

WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL GRANT PROGRAMME

WELCOME TO ROUND (2) SEPTEMBER 08

The County Council values the independent services provided by the voluntary and community sector for the residents of Worcestershire and in order to support this, will make grants to voluntary and community organisations based in the county. The grant giving process has been designed to make sure that grants are given on a transparent and fair basis in keeping with the Worcestershire Compact.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

The Worcestershire Compact defines a grant as a “financial contribution to an activity delivered by a voluntary and community sector organisation in its own right either to contribute towards organisational costs or to wholly or partly fund a specific piece of work.”

For many years the County Council has given grants to voluntary and community sector organisations, but the processes for applying for them have been inconsistent. These new arrangements are intended to make the grant giving process clearer for you and for us.

The purpose of the County Council's grants is to make a financial contribution to organisations providing their own independent services that support the broad strategic objectives of the County Council, as represented by the grant funding priorities we describe later on in the application information.

We hope that organisations that receive these grants will be able to use this financial support as leverage to attract other local, regional or national sources of funding, and will not be wholly reliant upon the County Council's grant contribution.

Grants can only be paid to non profit-making organisations, not to *individuals*.

All references to the Council's new grants programme do not include any time limited government grant schemes for which the council is acting as a distributor. These grant schemes include, for example, the Children's Fund, Youth Opportunity Fund, Sure Start, Extended Schools, Supporting People, Carers Grant, WiNN and the Learning Disability Fund.

WHAT TYPES OF GRANTS ARE AVAILABLE?

In round (2), there are two types of grants available:

Community Grants

- applied for annually and given as a single one-off annual payment in advance
- each category of community grant has its own maximum amount (as described later on in this pack), but they will all be for amounts less than £5,500
- each annual grant is a discrete and one-off piece of funding.

Strategic Grants

- are for three years – no annual increases will be made for inflation
- payment is made in quarterly instalments in advance, subject to the signing of a written grant agreement
- written agreements will be drawn up with the grant recipient to reflect the agreed services, target numbers of users, monitoring schedule etc – based on information given in the application form.

WHAT IS THE TIMETABLE FOR ROUND (2) OF GRANTS?

Process	Timescale
Launch of Grant Application Process – forms available	8 th September 08
Information events for potential applicants	22 nd , 23 rd , 25 th September
Application deadline	4pm, 31 st October 08
Initial screening out of ineligible applications	Early November 08
Full assessment of applications	November – December 08
Successful and unsuccessful applicants informed	Early January 09
Grant agreement negotiated	January to March 09
Funding released	April 09

A further grant programme will be launched in March/April 09, so look out for further details of these nearer the time.

HOW CAN YOU FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION?

Guidance Notes

A set of general guidance notes is provided with each type of application form, to help you understand the questions asked and give guidance on the sort of information we are looking for. There is also specific information for applicants on the different types of grants available in round (2).

Language and Access Support

If your first language is not English, or if you require the form in a different format, please contact Stephanie Jones in the Council's VCS Unit for assistance on 01905 766885 or email Sjones12@worcestershire.gov.uk

Information Events for Round (2) of Grants

If you want to find out more about the grants available you can book a place at one of these information events by contacting: Stephanie Jones, Voluntary and Community Sector Unit Administrator on **01905 766885** or email [**sjones12@worcestershire.gov.uk**](mailto:sjones12@worcestershire.gov.uk)

Please note information relating to grants for Supporting Community Based Activities, Services for Older People, Carers Grant and Equality and Diversity will only be available on Monday 22nd in Worcester and Tuesday 23rd in Kidderminster. Information on the Community Transport Grant will be available on all three dates.

Date	Time	Venue
Monday, September 22	2pm – 4pm	Perdiswell Young Peoples Leisure Centre, Perdiswell, Worcester
Tuesday, September 23	10am – 1pm	Kidderminster Town Hall, Kidderminster
Thursday, September 25	10am – 1pm	Pershore Civic Centre, Pershore

Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium can also provide advice to help you complete your application. Please contact Ruth Hunt on **01684 312 730** or email [**ruthh@comfirst.org.uk**](mailto:ruthh@comfirst.org.uk)

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION & ASSESSMENT PROCESS?

Complete and Return Your Application Form

We would like to encourage you to access the grant application packs electronically – they are available to download from our website www.worcestershire.gov.uk/voluntary and click on '[grants to voluntary and community sector](#)'. If this is impossible for you, you can request hard copies of the pack from Stephanie Jones, VCS Unit tel: 01905 766885 or email [**sjones12@worcestershire.gov.uk**](mailto:sjones12@worcestershire.gov.uk)

During round (2), you can get your application pack from September 8th, and you need to return your form to us, either by registered post or hand delivered, by 4pm on 31st October. No late applications will be accepted.

Assessment of Applications

In early November an initial screening of all applications will be carried out to make sure application forms are fully complete, applications are relevant to our grant priorities and all requested information has been sent. Applications that are ineligible or incomplete will be screened out of the process, and those applicants will be informed in writing as soon as possible.

Eligible application forms will be assessed scored by panels of officers in each Directorate and VCS representatives during November and December, using a consistent method of evaluation to make sure the scoring process is fair to all applicants. Electronic records will be kept of all assessments carried out.

Finances

Organisations recommended for Strategic Grants will have their accounts checked by a designated finance officer within each Directorate. They will check that:

- the organisation has a financial need for the grant
- accounts have been properly audited
- existing County Council funding is shown in the accounts
- all groups with an annual turnover of between £10,000 and £250,000 have provided independently examined accounts
- all groups with an annual turnover of £250,000 or more must be able to provide audited annual accounts from the previous year (as advised in the Charity Commission regulations).

Decision Making

Following the assessment period, each evaluation panel will make recommendations for funding to their respective Heads of Service. Heads of Service, or other designated budget managers, will make the final decisions on the award of each grant.

Informing Applicants

Applicants will be informed in writing about the amount of grant they have been awarded in early January 09.

Unsuccessful applicants, and those whose grant award is lower than they applied for may request feedback from the appropriate grant manager. In addition, support from the Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium will be available to unsuccessful applicants.

In line with County Council practice we will be placing the list of grants awarded on the County Council's website. We will also send this information to all Councillors, the press and the Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium.

Complaints

If an applicant has a complaint about the way their application was processed the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure can be used. In the first instance, complaints need to be raised with the relevant grant manager.

Grant Agreements

Grant agreements will be negotiated for each strategic grant and will reflect the services and target numbers of users stated in the application form or as otherwise agreed with the grants managers.

Grant letters will be given for community grants, confirming arrangements.

The County Council reserves the right to withdraw or reduce funding if the terms of the grant are not adhered to, or if monitoring information is not forthcoming.

Payment Arrangements

In round (2) community grants will be paid in full as a one off single payment in early April, depending on the type of grant.

In round (2) the first quarterly instalment of strategic grants over £5,000 per year will be initiated on 1st April 2009, to reach the funded organisation by mid-April. Strategic grants of under £5,000 per year will be paid in full as a one off single payment at the same time.

Monitoring

The Compact definition states that 'a grant is a financial contribution with an expectation of mutually agreed, clearly defined outcomes. These outcomes are specified in a grant funding letter or agreement, and monitoring arrangements are commensurate with the value of grant given'. The relevant grant manager will agree monitoring arrangements with grant recipients appropriate to the amount of funding given.