

Community Panels

Volunteering

We value our volunteers. People volunteer in a number of roles, most notably as Grants Panel Members and Grants Assessors. These roles require certain attributes and our volunteers are given a full induction and any relevant training in order to fulfil them.

What is a community panel?

A panel is a body of local representatives brought together for the specific purpose of advising on decisions about grant awards under various funds managed by BLCF. Whilst it is not a legal entity, it does have significant responsibility towards its community. As a Panel member, you will be responsible for deciding who receives grants from the many applicants that apply each year.

Grant Panel members should be able to;

- Contribute local knowledge and specialist skills to the panel to help identify local needs, in accordance with the aims and priorities of each of the funds. Members will approve grants to the projects/initiatives who may meet those needs most effectively
- Keep up to date with the Community Foundation's fund criteria and procedures
- Attend as many of the meetings a year as possible (up to 4 times per year for some of our current panels)
- Keep Grants Staff informed about any item of news or information that comes your way that you think could help keep them up to date with local issues

Who is on the Panel?

A good Panel requires a team of people who share a knowledge and understanding of the local area. Panel members can come from all walks of life; the one common factor is that each member has an active interest in the community.

The Panel comprises representatives of the community or communities benefiting from the Fund. Ideally, members will represent a good cross section of the community. In fact, the more mixed and diverse the Panel, the more representative of the local community it is likely to be.

All Panel members need to be well informed about and take a healthy interest in community issues and be keen to see the funds making a real difference to their community.

Becoming a Grants panel volunteer

From time to time BLCF seek additional members to join existing or new community panels. One of the pre-requisites, however, is that we cannot accept applications from persons who may be connected to any organisations that may apply for funding from the Foundation. This may be in

the form of acting as a Trustee/Director or as part of a management committee, OR that you may stand to benefit from any grant awarded.

Essential criteria for persons interested in applying are:

- You must be based in or work in the areas covered by our funding, we are particularly interested in hearing from persons in Bedford Borough or the Central Bedfordshire area
- A keen and active interest in ensuring that well-run projects reaching the people in most need in our community get the funding they deserve
- An understanding of some of the issues facing excluded people in our community, and a willingness to learn more
- Ability to use your judgement and knowledge to make objective and impartial assessments
- Ability to take an active and supportive part in discussion and decision making

Desirable

- A specialist skill or area of knowledge
- Participation in networks in your local area
- Experience of the voluntary sector

If you are interested in being considered as a panel representative please email Francesca.johnstone@blcf.org.uk and send a copy of your most recent CV, as well as a covering letter explaining why you are interested in this role and your background.