



OPEN GRANTS PROGRAMME

Funding Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

The Clothworkers' Foundation is a UK-wide funder providing capital grants to organisations supporting disadvantaged and marginalised communities and individuals.

Our Open Grants Programme accepts applications for **capital projects** from **UK registered charities or not-for-profits**. Please note that an organisation can only submit one application to The Clothworkers' Foundation at a time. We fund both large and small projects. Our Small Grants Programme awards grants of up to £15,000. Our Large Grants Programme awards grants over £15,000 and typically, not more than £150,000.

Organisations providing services to beneficiaries that fall within our 10 programme areas can apply for support. We will consider applications from organisations where at least 50% of their beneficiaries fall within one or more of our programme areas.

PROGRAMME AREAS

Organisations, or their capital projects, need to be serving a majority of beneficiaries that fall under at least one programme area. However we realise that some organisations serve multiple eligible groups and we want to understand more about this. Therefore please do tick more than one category if you feel that a significant amount of your work falls under more than one heading. We also understand that many organisations are experts in one field, and there is no funding advantage in selecting more than one area.

COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCING RACIAL INEQUALITIES

Organisations supporting communities affected by racism, and organisations working to promote racial equity. Organisations may be providing specialist services such as employment support or legal advice primarily to minoritised communities or may provide more general community support. These communities may face discrimination or disadvantage on the grounds of ethnicity or faith.

DISABILITIES, INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH & VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Organisations supporting people who have physical and/or learning disabilities and/or people experiencing mental health issues/challenges. Those providing support to the families and carers of those with disabilities can also apply under this programme area.

Organisations supporting children and young people with disabilities should apply under this programme area as well as the Young People Facing Disadvantage programme area. Please note that **special schools/colleges** are eligible to apply under this programme area.

We have a 300-year history of supporting organisations improving the lives of blind and visually impaired people and welcome applications from organisations with this mission.

DOMESTIC & SEXUAL ABUSE

Organisations supporting adults and children affected by domestic or sexual abuse. This includes victims, survivors and perpetrators of abuse. It includes services helping victims escape abusive relationships, or any part of the recovery cycle. Examples include refuges and women's organisations.

Organisations applying for a capital project linked to supporting perpetrators must have or be working towards Respect accreditation.

ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE

Organisations supporting individuals or communities experiencing poverty and deprivation. This may include urgent support as well as longer-term work to relieve economic disadvantage.

HOMELESSNESS

Organisations providing services to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This includes those providing homelessness accommodation, or services such as food banks and furniture recycling.

Organisations supporting young people at risk of homelessness (or that are homeless) should also apply under our Young People Facing Disadvantage programme area.

LGBT+ COMMUNITIES

Organisations providing support to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people facing disadvantage or discrimination.

OLDER PEOPLE FACING DISADVANTAGE

Organisations providing services for older people facing disadvantage, particularly (but not limited to) economic disadvantage and isolation.

PRISON & REHABILITATION

Organisations supporting people in prison and their families, those at risk of offending and the rehabilitation of those leaving prison.

If you are supporting young people at risk of offending, please also apply under the Young People Facing Disadvantage programme area.

SUBSTANCE MISUSE & ADDICTION

Organisations supporting people and families affected by drugs and/or alcohol misuse.

YOUNG PEOPLE FACING DISADVANTAGE

Organisations supporting young people facing disadvantages, particularly (but not limited to) young people in care or leaving care and young people not in education, employment or training.

The focus of services must be on supporting disadvantaged young people; general educational organisations, wildlife and outdoor educational charities, sports organisations, and youth arts organisations are not eligible to apply under this category unless **at least 50%** of those benefiting from the capital project fall within one or more of our programme areas.

Please note, we do **not** accept applications from pupil referral units, schools or organisations delivering other mainstream educational provision under this programme area.

Organisations supporting young people with physical and learning disabilities, or mental health issues should also apply under the Disabilities, including Mental Health & Visual Impairment programme area.

ORGANISATIONS THAT WE DO AND DO NOT FUND

Most of the organisations that we give grants to are registered charities, but we do fund other types of organisations such as Community Interest Organisations (CIO), Community Interest Companies (limited by guarantee without share capital), exempt charities (in which case we require details of your principal regulator and/or evidence of HMRC exemption) and special schools.

ORGANISATIONS THAT ARE EXCLUDED FROM APPLYING

The Clothworkers' Foundation receives more applications than we are able to support. We therefore have a number of exclusions so that we can prioritise our funding.

We do not fund:

- ☒ Organisations that have received a grant offer from us within the last five years (unless specifically invited by us to reapply).
- ☒ Organisations that have had an application declined in the last six months.
- ☒ Applications for a capital project that has previously been declined, even if this was more than six months ago.
- ☒ Organisations that promote religious activities or proselytise to service users. The Clothworkers' Foundation will consider on a case-by-case basis applications from organisations with a religious ethos, provided they do not promote religious activities or proselytise to service users. We will not normally support an organisation which provides services only to people of a particular religion, or where trustees/employees are required to be of a particular faith.
- ☒ Organisations with income of over £10 million (please contact us if there are exceptional circumstances for income exceeding this amount, and your income will drop below this amount in subsequent years).
- ☒ Hospices and NHS charities.
- ☒ Organisations where grant making is a substantial part of their core services.
- ☒ Schools, colleges or universities (unless their students are exclusively individuals with physical and learning disabilities e.g., special schools). Please note that we do not fund PRUS or alternative provision providers. We also do not support special schools which are part of a multi-academy trust with an income of more than £10 million.
- ☒ Almshouses.
- ☒ Village halls or community centre/hubs which are not operating in an area of high deprivation (as determined by the current Indices of Deprivation).

CAPITAL FUNDING DEFINITIONS

We award grants towards capital projects such as:

- ④ **Buildings:** the purchase, construction, renovation or refurbishment.
- ④ **Fittings, fixtures and equipment:** this includes but is not limited to office equipment/furniture, sports/gym equipment, digital/audio-visual equipment, software and websites ([more guidance on digital infrastructure can be found here](#)), garden equipment, and specialist therapeutic equipment. Please ensure you read our guidance on non-capital items.
- ④ **Vehicles:** this includes (but is not exclusive to) minibuses, cars, caravans, people carriers, 4x4 and boats. We are unlikely to fund the total costs of a new vehicle or where an organisation owns a large number of vehicles already. We do not provide grants towards vehicle leasing and organisations whose core activity is community transport, are ineligible for funding.

Our Open Grants Programme provides **capital grants only**. We will not provide support for the following items:

- ④ Salaries and overheads
- ④ Volunteer expenses
- ④ Training
- ④ Rent
- ④ Costs associated with the lease of property or equipment
- ④ Professional fees and project management costs
- ④ Marketing, leaflets and other literature
- ④ Equipment for one-off use, or which will be given to service users for personal use on a permanent basis
- ④ Costs associated with one-off events
- ④ Consumable items such as items with a short shelf life e.g. clothes, some sports equipment and kits, toys, and stationary

Other ineligible projects include:

- ④ Medical research or equipment
- ④ Consumables (as described above)
- ④ Setting up/refurbishment of charity shops
- ④ General appeals and emergency appeals
- ④ Retrospective projects (i.e., those that have already been completed)
- ④ Political projects
- ④ Requests for a vehicle from an organisation whose core offer is community transport
- ④ Projects overseas
- ④ Projects where the primary purpose is that of heritage or culture
- ④ Capital costs relating to arts and education projects unless they target and work exclusively with individuals from our programme areas

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

WHEN CAN YOU APPLY?

The Open Grants Programme is a rolling grants programme. We have no deadlines and assess applications as they are received.

HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION?

To apply, you must first successfully complete the online eligibility quiz which can be accessed on our [website](#). If you pass the quiz, you will be directed back to our website to access our online application form. Please note that although the eligibility quiz asks core questions about eligibility; you should still read our list of exclusions carefully before applying.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE RECEIVE YOUR APPLICATION?

You will receive an email confirming receipt of your application form. This email will come from mail@grantapplication.com (note: you should never send emails in reply to this address as it is not monitored). Please ensure you save this contact so emails do not enter your spam or junk inbox. Your application will be assigned to a batch and you will be informed once a Grants Officer has been assigned.

Your Grants Officer may contact you if they need any information during our assessments. We sometimes visit applicants (or ask for an online call) as part of the assessment process and if this applies to your application, we will contact you to discuss prior to our visit. For the Small Grants Programme (up to £15,000) we usually make a decision within twelve weeks, and for the Large Grants Programme (more than £15,000) within six months.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU ARE SUCCESSFUL?

If your application is successful we will write to you by email with an offer letter outlining the terms and conditions of your grant and the next steps. The online portal account you set up for the application will be used throughout your reporting of the grant so please keep a record of your log in details.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR APPLICATION IS UNSUCCESSFUL?

We do not currently provide feedback on unsuccessful applications. All decisions are final and you cannot appeal a decision. An unsuccessful organisation cannot apply for another grant for six months, and may not apply to us for the same capital project again (unless we specify otherwise).

Our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page provides answers to some common questions about our application process.

THE APPLICATION FORM

You can access a sample application form with help text on our website. In brief, there are seven sections to the application form:

- ① **Organisation and contact details:** Standard questions about you and your organisation as well as questions about how your work fits within our programme areas, and how you monitor your effectiveness.
- ② **Finances:** Questions about your financial position, any financial challenges you face, and copies of your latest annual accounts. If your charity is young and has not yet produced any accounts, we recommend that you postpone your application until they are produced, unless you have detailed management accounts and can demonstrate your organisation's sustainability.
- ③ **Project details:** Questions about the capital project taking place, the need for the project, and we request a copy of your project budget. We also ask about project outputs and outcomes (please see later in this document for further guidance) and where the project will take place (e.g., your lease).
- ④ **Fundraising:** We need details about your fundraising strategy for the project, any funds raised, and any pending applications to funders.
- ⑤ **Faith:** We ask questions relating to any faith ethos or religious activities of your organisation. We do not fund projects which promote or benefit religious activities
- ⑥ **Type of capital project (buildings):** We ask some questions about the ownership of your building as well as any planning permission requirements for the project.
- ⑦ **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** We ask some questions about why your organisation was set up, and who you have been set up to work with and support. We also ask about the leadership of your organisation and how it relates to the mission of your organisation. **We will not use the data that you provide to make a decision on your application.** If you do not wish to give us this information or are unable to do so, there is an option for this.

Please note: we have tried to be generous with the word limit for most questions on the application form. This is because we understand how time consuming it can be to reduce answers to match word limits. We would however ask that, when completing the form, you keep your answers concise and that they only address the specific question/s being asked when possible.

OUTCOMES FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

It can be difficult to identify outcomes for a capital project, particularly when it is the first stage of a longer journey to improve the lives of your beneficiaries. Because of this, we would like to know more about predicted outcomes **for your organisation** even if you are unable to predict outcomes **for your beneficiaries**.

We believe that all capital projects should be able to identify changes which lead to at least one of these three longer-term outcomes:

- ① An improved **work environment**
- ② **Maintained, improved, and/or increased services**
- ③ Improved **financial sustainability**

Please see the examples below to give you an idea of how you might answer this question. Our examples are brief and lack detail; we would expect more detail in an application but understand that outcomes are not always quantifiable.

Example project	Example outcomes
The purchase of IT equipment for staff at a charity working with disadvantaged minority communities	Staff will now have access to the IT equipment needed to deliver services. This means staff will be happier, there will be an improved work environment. The service to beneficiaries will be more effective and efficient with an extra 10 beneficiaries being supported per week because of time saved
The purchase of specialist sensory equipment for pupils at a special school	Pupils will receive improved support as they have access to the benefits of a sensory room. The knock-on positive effects will also be felt by staff supporting pupils
The construction of new accommodation units for an organisation supporting homeless people.	15 additional people per year will have access to safe and secure accommodation. The charity will own the new building, so increasing its financial sustainability and also help it to unlock further funding from elsewhere
Purchase of AV equipment for a charity working with disadvantaged young people	It will give staff the tools they require to deliver the services, improving our current workshops but also meaning we can deliver an additional four film craft and production skills training workshops per week.
The construction of a community centre in a highly deprived area	The new community centre will ensure that more services and community spaces are available to beneficiaries from across several of The Foundation's programme areas (particularly, older people, disadvantaged young people, and people with disabilities). As well as the charity being able to own its own building, the extra space means that they can attract funding for new activities, and the modern facilities mean staff are happier and more resilient.
The development of a database for a charity which works with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds	There is increased efficiency across the organisation, time spent on administration tasks is reduced meaning more time is spent delivering services and improving the outcomes for beneficiaries.

WHY WE DECLINE APPLICATIONS

Unfortunately, we receive more applications for funding than we can support. Below is a list of the most common reasons why we turn down an application:

- ④ The organisation's structure or organisation type was ineligible.
- ④ There is not a strong enough fit with our Programme Areas.
- ④ The financial need was not sufficiently evidenced .
- ④ We are not confident of the organisation's financial position; for example there may be insufficient revenue funding in place to remain a going concern.
- ④ The request was for a non-capital project.
- ④ The organisation's secular activities were not sufficiently demonstrated.
- ④ The organisation's fundraising plan does not seem adequate to meet the needs of the project.
- ④ The request was for retrospective funding (i.e., a project that had already been completed).
- ④ Due to the size of the project costs, the Foundation is unable to award a meaningful grant.
- ④ The organisation is still in its infancy and has a limited track record.

If you have any questions about our Open Grants Programme that are not answered in this document or on our website, please email Foundation@Clothworkers.co.uk.