CRITERIA

STABILITY FUND

A FUND MANAGED BY
BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

FUNDED BY

The Steel Charitable Trust

The Amateurs Trust

BLCF
Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation

INTRODUCTION

The Stability Fund supports the sustainability of charitable organisations in Bedfordshire which deliver key services, addressing urgent need and preventative services. The fund will contribute to financial stability over 2 years for charitable organisations with a strong track record (minimum 3 years) of support for Bedfordshire residents. This fund builds on learning from previous Stability Fund rounds, which have supported organisations in developing their core and sustainable development plans.

Please note, if you are applying for core funding, you will be asked to evidence your organisation's current financial position and plans for return to sustainability within a specific timescale, including:

- Information explaining your current financial position in terms of operating budget.
- Information regarding the status of and plans for any restricted / designated reserves.
- Operational plans and financial forecast covering the next 12 months, plus an indicative plan for longer-term financial sustainability.

Smaller community groups may submit a simplified budget / plan showing projected income and expenditure for the next 12 months.

HOW MUCH CAN GROUPS APPLY FOR?

Grants of £10,000 per year (maximum 2 years) are available, for up to 6 organisations - 2 in each Local Authority area (Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire & Luton).

If you have any queries, please contact us at administrator@blcf.org.uk

OBJECTIVES

The Stability Fund supports charitable organisations committed to equity and fairness which are addressing priorities outlined in **BLCF's Strategic Plan**, including the following:

1) Mental Health – young people, older people, social exclusion or those who are vulnerable.
2) Poverty – addressing the root cause, including; homelessness, Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG), retraining, and employment.

We Fund

Registered charities and other not-for-profit groups making a positive difference to people in the community (i.e. community groups, sports groups, PTAs, etc).

You need to be able to demonstrate that you have:

- A strong track record of delivery to Bedfordshire residents for a minimum of 3 years.
- An annual income of more than £15,000 and less than £200,000 within the last financial year.
- A constitution or other governing document.
- A committee of at least 3 unrelated Trustees / Directors (no-one with 'significant control').

- Good financial management and health, without large free / unrestricted funds.
- A comprehensive safeguarding policy (for work with children / adults at risk).
- A clear plan to work in partnership with others.
- Sought funds from a range of sources, made efforts to become self-sustaining, and have a clear strategy for when funding ends.

If your organisation is a social enterprise (including CICs) there is specific guidance available **here.**

We Do Not Fund

- Organisations based outside of Bedfordshire.
- Groups with 3 or more active BLCF grants (each of which are above £5,000).
- Groups that have received funding from the Stability Fund previously.
- Groups who have provided low quality monitoring on previous grants.
- Individuals.
- National organisations (unless clear local benefits).
- Private Limited Companies (except Community Interest Companies - CICs - limited by guarantee).
- Profit-making organisations.
- Organisations or activities that promote political parties or religion. (We do fund activities that demonstrate wider public benefit).
- Professional marketing / advertising (unless you can demonstrate that this is only to publicise the funded work to engage beneficiaries).
- Professional fundraising.
- Retrospective costs.
- General appeals or sponsorship.
- Animal welfare, unless the activity directly benefits people.
- Trips (excluding respite care) and / or fundraising events.

Supporting Documents

At **Expression of Interest** stage, you must upload the following supporting documents with your application:

- Governing documents - constitution, memorandum and articles, articles, or set of rules.
- Annual accounts - most recent signed annual accounts and / or management accounts, which have been audited / independently examined where required.
- Trustees and directors (names, roles, confirmation of any related trustees / directors and any other potential conflicts of interest).

If you are invited to **Full Application**, you must upload the following supporting documents / information with your application:

- An explanation of your current financial position in terms of operating budget.
- An explanation of the status of and plans for any restricted / designated reserves.

- Operational plans and financial forecast covering the next 12 months, plus an indicative plan for longer-term financial sustainability. Smaller community groups may submit a simplified budget / plan showing projected income and expenditure for the next 12 months.
- Bank statement - dated within 2 months, in the name and correct address of the organisation applying with at least 2 unrelated signatories.
- Equal opportunity policy.
- Safeguarding policy.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Successful applicants must complete interim and end-of-grant monitoring reports. We will ask how you spent the grant, including providing receipts. You will need to tell us about the outcomes, impact, important issues, and lessons learned. We will contact successful applicants to discuss progress and organise visits to help with learning and development.

Please consider:

- Who will write your reports.
- Your aims and objectives.
- How will you measure progress.
- What information you will collect:
    - Numbers (quantitative data) – how many people use the service, goals achieved (e.g. employment, improved health).
    - Stories / Case Studies (qualitative data) – user / volunteer feedback, observed increase in skills, confidence, etc.
    - Learning – user / volunteer feedback, what went well, what would you do differently, etc.
    - Partner feedback.

Additional Information

All applications are thoroughly assessed, including due diligence checks (more information here). Only applications which clearly meet the fund's criteria will be presented to our panel of local volunteers. We reserve the right to decline or accept any application according to the grants panel's decision.

We encourage all applicants to explore other funding sources. Your local Community Voluntary Service (CVS) can provide funding advice. For Bedfordshire CVS, visit www.cvsbeds.org.uk

Equal Opportunities

We commit to promoting equal opportunities and valuing diversity regardless of any protected characteristics.

If you have any queries, please contact us at administrator@blcf.org.uk