



# Strategic Solutions Community Foundation





## What is a Strategic Solutions Community Foundations grant?

Grants range from £100, up to a maximum of £2,000 per project/application. The average grant is between £200 - £1,000. It is unusual to award the maximum of £2,000, as this reduces the range of projects that can be supported.

### What is funded?

The community foundation is committed to supporting financial education, well-being and giving back to the communities where our customers and employees live, work and play. Grants are therefore prioritised to those in Dorset, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somerset or Devon, those of other regions will be considered only where there is substantial evidence of significant geographical reach to our clients' community.

Grants provide targeted funding to small, grassroots groups. Not just because they are likely best placed to make a real difference with limited resources; but also, as they often struggle to find funding. The groups funded usually have an annual income of less than £50,000 (most are substantially less) and run entirely or predominantly by volunteers.

Grants prioritise projects that aim to create long-term change – it's important to fund projects that aim to prevent and address the root cause of the problem. That's why, for example, priority would be given to a project that aims to improve financial education over one that aims to help those already in debt.

### Who can apply?

To apply, your group will likely have annual income of less than £50,000 and be run entirely (or at least predominantly) by volunteers.

Grants do not fund individuals, only organisations and groups. Your group does not need to be a registered charity, we support all kinds of groups, including new organisations and start-ups. However, your group should be not-for-profit. Priority will go to grants to direct funding towards causes that are often overlooked by other funders. This means less popular issues, which are more difficult to raise funds for, are likely to be prioritised over an organisation that has, for example, many supporters, corporate sponsors, or has enough profile to be able to secure mainstream funding such as government grants.

Strategic Solutions grants prioritises those projects/organisations that we hope best match our values and ethics.

This means applications are likely (but certainly not exclusively) prioritised from organisations that:

- Are based within our local communities to Strategic Solutions advisers and clients
- Have a leaning towards financial education or helping our community
- Are run entirely by volunteers
- Have a low annual income

This means applications are NOT accepted from organisations that:

- Are from non-secular, religious or military organisations
- Deny the human rights of others
- Prevents or impedes the free-speech of others
- Promote/support violence, aggression or oppression towards others
- Overseas charities and projects taking place and/or benefitting people outside the UK
- Individual housing associations and tenant organisations
- Individual churches, for maintenance of the fabric
- Play schemes, nurseries or pre-school facilities

- Local authorities, or work usually considered a statutory responsibility
- Major building projects, or capital funding
- Overseas projects or trips
- Campaigning or lobbying projects, or general awareness of raising work
- Membership organisations
- Are involved in cruelty/subjugation of animals (incl. farming, testing or research)
- Coerces or forces others to change their beliefs
- Harbour racism or prejudice
- Groups or projects that support, incite or promote violence, aggression or oppression towards others would not be funded.
- Significant asset purchases (e.g. land) would generally not be considered, nor applications for legal challenges
- It is also very rare for theatrical productions or arts-based projects to be funded.
- Funding is also not available for student expeditions, schools, councils, volunteer-tourism projects, academic studies, sponsored activities (e.g. walks, runs challenges etc), fundraising initiatives,
- Salary costs would not be funded as they are targeted to support underfunded voluntary groups and could not sustain the large-scale costs of campaigning salaries

## **Guidelines and Limitations:**

We make grants to those charities who wish to undertake particular projects going directly to the point of need.

We do not make grants to grant-making organisations, or those seeking to raise funds to make onwards donations or bursaries.

We do not consider mailshots requesting donations. Full and complete applications along with all relevant supporting documents must be submitted or they will not be considered.

While the Company has its roots in the Christian faith, we welcome applications from all faith and non-faith charities. Those applications which can show themselves to be open to all members of the community and which promote social integration and cohesion will be considered. Those charities who only seek to promote a particular religion will not be considered.

## **What do I need?**

### **Organisation Details**

You will need to tell us a bit about you/your group. Some basic information, such as the groups' name, address, and charitable status etc., as well as some detailed information, such as your total annual income and expenses, if you have staff, how many you have, and your groups' background and mission statement. If you are a new organisation, you should provide a background for the main individuals in the organisation.

### **Project Details**

Think carefully about what you are planning, as you will need to submit a clear, focused and well-defined project plan. You will need to know how much funding you need, and when you need it

by, and whether you could accept a partial award, if we were unable to fund the full amount. You will also need to tell us what you want to do, why you think it's needed, where and when your project is going to take place, and who or what your project benefits, and to think about what other groups you might be overlapping with or working alongside. You can also include any web address links to any supporting documentation - for example, film trailers, photo's, online articles.

### **Budget**

You will need to submit a budget for your project in pounds sterling that clearly demonstrates in detail how you will spend the funds. Your budget should match the amount you are asking for, and clearly show the individual costs you would like us to fund. If you are providing extra budget details (e.g. costs that are not being applied for), ensure that these are clearly separated and identified as not to be considered).

Avoid generalised costs, for example 'admin costs' - this needs to be broken down into the constituent costs that make up this total. If you are budgeting to purchase an asset indicate how many you are buying, and what will happen to all assets once your project is complete. If you are purchasing travel, indicate who is travelling, why and to where, and how (e.g. train, car etc.).

### **Bank Account**

Grants cannot be paid into personal bank accounts, for example, an account held in the name of an individual. Grants can only be directly paid into an organisations' bank account. This is an audit requirement and demonstrates your commitment as a group/project.

However, if there is an issue preventing you from obtaining a group bank account, in exceptional circumstances you may be able to nominate an affiliated organisation to receive transfers on your behalf as a fiscal sponsor - please email [community@ssfs.co.uk](mailto:community@ssfs.co.uk) to discuss options.

### **Referees**

Each application must be submitted with the full details of a referee. A referee must be independent of you/your group, but able to comment with experience and expertise on the activities, successes, and challenges your group faces. Your referee cannot be a funder, employee, volunteer, founder, or trustee in your group. They also cannot be financially dependent on your group or know you only because of providing funding. However, providing referees from groups working in a similar field who have a good vision of your work, is a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate how connected your group is to the wider community.

### **When can I apply?**

Applications are accepted at any time, and there are no cut-offs. However, you should allow at least 3 months from application to when you need the funds. Applications are assessed on a first-come-first-served basis, however, if your funding is exceptionally urgent please email [community@ssfs.co.uk](mailto:community@ssfs.co.uk) for advice.

### **How do I apply?**

Once you have read these guidelines, if you'd like to apply, you can click here to access our online application form. Or here for a pdf version.

You may submit additional materials and images by attaching to your email (e.g., letterhead, photos, PowerPoint).

Applications must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the date your organisation needs the contribution or your event date.

### **What happens when I apply?**

When you submit your application form it is processed and checked for any missing information or additional details. It is then submitted for panel review. We receive many requests each month. Because of this high volume and the fact that the panel are all volunteers freely giving up their time, we cannot respond immediately or to all requests.

Decisions are made by a panel. The panel assess and shortlist the applications to those that most closely meet the grant guidelines.

Typically, the panel will assess applications in two-month batches. You should expect this process to take at least 8-10 weeks. You may be contacted at any time during the process, should additional details or clarifications be needed for a decision to be made. If your application is shortlisted your referees will be contacted, and their feedback will contribute towards a final decision.

If your application is not successful, you will be emailed and informed. Unfortunately, given the application volumes, it is not possible to offer feedback on rejected applications. However, a rejection does not prevent you from re-applying as it may be funding was over-subscribed.

Please consider letting your referees know that the speed of their response directly impacts the time it takes to make a final decision. However, if successful, you will be emailed a confirmation together with the value of your grant. Payment is then usually made within 7-10 days.

### **What is required if I am successful?**

If successful, your group name, project description, and website link will be listed on our website, to provide transparency to clients and staff.

You will be required to provide feedback on your project, either when it is completed or within a year of receiving the funds (whichever is earlier). You should be prepared to provide links to any supporting documents such as news articles, local press, social media videos or receipts for significant assets.

Sometimes informal visits are arranged so that we can add more information and where appropriate, publicise your cause or event alongside you.

## **FAQs**

**Can I apply for more than one project?**

Yes. However, as groups can only be funded once per year, you will need to submit all the projects within the same application form, ensuring that each has a detailed budget, and the total is under £2,000. The Funding Panel may then decide to fund all or only some of the projects you've submitted.

**Can I apply again if I have been unsuccessful?**

Yes. grants are often over-subscribed, therefore if your application has been

rejected, it may be indicative that other projects better fit the funding criteria. If you wish to reapply for the same project, you should consider demonstrating a change in your project to better fit the criteria.

**Can I apply for a second grant?**

Yes. A group can be funded up to once per year (allowing a full 12 months between funding). Review of subsequent applications would also factor in the success of prior projects and feedback. You must submit a full report from your prior grant before applying again.

**Can I apply for partial funding?**

Yes you can apply for partial funding of up to £2,000 where a project budget exceeds £2,000. You would need to evidence your plans to raise any remaining required funds, and if you are seeking significant additional funders, you might be asked to wait until these funds have been secured. However, typically, smaller projects would be prioritised.

**Who can I contact to ask a question?**  
[community@ssfs.co.uk](mailto:community@ssfs.co.uk)



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