Community Impact Grants (CIG): Guidance for Applicants

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Programme overview

Benefact Trust's Community Impact Grants programme supports projects that empower Christian organisations in the UK and Ireland to have a positive and transformative impact on lives and communities. It is open to applications from churches, cathedrals, denominational bodies, Christian charities, and schools and theological educational institutions with a clear Christian ethos.

The programme can support direct capital and/or revenue costs, and funding is available under the following four Programme Objectives:

1. Growing congregations and Christian communities
2. Addressing social challenges facing communities
3. Enabling wider community use of church buildings
4. Empowering Christian education

Who can apply

The Community Impact Grants programme is open to applications from churches, cathedrals, denominational bodies, Christian charities, and schools and theological educational institutions with a clear Christian ethos (schools and theological educational institutions can only apply under Objective 4: Empowering Christian Education).

Please note that we are only able to provide funding to organisations which are registered as charities in the UK or Ireland (unless the organisation applying has 'exempt' status, which is restricted to churches and educational establishments).

What we can fund

All funded projects must contribute to one or more of the Community Impact Grants programme objectives):

(1) Growing congregations and Christian communities

Projects which focus on growing church congregations and communities by encouraging numerical growth and growing faith and spirituality across all ages. Creative and imaginative projects will be encouraged, but typical areas of support are likely to include:

- Children's and youth projects
- Resourcing and training for church leaders
- Evangelism and faith development
- Outreach and wider engagement through music and the arts
- Construction of new chapels for hospices or other charities

(2) Addressing social challenges facing communities

Projects focusing on addressing, or building the capacity of Christian organisations to address, the following types of issues:

- The effects of poverty (including food poverty, debt and associated financial issues)
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Climate change and environmental sustainability

- Marginalised and vulnerable people (e.g. people experiencing or affected by issues such as homelessness, addiction or substance misuse; victims of domestic abuse, human trafficking or modern slavery; refugees; and ex-offenders)
- Children's and young people's needs

(3) Enabling wider community use of church buildings

Projects resulting in a clear increase in use of church buildings by the wider community (beyond the immediate congregation). Please note that requests for essential building improvements should come through our Building Improvement Grants programme (launching at the end of February 2023) unless they are a small part of a larger project clearly focused on enabling wider community use.

The types of projects likely to be supported include:

- Redevelopment, expansion or improvement projects resulting in new or improved facilities for wider community use or community benefit beyond the immediate congregation
- Work which includes the provision of disabled access, facilities or equipment (relatively minor works of this nature which are not part of a wider redevelopment project can be applied for under the Building Improvement Grants programme, launching at the end of February 2023)
- Other activities or resources to support a sustainable transition to increased community use (e.g. a new staff member to undertake programming/coordination of community spaces, additional resource for business planning/feasibility studies, etc)

(4) Empowering Christian education

For schools and theological educational institutions with a clear Christian ethos, the following types of projects will be supported to help these organisations support and care for students and provide access to Christian worship and education:

- Improving Collective Worship and the teaching of Christianity

- Chaplaincy and pastoral care

- Mental health/therapeutic support, especially for vulnerable children, and mentoring

- For Theological Education Institutions, improvements to buildings and facilities that will provide clear benefit for students and support a clear Christian purpose (e.g. repair/ refurbishment of chapel, outdoor worship spaces/prayer gardens)

We can support a range of capital and revenue (e.g. salary costs) as long as these are directly relevant to the delivery of your project. All costs included in your budget should clearly deliver additional value to your existing work, through new or expanded activity. We will not fund the continuation of business as usual or indirect costs, such as overheads and staff costs not directly related to project delivery. For more detailed guidance on cost eligibility, see our Cost Eligibility Guidance in the Appendix.

It is possible to apply for funding for one year or for a multi-year project (up to three years). In the case of multi-year projects, it will need to be clear how a longer funding period will help to enhance the impact and sustainability of your project.

We do not normally make retrospective grants for projects or work already undertaken. If you are planning to apply for a project that has already started, please contact us first for a discussion.

How often can I apply?

Once you have received funding for a project under the Community Impact Grants programme, you cannot make another application to the same programme for 2 years after receiving your final payment from us. If you have received funding under our Transformational Grants programme, you will also need to wait two years before making an application under Community Impact Grants.

You may make an application to one of our other grant programmes during this time, as long as the application relates to a different project (we cannot fund the same project under more than one programme).

How much can I apply for?

When completing your application, you will be asked to present the total costs of your project and details of the match funding you have secured, rather than requesting a specific grant amount.

If your project fits the programme criteria, the size of your grant will be calculated by our Grants Officers based on your total project costs and our assessment criteria. We will also take into account deprivation levels where your project is taking place and may apply a deprivation uplift when determining the size of your grant.

A recommendation for a grant award will then be made to our Trustees. Trustees are keen to support as many projects as possible which align with programme criteria.

Match funding

All applicants will be expected to have secured funding for at least 30% of their total project costs before making an application (it is not possible to submit an application form until this level of match funding has been secured). Applicants should also have a clear plan for how the remainder of the match funding for the project will be secured (i.e. it should not be assumed that Benefact Trust will cover the entire funding shortfall).

How to apply

Please ensure that you have read this guidance document in full before starting your application form. You may also want to refer back to the guidance when you are completing your application form and Project Budget template.

The Community Impact Grants programme is a rolling programme which is open for applications throughout the year. To make an application, you will need to register on our online application portal and complete this online application form. You will also need to complete a Project Budget template and submit this with your application.

Once your application has been successfully submitted, you will receive a confirmation email.

If you are not sure which of our grant programmes is right for your project, please contact us for a discussion.

When will I find out if my application has been successful?

We aim to communicate decisions as soon as possible. The average decision time for small grants (up to £10k) is two months. Larger grants (over £10k) take between four and six months because these are considered at Grants Committee and Board meetings which are held throughout the year.

If you are awarded a grant

Please note that all grants awarded by Benefact Trust are subject to our Standard Grant Terms and Conditions. For all grant beneficiaries, this includes a requirement to complete a brief Impact Survey at the end of your project to help us understand and evaluate the impact of our funding.

In most cases, your grant (or first payment for multi-year grants) will be paid upfront shortly after your grant has been approved. However, your Grants Officer may discuss alternative payment arrangements with you if appropriate.

If you have been awarded a multi-year grant (with more than one payment), you will be required to complete an annual Progress Report. This must be reviewed and approved before the next payment can be made. The Trust reserves the right to delay or not make the next payment if progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory.

For all grant payments, you will be sent a receipt with your payment, which you will need to sign and return to us.

The Trust publishes details of all grants awarded in its Annual Report and Accounts. In addition, the Trust publicises details of various grants on the website, social media and through other publicity material. Our communications team may contact you directly to discuss publicity of your grant.

Your grant should, where possible, be publicised by your organisation (e.g. through social media, on websites or newsletters). There are a range of resources to support you with publicity on our website.

Appendix: Community Impact Grants Cost Eligibility Guidance

Please read this guidance when you are completing your Project Budget template.

The table below will help you to understand the types of costs which are likely to be eligible for funding under the Community Impact Grants Programme. Please note that costs will only be eligible as part of a project which contributes to one or more of the four objectives of this grant programme (as outlined above in the programme overview section).

This list is not exhaustive, and Benefact Trust reserves the right to decide whether costs are eligible for funding. If you have a question regarding cost eligibility, please contact us at info@benefacttrust.co.uk.

Revenue		
Cost	**Eligible**	**Ineligible**
Staff costs	Salary costs and direct expenses of employing new staff and/or extending contracted hours of existing staff in relation to new or expanded work	'Business as usual' (BAU) salary (including clergy posts) and costs for existing staff or staff costs not directly meeting programme objectives
Training	Training of staff and/or volunteers in relation to new or expanded work	
Volunteer expenses	Modest expenses necessary to enable volunteers to play their role in the enabling of new or expanded work	Significant volunteer expenses that represent a disproportionate amount of the overall project budget or do not clearly meet programme objectives
Hire of buildings and/or equipment	Specific hire costs necessary to enable new or expanded work to take place	Costs that relate to BAU or represent a disproportionate amount of the overall project budget
Marketing and promotion costs	Costs that represent a proportional amount of overall project budget and relate to new or expanded work	Significant marketing and promotion costs that represent a disproportionate amount of the overall project budget or do not clearly meet programme objectives
Running costs e.g. heating, lighting, broadband, other general BAU costs	None	All
Events, conferences, travel and consumables (e.g. meals, food, promotional materials, etc)	Not normally eligible. Items that are clearly an integral and necessary part of delivering or enabling new or expanded work may be considered eligible in exceptional cases.	Items that represent BAU or that are not clearly an integral and necessary part of delivering new or expanded work. One-off events, camps, conferences, etc will generally be ineligible.

Creation of digital assets (e.g. websites, online courses)	Costs which have a direct link to enabling new or expanded work aligned with programme objectives, and where there is a clear plan in place for how digital assets will be maintained	Disproportionately high costs and items representing BAU or ongoing maintenance of digital assets

Capital		
Cost	**Eligible**	**Ineligible**
Alterations, new building work and installation of new facilities	Costs with a clear and direct link with the delivery of one of the four programme objectives (see above).	Building improvements which are not linked with clear outcomes aligned with one of the four programme objectives (see above).
Building Repair work	Not usually eligible but could be eligible in the following cases: • for schools/theological institutions applying under CIG objective 4 (e.g. chapel repair) • if the repair work forms a relatively small component of a wider project which clearly fits under the CIG programme (and would separately be eligible for support under Building Improvement Grants)	Most repair work. For general repair and work, please consider our Building Improvement Grants programme.
Equipment	• Costs of equipment clearly necessary to enable new or expanded work to take place, including equipping staff and volunteers with what they need to carry out their role, or ensuring that facilities are appropriately equipped to ensure that project outcomes can be achieved • Reasonable quantities of AV equipment, tablets or computers that will remain in situ at the project location and will enable the new or expanded work to take place	• Tablets and phones to be given or loaned to users of new services being provided • Phones for staff or volunteers