

These Guidance Notes are to help you complete the Strategic Grants Application Form

Some general points first:

- You are advised to read these notes and the whole form through before you start filling in the form
- In the form, the word 'you' usually refers to your group or organisation
- If you need any help, please phone the VCS Unit Co-ordinator at the County Council on 01905 728650 or email: SJames2@worcestershire.gov.uk
- If you don't have an answer to a question, then please don't just leave the box blank. Please explain *why* you can't answer the question
- Please either download the form onto your computer and complete it from there, or complete it by hand using black ink. To download the form, please go to: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/voluntary and click '[grants to voluntary and community sector](#)'.
- If you need to have this form in a different format or would like help filling it in because your first language is not English, please contact us as above.
- Please feel free to expand the boxes or add extra sheets, labelled with your group's name, and question number if necessary. However, please don't send us any information or documents we haven't asked for, as we cannot consider them
- Document Checklist:
Please ensure that you send copies of the following documents with your form:
 - Your latest signed annual accounts or management accounts (see Q.29).
 - Your three-year budget spreadsheet – using the form provided.
 - Letters of commitment from all partners involved in the project, *if* you are applying as the lead body for a consortium or partnership

Please remember to send all the required documents with your application, otherwise your application will not be considered

- Please send back your completed form by the deadline of **4pm on 31st October 2008**. We cannot accept incomplete, late, emailed or faxed applications, so please either **hand-deliver** your application to Main Reception at County Hall, or post it by **recorded delivery** in advance of the deadline to the address shown below:

**Strategic Grant Application
VCS Unit
Planning, Economy and Performance Directorate
Worcestershire County Council
County Hall
Worcester
WR5 2NP**

If you hand deliver your application, please ask the Reception staff to date and time stamp your envelope.

Groups we will consider funding through a strategic grant

Applications will only be considered from groups and organisations meeting all of the following requirements:

- Groups that are non-statutory organisations
- Groups that are formally constituted
- Groups that operate in the not-for-profit sector
- Groups that are clearly able to demonstrate their ability, through a grant award, to deliver benefit to the community within the period of the grant, and to sustain their activities
- Groups whose activities benefit residents of Worcestershire
- Groups whose activities clearly contribute to or support the County Council's strategic funding priorities.

Groups/activities we will not consider funding through a strategic grant

The following will not be considered for funding:

- Groups which do not provide services to the community, but use funds to campaign
- Activities or projects that promote religion or a political party (this does not exclude applications from faith-based groups to deliver community based projects)
- Groups that have uncommitted/unrestricted funds that could be used to fund the activity.

What can you use the County Council's strategic grant funding for?

We prefer to give funding to support your revenue (running) costs rather than capital costs (purchase of computers, mending the roof, installing disabled access). This is because we believe revenue funding is harder to obtain from other sources, but you may be more likely to be able to raise money elsewhere for one-off capital costs. Also, our strategic grants are for three years, which goes above and beyond one-off purchases.

We give grants because we want to support voluntary sector organisations to deliver independent, sustainable services for the residents of Worcestershire. Strategic grants are intended to help sustain and support the work of an organisation, for example, the staffing required to deliver its primary activities, or the premises from which it does so. Funding is usually required on a continuing basis, which is why we are offering a three year term, in keeping with the Compact. The Worcestershire Compact states that a grant is a "financial contribution to an activity delivered by a voluntary and community sector organisation... either to contribute towards organisational costs or to wholly or partly fund a specific piece of work."

You can apply for funding to contribute to the costs of your whole organisation *or* a project – you are asked on the budget spreadsheet to make it clear which you want.

You might want to consider the following when assessing the full costs of your services, in addition to the direct costs:

- compliance (regulatory and insurance requirements)
- income generation
- support services (otherwise known as 'overheads' eg premises, equipment, utilities, management salaries etc)
- responding to consultation
- governance, user engagement & representation
- innovation and quality (including research, monitoring & evaluation).

Please note that we will not fund the whole of any organisation's costs. This is because it is not advisable for you to be totally reliant on the County Council for your funding - we cannot guarantee any funding beyond the three-year term. Grants will only be given to support services that meet the funding priorities of the County Council. Applications to fund a one-year or one off project should be made using our Community Grants application form.

Eligibility and Screening

We will operate an initial screening process, where we check each application form against our funding priorities. If we do not consider that your application meets our priorities, we will reject it without assessing the whole form. This means you will hear from us in a relatively short time (around mid-May) if your application has been screened out. If an application form is incomplete, or any information we asked for is not sent, then we will also reject the application without assessing the whole form.

Timescale for this Round (2) of Strategic Grants

Process	Timescale
Launch of Strategic Grant Process	8 th September 2008
Information event for potential applicants	22 nd , 23 rd , 25 th September 08 Please see Welcome Letter for details.
Application deadline	4pm, 31 st October 08
Initial screening out of ineligible applications	Mid-November 08
Full assessment of applications	November - December 08
Successful and unsuccessful applicants informed	Beginning January 08
First instalment of funding released	1 st April 09

The following are the guidance notes for each question:

Q1. We need your organisation's name and full contact details.

Q2. We need this information in case we need to contact you with a query about your application – so please name the main person who is most likely to be able to help us.

Q3. Which category of grant are you applying for?

Grants are only available under the headings listed here, so you should re-read the Priorities on pages 3 & 4 of the application form. Tick the box that is relevant to you, as you will be asked in Q.7 to explain how you meet the funding priorities of your chosen category.

Q.4 How much are you applying for?

You are applying for 3 year funding so please state how much you would like *each year* here, in the box below the category of grant you're applying for (see Priorities at the beginning of the form). Please don't ask for more money than the maximum specified for each category.

Q5. Are you applying for funding for your own organisation alone, or for a partnership/consortium activity?

Partnership and collaborative working are encouraged, but you may also apply for funding just for your own organisation. If you are making a partnership/consortium based application, please make it clear in your answers to all the questions when you are referring to the lead body and when to the whole partnership/consortium. Please tell us who your partner organisations are. Only one application should come from each partnership/consortium, and one organisation should be chosen as the lead body to make the application. The lead body will be responsible for the use of the grant and will be expected to sign a grant agreement with the County Council. We ask you more about your partnership/consortium in Q26.

Q.6 What are the main services/activities of your group/organisation/partnership/consortium?

Please give us enough information so that we can get a good idea of what your organisation is set up to do, and what it does day-to-day. Please also explain who these activities are for: eg older people, people living on a certain housing estate, young people. (We ask about numbers in Q.8).

Q.7a) What will you use the requested funding for? AND**b) How do these activities match up with the funding priorities of the category to which you are applying?**

Please make sure you answer both parts of this question because it's the most important one in the form. We cannot fund applications from organisations whose work does not help us meet our priorities. You should read the funding priorities on pages 2 & 3 of the application form, and if you need further information, please phone the relevant grants officer to find out more.

We want to know what outcomes will be achieved for some of the residents of Worcestershire by your organisation, with our financial support. If you already have funding from us, you might like to think first about what you *wouldn't* be able to do if you no longer had a grant from us – then use this to shape your answer. Please do not *just* say 'to help us with our overheads' or 'to help pay our manager's salary'.

NB: Please don't just copy down the wording of the priorities – eg saying 'we provide community-based activities to support adults with physical disabilities' does not tell us enough.

Q.8 How many individual service users will be supported with this grant?

We need to know the total number of people you think this grant will help support. If your organisation has a standard client group of, say, 20 individuals then please put 20 as your answer. If they all come twice a week, you might be tempted to tell us you have 2000 users (ie by calculating 20 people x twice a week x 50 weeks a year = 2,000 people). However, we need to know the number of individuals, not the number of times they walk through your door.

We also need to know their age range – to find out whether you mostly deal with children and young people, adults up to retirement age, or older people. If you can say roughly what percentage of clients are in each age range, then please do so.

If you find out and record the ethnic origins of your clients you should be able to answer this part of Q8. If you don't do so already, then we will expect you to start doing so if we give you a grant.

Q.9 What sort of group or organisation is yours?

Your constitution or governing document should provide this information, if you are unsure. We cannot give grants to individuals or private organisations – only to voluntary or community groups/organisations, which reinvest any surplus or profits, they make. If you are a registered charity, please write in your registration number. If we haven't listed your type of organisation, please explain what it is – eg it might be a community interest company or a co-operative.

Q.10 Is your group/organisation a member of a local infrastructure body (eg Community Action, CVS, Community First, WCVYS, Volunteer Centre etc)?

We do not give this question/answer a score when we assess your form.

We are interested to know whether you are a member of one of Worcestershire's VCS support agencies, but if you are not, we are also interested to hear about the reasons why. This may be just because you have never heard of them, or don't know what they do. Saying you are not a member will not affect your funding application at all, so please give an honest answer.

Q.11 Where do your clients live? Please give percentages for each district.

We have provided you with six boxes – one for each district or borough in Worcestershire. If your organisation operates countywide, you should still fill in the percentage of clients/service users who live in each area (or a good estimate, if you don't know the exact numbers). If you are a countywide organisation, but you want funding for a service that is only going to operate in one area, please make this clear.

Many groups will operate mostly in one area/district – in which case, you will fill in only one of these boxes. We ask this question so we can try to ensure a good spread of grants across the county, but we are aware that needs differ between different areas.

Q.12 What evidence is there to show that your services are needed in your area?

Your work might be based in a geographical community, or it may be with a 'community of interest for example 'lesbians and gay men' or 'the Chinese community'. Either way, we want to hear about how you know what needs are, and how you are helping to meet them. How did you find out what people's needs are?

Q.13 What early intervention and prevention services will you be able to provide as a result of this funding?

We are particularly keen to fund services which will help people stay independent in the community – this could be day care, community transport etc. Please think about the services you provide and tell us how they will help save resources in the future by preventing problems and supporting people's independence.

Q.14 What have you done (or will you do) to assess the potential for working in partnership with similar services: eg to save on duplicating administrative, overhead and management costs? Who would your potential partners be?

Because the County Council cannot afford to fund several groups providing the same or similar services in the same area, we would like to find out what you are doing to help reduce running costs

by working in partnership with other groups where possible to cut costs – ie what financial savings can be made by sharing some back-office services in the future, if you don't do this already.

Please give an honest answer: if you haven't thought about this before, say so – but tell us instead what you could do in future to tackle this issue. We hope that you are aware of other services in your geographical area which serve the same or similar clients. For example, if your organisation gives advice to the public, there may be several advice agencies or counselling providers in your District or across the County which you could work with on this in future.

Q.15 How do you involve service users in developing and managing your services?

The voluntary and community sector prides itself on involving its service users in designing and managing its services – so how does your organisation let clients have their say in how things are run? For example, you might have a user forum or regular opportunities for users to give feedback. Or you may involve service users on your management committee/board of trustees.

Q.16 How do you evaluate the success of your work?

Monitoring and evaluation are very important to both the service manager and the management committee. Do you carry out a user-satisfaction survey? Do you ask your clients to think about the outcomes they want from your service – then check that they get them? How often? If you don't do this now, please say so – but let us know what you will do and when.

Q.17 Review of Child Protection Policies and Procedures

The Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006 both expect all organisations that work with children and young people to have robust safeguarding policies and procedures. Working Together came into effect in October 2006. It is expected that organisations and groups will have updated their procedures following this and if not have plans to do so. Advice is available from Worcestershire Council for Voluntary Youth Services and Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board.

Q.18 How do you practise equal opportunities for service users and ensure your services are open and accessible to all, including hard-to-reach communities and individuals?

Please don't just say 'we've got an equal opportunities policy' – we want to know what you do in practice, eg what steps you take to ensure your services are accessible to everyone regardless of disability, race or religion, ages and sexual orientation. If your service is aimed specifically at young single mothers, then we don't expect it to be 'open to all' (eg children or men) – but you should explain how you reach out to ensure young mothers from all sections of the community know about your services, and what you do to accommodate their specific needs (eg language).

Q.19 How do you practise equal opportunities and embrace diversity with regard to your volunteers, paid staff and management committee?

Please tell us what you do in practice to support equality of opportunity for your staff, volunteers and management committee. Describe what steps you take to ensure people from a wide variety of backgrounds can join your organisation – whether as volunteers or through your recruitment process. For example, do you pay out-of-pocket expenses to your volunteers?

Q.20 What arrangements do you have for supporting, supervising and training paid staff and volunteers (including the manager)?

The most important resource an organisation has is its people – so we want to know how well supported they are. Tell us about supervision arrangements and training – for both staff and volunteers, and describe who supports or supervises the manager.

Q.21 How many volunteers do you have who volunteer regularly?

The Council monitors this as part of our Local Area Agreement arrangements, so we would be grateful for accurate answers to the three parts of this question. You will not be 'marked down' for having only a few volunteers – this question is not part of the assessment and we do not give this answer a score, but is a useful opportunity for us to gather some statistics from the voluntary sector. The 'total' is the total number of hours per week all the volunteers give to the organisation added up together (whether on the management committee/board or in providing the service/administration).

Q.22 How often does your management committee or board of directors meet, and in what ways are they kept informed of your organisation's progress/relevant issues?

We want to make sure that the management committee is regularly informed of progress against targets and current issues, as well as receiving a regular report on finances and fundraising – in order that the committee/board can oversee the organisation adequately.

Q.23 How do you plan to improve and develop your service over the next 3 years? (Please include targets, milestones and efficiencies for the coming year and outline ideas for the next 2 yrs.)

As we are offering longer term year funding with strategic grants, we want to be sure that this investment will be used wisely – and that the organisations we invest in are growing and thriving. Please set out some specific targets for your services for the next year, and give an indication for the subsequent 2 years. 'Milestones' are points along the way that will help you see if you are on course to achieve your targets. Some of these could be organisational development targets, and some could be service-related. We also want to know how you will make efficiencies in the way you manage the organisation in order to give increased services to the community. (These efficiencies could relate to your answer to Q.14.)

Q.24 What are your fundraising plans and targets for the next 3 years?

Please be specific about where you will be applying for funding from in the coming year – actual amounts, funders etc. It is enough to then give an outline of your plans for the following 2 years. We need to know we are investing in a sustainable organisation that is not over-reliant on the County Council's grant but has a broad and expanding funding base.

Q.25 Please describe the value to you and your service users of you being an independent voluntary sector organisation

The voluntary and community sector delivers a whole range of independent services, which public sector organisations like the County Council do not or would not provide. Please describe the value to you and your service users of your being an independent voluntary sector organisation. Your answer to this question will help us to identify the 'added value' of the grants programme to support the independent role of the voluntary sector.

Q.26 If you said in Q.5 that you are seeking funding as a partnership or consortium, please explain how the money and the work will be divided up.

We want to ensure that any investment of funding we make to a partnership or consortium goes to one that is well planned and has procedures in place for managing finances and returning high-quality monitoring from all partners through the lead body.

Q.27 Describe how you will publicise that the County Council is part-funding your organisation and how your service users and other funders will know this.

For example, you could put 'Part-funded by Worcestershire County Council' on your leaflets and publicity material, or include our logo on your headed notepaper (along with your other funders)

Q.28 To receive a grant from the County Council, your organisation must have its own bank or building society account in the name of the organisation as shown in your governing document. Cheques and other withdrawals must be signed by at least two people who are not related to each other.

We will only fund groups or organisations which have two or more signatories for cheques, as this is standard good practice to help avoid fraud. The signatories should not be related to each other, and at least one should be a senior management committee member/trustee such as Chair or Treasurer (ie not two paid staff).

Q.29 We cannot assess this application without your accounts. We have provided lots of explanatory notes for this in the form itself. If you have already sent in your annual accounts for other funding that you receive from us you just need to tell us who you sent them to and send us a copy of your management accounts. Please include your validation number here if you have one.

Q.30 Questions about your reserves.

If you have £30,000 in the bank as unrestricted reserves and you are asking for a grant of £20,000 per year, we may decide you don't need a grant as much as a group having fewer reserves. However, we understand that healthy reserves can indicate a well managed, sustainable organisation, so this box gives you the chance to explain your financial situation if it looks as if you have enough money in the bank to support your proposed project or activity without a County Council grant.

Restricted reserves are only those which have been restricted by the *funder* – for example, if you didn't spend all of your Big Lottery grant last year because of delayed recruitment, then the Lottery will not let you spend their left-over money on anything other than the purpose for which it was given, so it is restricted. Unrestricted reserves are all the other monies or savings you have accumulated – even if you have earmarked them for replacing the boiler or staff redundancies, for example.

Q.31 Which of these policies and procedures do you have in place?

Because we are not asking you to send in copies of your policies with your application, we may ask for sight of these documents at some point during our monitoring process. We appreciate that you may not have developed all of these policies yet, or that some of them will not be relevant to the service you provide, but we do ask you to state a date by which you will develop those that are applicable to you. As part of the monitoring of any funding we give you, we will monitor your progress against the dates you have set for developing new policies. If a policy/procedure is not applicable to you, then please put N/A in the NO column. Do tell us about any others you have, if you would like to.

Here is some information on CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checks:

There are two types of checks – standard and enhanced.

A Standard Disclosure is required for positions of trust, including those working in financial or legal services. A Standard Disclosure contains details of all convictions held on the Police National Computer including current and 'spent' convictions as well as details of any cautions, reprimands or final warnings. If a position involves working with vulnerable people, the Disclosure will also check

information held on government department lists, held by the Department of Health and Department of Education and Skills, of those who are banned from working with vulnerable adults or children.

All staff and volunteers who come into contact with children or vulnerable adults should have enhanced CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checks carried out before they begin volunteering or working for your organisation. This involves the same checks as a Standard Disclosure, with an additional level of check on local police records for information that might be relevant for the role.

A 'vulnerable adult' means a person aged 18 or over who is:

- receiving nursing or personal care in their own home or a care home
- is dependent on others in performing basic physical functions
- has a physical or mental illness, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs
- has severe impairment in the ability to communicate with others
- is unable to protect him/herself from assault, abuse or neglect

Please also note that there will be a requirement from October 2008 for grant recipients to comply with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Signing the form: It is the job of the person signing the form to check all the information is correct to the best of their knowledge.

Don't forget to complete and return the budget spreadsheet that goes with this form, and send us a copy of your most recent accounts if applicable.

The closing date is 4pm 31st October 2008.