



The UK Fund

Supporting communities
to come together

Information for
potential applicants

Our Strategy

The National Lottery Community Fund's new strategy 2023-2030

Creating resilient communities that are more inclusive and environmentally sustainable by funding activities that will strengthen society and improve lives across the UK.

Four community-led missions supporting communities:

- to come together
- to be environmentally sustainable
- to help children and young people thrive
- to enable people to live healthier lives.

Our approach:

- An equity-based approach to tackle inequality.
- Supporting communities to build from their strengths.
- Supporting what matters most to different communities.

The UK Portfolio

The UK Portfolio is one of five funding portfolios that make up The National Lottery Community Fund.

We explore new approaches and test new ways of building a stronger civil society.

Our funding supports projects and ideas of UK-wide significance that focus on transformational change.

We support work that:

- is of UK-wide benefit
- has the ability to scale
- is attentive to the emerging issues facing communities.

The UK Fund:

- Our initial focus is one of the four missions of the new Strategy, **Supporting Communities to Come Together**.
- Grants start at £500k for 2-5 years on average.
- This is an open, rolling programme, with significant budgets available each year.
- We're building on learning from UK programmes - Bringing People Together, Growing Great Ideas and the Digital Fund.

What we're looking for

We want to fund projects that do at least one of the following:

- work to strengthen relationships between people who have had different experiences of life
- set out to create connections between online and offline worlds
- help make sure people from all backgrounds can shape the future of their communities.

Key criteria

We'll fund a wide range of projects. However, every project we fund will be able to demonstrate that they:

- **will benefit communities across the UK (or have the potential to)** - this could be by sharing learning, influencing, collaborating, convening or delivering activity across and between UK countries
- **can scale their impact** - this might be by expanding into new locations, developing or deepening infrastructure, strengthening delivery or increasing reach
- **are focused on equity** – we want to fund projects that involve and benefit places, people and communities who experience poverty, disadvantage and discrimination.

Ways of working

We're also looking for projects that show they have:

- **the potential to achieve systems change** – affect how people experience the services and systems that are part of their everyday lives
- **ways to work with others** – collaborating across systems and sectors to achieve lasting change
- **a commitment to learning** – share learning openly and adapt as new insights are acquired
- **a regenerative approach** – have a positive impact on people and the natural environment.

What we're unlikely to fund

We're unlikely to fund projects that:

- have a sole focus on delivering services
- only plan to move existing activity online
- exist already with no plan for how they will scale
- are brand new
- work in isolation.

Our approach to learning and evaluation:

- We will invite funded projects to work with us to **co-design research questions** which will evolve over time.
- This collaborative enquiry will help us all understand more about the conditions which best enable social connection.
- Each question will evolve as a **learning journey** – a mini-exploration designed to benefit individual projects and the communities they're working with, the cohort as a whole and the future development of the programme.
- We will commission a **learning partner** to support this work.

Our approach:

- We've shared recorded **webinars** so we can share more information about the programme.
- If your project is a good fit with the programme **you can apply** through our website.
- We'll make an **initial assessment** and then invite the strongest applications through to the **next stage**.
- At this next stage, we'll ask for more **detailed information** about your project, including a **budget and accounts**.
- **UK Funding Committee** makes the final decision.

And finally – a checklist:

- Are you **eligible** for our funding?
- Are you connecting a) people with different experiences or b) offline and online worlds or c) communities and their future?
- Will your project benefit communities **across the UK**?
- Are you **scaling** your work?
- Is **equity** at the heart of your project?
- Are you working systemically, collaboratively, regeneratively, openly?

Next steps

If you think your idea is a good fit for the programme

You can apply through our website:

www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/the-uk-fund

If you don't think The UK Fund is for you

Contact our advice line:

www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/about/contact-us