick all that apply.

☐ Yes

32. Signed annual report and accounts plus proof of income and expenditure covering 12 months Successful applicants will be required to supply audited accounts of the most recent financial year. If the most recent year is not yet available, management accounts or income/expenditure document will be accepted.' i.e., reporting on data at least up to September 2024. *

Tick all that apply.

☐ Yes

33. Signed set of rules, terms of reference or constitution *

Tick all that apply.

☐ Yes

34. Contact details for all trustees and/or management committee members with cheque/bank signatories (at least two) identified who must not be family members (address, email and phone number) *

Tick all that apply.

☐ Yes

35. A signed grant agreement, provided by OCF to release funds *

Tick all that apply.

☐ Yes

36. I confirm we have three Trustees, Directors or Committee Members (as relevant to our organisational structure) that are not related to each other *

Tick all that apply.

☐ Yes

37. I confirm that our reserves are expected to be a minimum of three months' running costs, and I understand that if they are more than 12 months an explanation will be requested. *

Tick all that apply.

☐ Yes

38. Grant recipients will be required to provide an end of year grant report on the delivery of their grant. Please confirm that you have reviewed the Monitoring & Evaluation information provided in our guidance document and are content with the requirements of the end of year grant report. *

Tick all that apply.

☐ Yes

Further Information

After you submit your application it will be reviewed thoughtfully by two assessors before our grants panel meeting.

If you need any help or have questions, please don't hesitate to email us at grants@oxfordshire.org or call us on 07927 539 699. We truly appreciate your interest and are here to support you. For more information on OCF, please refer to [our website](#).

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