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# Guidance for applicants

## About us

Sussex Community Foundation is a registered charity that exists to make Sussex a fairer and more equal place. We do this by enabling local people to support local causes and making grants to small charities and voluntary groups working in communities across Sussex.

Our grants help to address disadvantage and deprivation and build resilience across Sussex. We particularly welcome applications from organisations led by and supporting people from underrepresented communities.

## Our Funding Priorities

Our four funding priorities target our efforts towards the areas we believe will make the biggest difference to the lives of people in Sussex. Through them, we fund hundreds of charities and community groups across a range of causes, in communities all over Sussex. It's all part of achieving our vision of a fairer, more equal Sussex.

Our current priorities are:

**Tackling Poverty:** Reducing poverty and disadvantage in our communities.

**Improving Health:** Helping people live longer, better lives.

**Reaching Potential:** Providing life-changing skills, education and training.

**Acting on Climate:** Taking local action for the climate

To find more detailed information about our funding priorities, [visit our website](#).

## Our Grants

Our grants are structured into our general awards (our main funding programme) and special funds and programmes. As part of our general awards, we provide grants three times annually - in Spring, Summer and Autumn. Grants range from £1,000 to £10,000 to support work over a one-year period, including both core operational needs and project expenses.

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Most of our grants are made up of funding from what we call our donor-advised funds. These are funds that we manage to help donors give to causes that they care about. When you apply to the general awards, which is made up of over 100 funds, we match your application to the relevant funds that support your cause. You can find out more about this on our website.

## **When to apply**

You don't need to wait until the deadline to submit your application. Applications for our general awards can be made at any time throughout the year using our standard application form. Our Grants Committee meets three times a year to review the applications and make decisions. Deadlines for these Committees are advertised on our website. Applications received after 5 pm on each closing date will be carried forward to the next grant round.

We also have special funds and programmes which have their own separate deadlines, application forms, and requirements. On the whole, special funds can be applied for in addition to holding or applying for a general award grant. Visit our grants page for more information about these.

## **Am I eligible to apply?**

Most of our grants are awarded to not-for-profit volunteer-led organisations whose annual income does not exceed £2 million. However, our funding is particularly aimed at supporting smaller voluntary groups across Sussex, many with an annual income of less than £100,000. <sup>1</sup>

We define 'not for profit' organisations as those:

- Whose governing body (board or management committee) is entirely voluntary, although out of pocket expenses may be paid, and has a minimum of three unrelated people (if some are related there must be at least three who are not)
- Whose members do not receive any financial benefit
- Whose income and assets are used for exclusively charitable purposes (and any remaining assets are transferred to a charitable organisation)
- That does not pay any dividend or distribute any surplus to shareholders or members

Your organisation does not have to be a charity but it does need to have:

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<sup>1</sup> Where advertised, a small number of programmes allow larger organisations to apply (ie some national programmes and/or for larger awards) - we recommend always checking with us before making an application.

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- Its own bank account, with at least two cheque signatories (who are not related to each other)
  - A constitution or set of governing rules, with a minimum of three trustees/committee members, as above
  - Accounts or records of expenditure
  - Relevant policies (such as equal opportunities, child protection, vulnerable adults, health and safety etc).

We can accept applications from social enterprises, CICs and Companies Limited by Guarantee carrying out charitable activities. However, these organisations must have:

- Demonstrable public benefit and clear protection against private benefit
- A minimum of three unrelated directors, the majority of whom are not paid either as directors or for delivering the activities of the organisation (if some are related there must be at least three who are not)
- A majority of non-executive directors approving the salaries and benefits of any paid directors, which should be reasonable and proportionate to the work they do and the financial position of the organisation
- An asset lock body (in the case of CICs) with objectives that are charitable and similar to the CIC

These organisations must confirm that they meet the above conditions at the time of applying and no later than the closing date.

We are currently unable to accept applications from individuals or from organisations that are part of central, local or regional government. However, some specific special funds and programmes can support these applications, including the Paul Rooney Foundation and the Westdene Fund both of which provide funding for individuals. Further details are available on our website.

## **How to apply**

To apply, you need to complete our online application form which you can access at [www.sussexgiving.org.uk/apply](http://www.sussexgiving.org.uk/apply).

Make sure to click the save button (where indicated) at the top and bottom of the form so can save your progress and come back to complete it another time. If you wish to return to your form, you will need to register an email and password. Following this you will be sent an email with a link to continue your 'in progress' application.

You should submit your supporting documents as electronic attachments to the application form. Once you have submitted the form, you will receive an acknowledgement of your application by email.

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By completing our online application, you will be agreeing to the Terms and Conditions detailed at the end of the form. The form will also ask you to provide the bank account details that you would like the grant to be paid into if your application is successful.

If you need support to access the online form please contact our friendly Grants Team either by email to [grants@sussexgiving.org.uk](mailto:grants@sussexgiving.org.uk) or by phone 01273 409440. We're here to help guide you through the process.

## **Document checklist**

This is the list of documents you need to provide as part of your application to us (please note, we are unable to consider your application without this information):

### **For all applicants:**

- a signed copy of your latest annual accounts or record of expenditure
- a copy of a bank statement from the last three months

### **For first time applicants only:**

- a signed copy of your latest annual accounts or record of expenditure
- a copy of a bank statement from the last three months
- a signed copy of your constitution or set of rules (if you are a CIC, please also supply your CIC 34 report)
- the names of management committee members, with cheque signatories identified
- Your equal opportunities policy, covering both the Equalities Act 2010 and the nine protected characteristics
- Other policies relevant to your work such as child protection or vulnerable adult protection policy, health and safety policy, environmental or sustainability policy
- if applying for a grant to purchase equipment, please send copies of written estimates or catalogue pages

We will contact you if we need any further information after we have received your application.

## **How often can I apply?**

For our general awards, you can only make one grant application per round and only receive one grant in any twelve-month period. So, if you are successful, you can apply to our general awards programme once per year.

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If you are unsuccessful, we encourage you to apply again in the next round (after getting feedback and support from our Grants Team).

For our special funds and programmes, most grants are available as additional funding to a grant given from our general awards programme. Details of currently open special funds and programmes can be found on our website. If you would like to discuss applying for a grant from one of these funds, get in touch with our Grants Team.

Please note, we will only consider applications from organisations who have submitted their monitoring reports from any and all previous grants.

### **What happens once you receive my application?**

Once we receive your application, we will check that you are eligible and have supplied the information we need. The application will then be assessed against several set criteria in line with the questions in the application form. The assessment includes a review of the need in your local community, the project plan and budget, a set of measurable outcomes and evaluation tools and a plan to sustain the activity and/or support for beneficiaries going forward.

Depending on the outcome of our assessment, your application will then be matched to our funds and presented to relevant donors and fund panels for consideration. Our Grants Committee then meets to consider all the applications and to allocate any further funds.

This process takes about eight to 10 weeks and we will let you know the outcome of your application shortly afterwards.

If you are successful, you will receive the grant payment using the bank details you provided us with.

### **What can't we fund?**

- Organisations or activities which don't benefit communities in Sussex
- Organisations that discriminate unlawfully under the provisions set out by the Equalities Act 2010
- Organisations where the service provided is used as a vehicle or means to promote religious beliefs
- Political activities
- Small contributions to major capital appeals or campaigns
- Grants which will be used to make awards to a third party
- Projects which only benefit animals
- Organisations who have not returned monitoring from previous grant awards

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- Retrospective funding for activities or projects that have already taken place

## Monitoring

When your project is finished, we ask that you complete an online monitoring report. We expect to receive this twelve months after your grant is awarded.

You must submit your monitoring report before we can approve any further grants to you. Generally, this means you are eligible to make a new application after the deadline for your monitoring report.

We will send you a link to your monitoring form when you are awarded your grant. In the form, we ask for similar information to the application form. You don't need to submit detailed evidence of expenditure, although please do keep records of these as we may ask for this as part of our programme evaluations.

The knowledge we gain from monitoring and evaluation is vital to us. We use this information to report back to our donors and funding partners. We also highlight good practice and share success stories in our communications and impact reports. This information helps shape the Foundation's organisational learning and grant-making practice, so we really appreciate your time spent on reporting back to us.

## Where can I get more help?

If you have any questions about this guidance or our application process, please get in touch with our grants team. You can contact us via email [grants@sussexgiving.org.uk](mailto:grants@sussexgiving.org.uk) or by calling 01273 409440. We're here to provide the support you need to make applying for our funding as easy as possible.

If you're new to applying for grants or to Sussex Community Foundation, you can get further advice from your local infrastructure organisation (mainly known as Voluntary Actions). Voluntary Actions offer a wide range of information, support and training for voluntary sector organisations. They can help with funding applications and give guidance on what you need to include when putting together your funding submission. They can also help identify a range of funding opportunities for your organisation or project.

You can find details of the infrastructure organisation for your area [here](#).