Seed Grants - (Grants up to £750)

Grant Guidance

Seed Grants are designed to provide support to charities and voluntary-led organisations with early-stage ideas that test new ways of working, promote community voice, and strengthen grassroots action in Milton Keynes.

Before committing to an application, please make sure that your organisation and project are eligible for funding and that you have read our grants policy in full.

Grant Size
Up to £750

Grant Deadlines
There are no deadlines for Seed Grants, it is a rolling programme, and a decision is usually known within 2– 3 weeks of applying.

What Types of Projects Can It Support?
Seed Grants can support a range of projects and activities. We encourage applications that respond to issues raised in our annual Vital Signs report, address local needs, work in partnership, and aim to strengthen the voluntary sector.

Please refer to how your project is addressing issues highlighted in your application.

Our Vital Signs Areas:

Stronger Communities	Disadvantage and Poverty
Local Economy	Diversity
Transport	Health and Wellbeing
Work	Crime and Safety
Education	Housing
Environment	Arts and Heritage

Who Can Apply?

We can accept applications from constituted, not-for-profit organisations supporting beneficiaries from Milton Keynes:

- Unincorporated associations
- Registered charities
- Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs)
- Sports clubs
- Faith groups - *where the primary project activity is community-focussed and not for the promotion of religion. Beneficiaries must not be required to take part in religious activities, and no individual may be excluded from benefiting on the grounds of faith, religion or lack of belief.*

Finances

- If your organisation's income is over £5,000 at the time of application, your organisation must be registered with The Charity Commission or the relevant regulator (e.g. Companies House, CIC regulator or Financial Conduct Authority) or be in the process of registration. Evidence of this must be submitted with your application. Guidance on setting up a charitable organisation can be found at www.gov.uk/setting-up-charity

- Organisations with over six months' free reserves should be prepared to explain why they need to hold this level. ("Free reserves" do not include designated or restricted funds).

Governance

All applicants must provide the following documentation:

- A governing document/constitution that details the name and purpose of the organisation. It must also include an appropriate asset lock and confirmation that the organisation is not for profit. (The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) has advice on **writing a constitution**. GOV.UK also provides information

on **how to write your charity's governing document**.)

- Trustee/Management Committee details – a list of names and addresses of your management (governing) committee; we require a minimum of three contacts.

- Most recent Annual Accounts/Financial records covering a minimum of past 12 month (For organisations that have existed for under a year, a bank statement will suffice).

- A recent bank statement to show the bank account is in the organisation's name (as written in your constitution/governing document). The account must have at least two unrelated signatories.

- EDI/Equal Opportunities policy covering the nine protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

- Child and Adult Safeguarding Policies with details of the local lead person (including Vulnerable Adult Policy, if applicable)

- Evidence of expected cost such as quotes when requested by the Philanthropy Team.

What the Grant Will Not Cover

- Core/running costs, except where these are essential to project delivery.
- Statutory activities, or purchase of equipment that will become the property of a statutory body.
- Animal welfare projects.
- Retrospective costs (anything that has already been bought). Rare exceptions may be made where deposits are required. (Must be agreed in advance by a member of the Philanthropy Team).
- Medical research or treatment.
- Deficit funding or repayment of loans.
- Unspecified expenditure.
- Contingencies and miscellaneous expenses.
- Events or activities where the primary purpose is to fundraise.
- Redistributing funds to other charitable organisations (except for specific partnership arrangements).
- Food and drink (unless vital to the project).

- Travel and accommodation (unless vital to the project).

Decision Making

- Seed Grants are scored and approved by an internal panel made up of MK Community Foundation staff.

Scoring

- The internal panel will vote on Seed Grant applications. Applications with a majority 'pass' vote will be successful.
- Please note that the panel may decide to fund the full amount requested or part of the amount requested.

Application Questions

When completing a Seed Grant application via the online form, you will be required to answer the following questions (the criteria areas each question relates to are in red):

1. *Amount needed*
2. *Budget details*
3. *Project details (up to 500 words)*
4. *Primary impact*
5. *Vital Sign area*

Seed Grant Criteria

To be successful, applicants must address the **criteria** when providing project details and primary impact:

- **Need and Demand**

  - The group has provided strong evidence that there is a need for this project.
  - This need is not being satisfactorily met locally by other agencies, i.e. this is not a duplication of an existing service.
  - This is the best way to meet this need.

o There are limited opportunities for these funds to be raised elsewhere and/or there are not more appropriate other avenues for this funding to be sought

o There is a need for this project to be supported by grant funding, e.g. the applicant organisation could not reasonably fund this from free reserves or other means.

- **Reach and Impact**

  o The project and all associated costs and activities are relevant to the need it is trying to address.

  o The applicant is properly qualified to deliver these services to the relevant individuals in the community and possesses the skill or established connections to ensure they are delivered effectively.

  o The project will serve under-funded geographical areas and/or communities.

  o The application shows an understanding of and plans for effective outreach.

  o The group has addressed barriers to provision (e.g. cost, access, cultural divisions).

  o The project will serve a hard-to-reach demographic and there is evidence that the group will be able to work well with this demographic.

  o The project will build useful skills and resources for the local community.

  o There are other long-term benefits to the community from this project.

- **Sustainability**

  o The applicant can evidence that their group has begun to strategize / investigate long term funding options that will enable this project to continue past the end of this grant.

  o There is a realistic expectation that long term funding can be secured following the end of this grant.

  o If the project is not long term, the costs and financial projections offered are realistic and sustainable for this project. 'Good value for money.'

- **Diversity and Inclusion**

  o The project is fully inclusive and has considered differing needs within Milton Keynes' diverse communities.

- o Reflects an awareness of the nine protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

- **Partnerships**

  - o The project must show collaboration with other organisations where objectives are similar.
  - o The project brings together several groups to maximise expertise.
  - o The project is innovative and/or unique in the area and is it a creative approach to addressing a need.

How To Apply

To apply for a Seed Grant, you must use our online application form which can be found by visiting: https://miltonkeynescommunityfoundation.my.site.com/fundseekerportal/s/login/

It is advised that all previous grant monitoring is submitted before you make a new application to any programme.

Need More Help?

If after reading the guidelines, you have any questions or need some help completing your application, please get in touch with our team:

Email: applications@mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk