

Introduction

Welcome to the Shropshire Community Foundation Application Guide! This guide is designed to assist individuals and organisations in navigating the application process effectively to access funding and support from the Shropshire Community Foundation.

Our foundation is committed to enhancing the quality of life in Shropshire by supporting local initiatives and projects that address community needs and promote positive change. Whether you're a community group, charity, or individual seeking support for your project, this guide will provide you with step-by-step instructions and valuable tips to maximize your chances of success.

The Shropshire Community Foundation operates as a conduit for various funders, delivering grants on their behalf to support a wide range of community initiatives and projects. It's essential for applicants to understand that each funder has its own distinct aims, priorities, and eligibility criteria. It is important to note these differences and to check that your application is in:

- **Alignment with Objectives:** Different funders may have specific areas of interest or target populations they aim to support. Understanding the aims of each funder allows applicants to tailor their proposals to align closely with the objectives of the particular funding source.
- **Eligibility Requirements:** Funders may have varying eligibility criteria regarding the types of projects or organisations they will fund. Some funders may prioritise certain geographic areas, sectors, or types of activities. By understanding these criteria, applicants can determine which funders are the best fit for their project and ensure they meet all necessary requirements.
- **Maximizing Success:** Applying to a fund whose aims and criteria closely align with the project increases the likelihood of success. Tailoring proposals to fit the priorities of each funder demonstrates a strong understanding of their interests and increases the chances of securing funding.
- **Efficient Use of Resources:** By targeting funders that are most likely to support your project, focusing your efforts on funders whose priorities match the project reduces the likelihood of applying to funders where the project is less likely to meet their criteria.
- **Transparent Communication:** Each fund has different aims and eligibility criteria helps applicants understand the nuances of the application process. It promotes transparency and ensures that applicants are aware of the diverse range of funding opportunities available through the Shropshire Community Foundation.

Shropshire Community Foundation delivers grants on behalf of multiple funders and underscores the importance of understanding the unique objectives and eligibility criteria of each funder. By doing so, applicants can tailor their proposals effectively, increase their chances of success, and make efficient use of available resources.

Making your Application

All grants can be accessed through the Shropshire Community Foundation Website. From the home page you can press the 'apply for funding button' or click on the grants tab at the top of the home page.

The grants page has a step, by step the application process and offers some useful links for possible funding sources, 'frequently asked questions' and access to open grants.

Select the grant you wish to apply for and complete the online application form.

* **Indicates required question** and is a mandatory field, if you have not completed a mandatory question it will not allow you to proceed to the next section of the application.

Section 1: Eligibility and Ineligible Costs. Explains the grant funding criteria. You must read and agree the grant terms and agreement of the funding before you are taken to the next section.

Section 2: Organisational Information. Asks you all about your organisation, its aims and objectives, staffing, governance and the contact details of who is making the application on behalf of your organisation.

Section 3: Project Details. Here we want to know all about the project you want funding, where the activity will take place, how much it will cost, how many service users, why it is needed and what outcome you hope to achieve.

Section 4: Project Budget. We need to know more about how much you want with a full project budget including VAT.

Section 5: Impact. This section is mainly made up of drop-down or tick boxes for you to tell us what impact and difference your project will make.

Section 6: References. If applicable please provide two referees who have funded you in the past, or can support your application.

Section 7: Supporting Documents. Not every application needs to use all the attachment boxes but please provide us with all the documents that relate to your application, if you do not attach the requested documents it will slow down the application process as we need to review these documents.

If applying for capital expenditure please provide three quotes for any single item over £1,000.

Don't forget to Submit!

Preparing Your Application:

- **Read Application Guidelines:** Carefully read the application guidelines provided by the Shropshire Community Foundation. Pay attention to specific instructions, deadlines, and required documentation.
- **Project Planning:** Develop a clear and detailed plan for your project, including objectives, activities, timeline, and anticipated outcomes. Clearly articulate how your project addresses a community need and aligns with the grant's priorities.
- **Budgeting:** Prepare a realistic budget for your project, including all expenses and sources of funding. Provide detailed information on how the requested grant will be used and how it will contribute to the overall success of the project.

Writing Your Application:

- **Be Concise and Clear:** Write your application in clear and concise language. Avoid jargon or technical terms that may be difficult for reviewers to understand.
- **Address Evaluation Criteria:** Ensure that your application addresses each of the evaluation criteria outlined in the guidelines. Provide evidence and examples to support your claims and demonstrate the potential impact of your project.

- **Tell Your Story:** Use compelling narratives and real-life examples to illustrate the significance of your project and the needs it seeks to address. Highlight the strengths and unique aspects of your project that set it apart from others.
- **Proofread:** Consider seeking feedback from peers or colleagues to ensure clarity and coherence.
- It is recommended that you write your application in word and then cut and paste it into the online form.

Submitting Your Application:

- **Complete Application Form:** Fill out the application form accurately and completely. Double-check all information to avoid errors or omissions.
- **Gather Supporting Documents:** Collect any required supporting documents, such as project plans, budgets, financial statements, and letters of support. Ensure that these documents are organized and clearly labelled.
- **Submit On Time:** Submit your application by the specified deadline. Late applications may not be considered, so make sure to plan ahead and allow ample time for completion and submission.

After Submission:

- **Await Decision:** The foundation will review your application and make funding decisions based on the merit of the project, alignment with priorities, and available resources. This can take up to 8 weeks from the grant window closing. Be patient during the review process and refrain from contacting the foundation excessively.
- **Feedback:** The foundation has limited staff and resources available to manage the application process and provide detailed feedback to every applicant. Providing comprehensive feedback can be time-consuming and may not be feasible given the volume of applications received.

Congratulations on taking the first step towards securing funding and support from the Shropshire Community Foundation! By following this application guide and putting in the effort to prepare a compelling proposal, you increase your chances of making a positive impact in the Shropshire community. Remember to stay informed, be thorough, and communicate effectively throughout the application process.

Thank you for your dedication to improving the lives of others, and best of luck with your project!