

Community Capacity Autumn 2026 Application guidance

Community Capacity grants

We are launching a new round of Community Capacity Funding, thanks to just over **£500,000** 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 133 detailed applications, of which 107 were rated good or outstanding, and 39 organisations received a share of £520,000 from the Community Capacity Fund. This represents a 29% success rate for applicants.

Please note that groups who received funding in 2025 and requested a two-year spend are not eligible to apply for this round of funding.

Key information

Amounts available	£5,000 - £20,000 (can be spent over one year or two years)
Group annual income	Under £1 million
Type of cost	Ongoing running costs, capital costs, costs for a particular project (staffing, insurance, venue hire etc),
Expression of interest dates	Open 14 September Closes 5 October (Midday)
Detailed application dates	Open 19 October Closes 16 November (Midday)
Grant period	Applicants can choose 12 or 24 months to spend the grant from date of award (December 2026). If the applicant chooses the 24-month option, they cannot apply for additional funding from the Community Capacity Fund during this period.



Dates and timings:

- **Expression of interest opens:** 14 September
- **Expression of interest closes:** 5 October (midday)
- **Full application opens:** 19 October
- **Full application closes:** 16 November (midday)
- **Funding decisions communicated:** 15 December
- **Successful applicants provide financial and governance evidence:** 22 December
- **Grants paid** by February 2027 (contingent on financial and governance evidence being received and due diligence being completed)

In addition, we are offering drop-in advice sessions to answer any questions you may have about the grants round and your application. Booking links for drop-in sessions are on page 7 of this guidance.

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 will prioritise grant proposals that deliver positive outcomes through activities which support:

1. Independent living
2. Increased physical activity
3. Reduced isolation and loneliness
4. Improved management of disabilities and long-term health conditions
5. Increased support for unpaid carers



Target populations:

The target population for the Community Capacity Fund is adults (18+) who live in Oxfordshire and may need some support to continue to live independently linked to difficulties they may face due to:

- their disability, frailty, and long-term condition and their carers
- people who may find it difficult to access care and support due to language, cultural or other barriers
- people living with social and economic disadvantage.

Among these groups, priority weighting will be given to schemes supporting adults aged 65 and over and people who live in rural areas. Funding will be allocated taking into account current City and District council geographies to ensure distribution across Oxfordshire.

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.

Desired activities:

The Community Capacity Fund will specifically seek to support community led activities provided by community organisations.

We will prioritise organisations that fill gaps in local services and that offer community connectors and [social prescribers](#) more options to help people.

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
- If you are a national organisation and your finances are integrated into the national organisation, then you **cannot** apply. If your finances are separate (your own bank account) from the national organisation and you have a local management committee then you can apply.

The following costs are eligible:

- Costs incurred from 1 December 2026 until 1 December 2027. If you choose to spend funds over two years then the grant period will cover costs until 1 December 2028.
- **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.

Requests for any of the following are not eligible for this 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 2026
- 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 2025 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

- Complete an [Expression of Interest](#) online 14 September to midday on 5 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:

1. Describe their target beneficiaries against the criteria set out above.
 2. Set out how they would deliver one or more of the desired outcomes listed above, including what activities they would do.
 3. 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 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.
- Ask one question to beneficiaries from the outcome monitoring questions below.
- Share lessons learnt, successes and challenges, and stories of change.

Organisations must submit an end-of-year grant report by 31 December 2027 covering delivery and use of funds (which must be spent by 1 December 2027).

If the organisation chooses to deliver over two years (spending funds by 1 December 2027), a second report will be required by 31 December 2028.

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.

Outcome Monitoring Questions (anonymous)

Statement	Response Options
Please rate your agreement with these statements:	
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



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. Please email the Grants team at grants@oxfordshire.org to book a slot on the dates below.

Expression of interest drop-ins:

- Monday 22 September, online, 9am – 4pm
- Tuesday 23 September, online, 9am – 5pm

Detailed application drop-ins:

- Monday 26 October, online, 9am – 4pm
- Thursday 29 October, online, 9am – 5pm

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:

- Offering online 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

