BLCF

Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation FAQs

Who can apply?

Organisations/groups must:

- Be a registered charity or other non-profit making body (community groups/PTA's/sports groups etc).
- Have a constitution or other governing document
- Have a committee of **at least three unrelated** Trustees/Directors (if you have more than this the majority must be unrelated individuals with no financial interest in the organisation).
- If your organisation is a social enterprise (including CICs) there is particular guidance available- please contact a member of staff or review our guidance document here: CIC's/Social Enterprise guidance

Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation will NOT support the following:

- Projects not benefiting people living in Bedfordshire (with the exception of a few identified areas via the London Luton Airport Near Neighbours fund)
- Grants to individuals or families for personal needs
- Direct replacement of statutory obligation and public funding
- Promotion of religious or political causes
- Groups with significant financial free reserves
- Retrospective grants
- Contribution to endowment fund, payment of deficit funding or repayment of loans
- National charities that are not providing clear local benefits
- Overseas travel or expeditions
- Sponsored or fundraising events or groups raising funds to redistribute to other causes
- Medical research and equipment for statutory or private healthcare
- Start-up funding for a project that is unable to start within nine months
- Commercial ventures, unless the group is a registered not for profit organisation
- General appeals
- Animal welfare, unless the project benefits people (e.g. disabled riding schemes)
- Fees for professional fundraisers
- Statutory agencies including Parish Councils and schools in the discharge of their statutory obligations

Which fund should I apply to?

BLCF manages a variety of charitable funds. Please view the details of all BLCF funds under the Grants page, the criteria for each fund is also listed- it is important to read the criteria **before** starting your application form. Please note that although occasionally it is possible for an organisation to apply for multiple grants from the Foundation (during a 12 month period) this cannot be for the same project/activity. Organisations can only receive one grant per year per fund.

What information do you need to tell us?

When completing your application form you should consider how you will demonstrate the following:

- How the project will impact a particular need or problem; groups should demonstrate that a grant will make a real difference to the people or community it intends to support.
- How the project will support the people involved.
- The plans for the long-term development of the organisation and for the project itself, for which you are applying for are realistic and practical
- How the effectiveness of the work supported by a grant from the Foundation will be measured
- How the service users are involved in developing the project, wherever possible
- How you address equal opportunities within your organisation

How is an application submitted?

The majority of application forms can be completed online. Each fund has its own application form which applicants can fill in and attach their supplementary documents to submit online. A list of required supporting documents can be found at the end of your online application form template. **Staff will not be able to progress your application without the required supporting documents.**

When can I submit my application?

There are different deadlines dependant on the fund you are applying to. You will find details of dates on the website for each fund, but it is important to note that many of the funds managed have regular opportunities to apply. We set deadlines for applications across each year, for example LLAL, LLAOL, Whitbread, Panacea and Luton Youth Fund panels meet frequently, on average deadlines are set every few months. Please check back on the website for future dates.

What happens once I have submitted my application form?

You will receive an automated confirmation email following online submission of your application. We will then process your application, acknowledge receipt by email (along with confirmation of a timescale for a decision) and inform you if any further information is needed.

Assessment

All applications received at the Foundation are subject to a detailed assessment. As part of the assessment of the application, the organisation or group may be contacted by email or telephone or the assessor may wish to visit the applicant. Each application is assessed using the following criteria:

- Evidence of need
- Community involvement
- Management and governance
- Value for money
- Lasting benefit

A summary is produced of your application before presenting them to a decision panel (BLCF have a number of different panels dependent upon the fund applied to).

How long does a decision take?

This would depend upon whether there is a deadline date for the fund you are applying to. However we aim to let you know within 8-10 weeks of submission date as a general rule. The decision can sometimes be made sooner, but we will let you know as soon as possible. A summary of each grant and details of any specific deadlines can be found under the main grants tab.

Who makes the decisions?

A distinguishing feature of BLCF is our ability to use local grantmaking panels to understand and respond to community needs. We work with a growing network of local residents, company employees and local business people, who sit on our grantmaking panels and make decisions on the distribution of such funds.

Grant decisions

Once a decision has been made, you will receive a letter with the outcome. If you have been awarded a grant, the payments can only be made on receipt of the signed Terms and Conditions which is part of our grant offer letter(payments are usually made in 2 or 3 instalments dependant upon the size of the grant awarded).

Please note that there is no right of appeal on award decisions made unless you believe there has been an error of fact.