

Living Essentials 2026

Application Form

We are launching a new round of Living Essentials funding and hope to have approximately **£250,000** available to award in grants.

Last year, **32 organisations** received a **share of £240,000** from the Living Essentials Fund. This was a **57% success rate** for applicants.

Funding will support charitable groups that are helping people with unaffordable essentials. The fund will support challenges such as homelessness, housing insecurity, food insecurity, debt advice, and managing heat and cold.

Grant amounts available: £1,000 - £20,000. You can request a maximum of £10,000 per year, for up to two years.

Desired outcomes for this grants round:

The Living Essentials Fund is supported by funding from Oxfordshire County Council's Crisis and Resilience Fund. It will help charitable organisations to provide crucial ongoing support to people in Oxfordshire, ensuring people have the basics needed for living a stable and safe life.

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 and interventions for 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, global majority and minoritised ethnic groups, people with mental and physical health challenges, asylum seekers or recent migrants, and

Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities.

Organisations must be serving communities within 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
- 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
- A safeguarding policy and procedures – recommended for all, but essential if you work with children, young people or vulnerable adults
- Up to date monitoring and reporting to OCF for any previous grants received from OCF. If you have previously received funding from the Living Essentials Fund and are not sure if your reporting is up to date please contact the Grants team on grants@oxfordshire.org

Oxfordshire branches of national groups can apply if they meet all three of the following criteria (in addition to the other eligibility criteria):

- You are an independent branch already operating in Oxfordshire
- Your Oxfordshire branch has its own bank account with at least two unrelated signatories, that has been open for 3 months or more
- You have a local management committee

If you do not meet any of the above criteria, unfortunately we will not be able to progress your application.

To self-check if you are eligible, use the [eligibility questionnaire](#).

Please also read our updated [Grants Policy](#) which sets out in detail the criteria that apply to all OCF grant-making.

Types of eligible costs:

- **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.

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 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:

- **Monday 26 October 2026:** Applications open, available via online form
- **5pm Monday 23 November 2026:** Applications close
- **w/c 18 January 2027:** Decisions communicated to applicants
- **By Monday 1 February 2027:** Successful applicants provide required financial and governance evidence
- **By mid-February 2027:** Grants paid

Here to help

We will be offering one-to-one online drop-in sessions to answer any specific questions you may have about your application. To book a session, or for any enquiries you can contact us on:

- Grants team telephone: 07927 539699 (WhatsApp)
- Email: grants@oxfordshire.org

* Indicates required question

I. 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 are you 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

4. Name of charity/organization: *
5. Address of your organization: *
6. Organisation Website (if applicable):
7. Main Contact Name: *
8. Job Title: *
9. Contact Telephone No: *
10. Organisation Start Date: *
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

Funding request

19. 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.

Requested funds

20. 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.

Funding Purpose

22. 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, approximately how many people will be supported, 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. Would any funding from this grant support children and young people, pensioners, or disabled people? This is not a requirement or a priority but will be useful for OCF to understand for our reporting purposes. If yes, please give a brief outline of how your work will support these groups.
25. 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

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*

☐ Yes

31. Signed Safeguarding Children /Vulnerable Adults Policy *

☐ 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 October 2026. *

☐ Yes

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

☐ 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) *

☐ Yes

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

☐ 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 *

☐ Yes

37. I confirm that if our reserves are equivalent to more than 12 months' running costs an explanation will be requested.

☐ 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. *

☐ Yes

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 appreciate your interest and are here to support you. For more information on OCF, please refer to [our website](#).