



YORK COMMUNITY FUND

Guidance Notes



Overview

York Community Fund has been set up as a partnership between Two Ridings Community Foundation, City of York Council, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York CVS and York Together. The fund focuses on strengthening York's voluntary and community groups with grants that support purposeful community action and create a sense of belonging.

The guidelines for this fund were created by people from the York community through a participatory decision-making process. A participatory approach ensures decisions can be made collectively. It involves people with lived experience of the issues that the Fund tackles, as well as people with practiced and professional experience. The goal is that these shift power away from the funder, creates a more equitable process and results in more informed local decision-making due to the range of perspectives in the room. Decisions on which applications will be funded will also be made by this community panel.

Fund priorities

To apply, organisations should be addressing local need in at least one of the following priorities:

- **Affordability and cost of living** (e.g. taking action to tackle the cost-of-living issues, reducing food and/or fuel poverty, personal budget management)
- **Climate action** (e.g. taking action to support environmental improvements, increasing walking and/or cycling for climate and health)
- **Equalities and Human Rights** (e.g. providing culturally appropriate activities & opportunities that promote equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, health and wellbeing, neurodiversity inclusion, providing support for people experiencing disadvantage or discrimination)
- **Health and wellbeing** (e.g. counselling, mentoring, befriending and advocacy, parenting support, providing opportunities for social interaction, confidence building and/or skills development)

We are particularly interested in:

- supporting leadership time for reflection, learning, planning and ways of working exploration.
- applications where people with lived experience of the issues being addressed are involved with the design of the project and/or the running of the organisation / delivering the project.
- supporting 'unpopular causes' (issues or movements that lack widespread support, often facing stigma, negative media attention, or difficulty attracting funding)
- organisations who are dealing with the 'root causes' (the fundamental reasons why problems or undesirable events occur) of these issues.

Who can apply?

York Community Fund grants are targeted at organisations with a turnover under £500K with charitable aims where a small amount of money can make a significant difference. You can apply if you are based in and serving the residents of the City of York.

In the event of this fund receiving more applications than we have monies to support:

- Micro Grants priority may be given to groups who have applied only for Micro Grants, not for both Micro Grants and Collaboration Grants.
- We would be unlikely to fund organisations with significantly high reserves where it appears these could reasonably be used for the proposed activity.

What can I apply for?

You can apply for a Micro Grant, a Collaboration Grant or both. (Collaboration is an informal approach, a flexible way of working. Partnership is more structured with shared responsibility and often legal agreements.) Decisions will be made by the York Community Fund participatory decision-making panel. You will hear from us with a decision by the end of November 2025.

Micro Grants

Apply for up to £1,000 spent over 12-months (we expect to fund approximately 20 grants)

Applications deadline - noon on Monday 20th October 2025.

Funding can be towards your overheads, pilot projects, providing activity, projects or support or for small capital items (all types of application will be treated equally). Grants can fund 100% of the activity costs or can be part of a combination of funding to meet the full amount needed. However, it is unlikely that priority will be given to projects or activities where the grant award would represent less than 20% of the total project cost. If you are applying for a percentage of the total costs, please tell us what other funding has been secured or how you will secure the remaining funds.

Some examples of what an activity could be (this list is not exhaustive):

- Activity costs for older people or young people experiencing disadvantage
- Digital skills and training, cyber security etc.
- Volunteer recruitment and training
- Counselling and peer support groups
- Purchase of equipment to extend activities to increase participation
- Events that can demonstrate impact beyond the event itself e.g. is there a legacy from the event that will meet the needs of your community, or will the event help you increase long term volunteering.

Overheads include organisational running costs such as:

- Rental costs
- Heating, lighting, water rates
- Insurance
- Back office / core staff costs (not involved in direct delivery)
- Stationery, small capital items, internet
- Volunteer costs

Interested in applying for a Micro Grant? – jump to [‘Eligibility and How to Apply’](#).

Collaboration Grants

Apply for up to £13,500 spent over 2 years (we expect to fund approximately 10 grants).

Expression of Interest deadline – noon on Monday 22nd September.

If you are shortlisted, **full application deadline** - noon on Monday 20th October 2025.

We understand the pressures community groups face. A Collaboration Grant supports leadership time to reflect, learn, and lead. Exploring, developing and maintaining collaboration takes time and resource. This grant is designed to give charity and voluntary sector leaders the time and space to build relationships, pilot new ideas and ways of working and to facilitate shared learning.

This is an opportunity to do things differently, explore collaborative ways of working and ideas, organisational infrastructure - the stuff that isn't front line delivery. We are keen to support community-led collaborations that strengthen local connections and shared purpose to address local challenges, build inclusive partnerships, and foster long-term resilience. Strong and successful collaborations need structure. We expect you to think about how:

- Inclusive decision-making will be fostered and ensured (e.g. how you will handle difference of opinion)
- You will create clear roles and expectations (incl. who will be the named lead partner if you are submitting a partnership bid)
- Workloads will be shared
- Diversity in size, type, and voice will be reflected, ensuring smaller groups are not just included, but empowered.
- The above will be worked into a Memorandum of Understanding (you must submit this if you are applying as a partnership)

We welcome applications from groups either as partnership applications or from a single organisation:

- Exploring collaborative working and partnerships for the first time
- Looking to deepen and strengthen collaborations
- Already working together to create meaningful change, especially those involving smaller organisations and underrepresented voices

We do not expect you to have all the answers and we do not expect all ideas to work, we simply want to enable the time and space needed to explore collaborative ways of working that will help strengthen York communities.

Communities of Practice

If you are applying for a Collaboration Grants you also have the opportunity to join a Communities of Practice group. By taking an active part in the group we can all learn from what works and what doesn't, share best practice and enhance collaborations. The group will meet every other month for the duration of your grant.

If you select to join the Communities of Practice group, you will receive a further £1,200 to help cover the cost of your participation. This is Restricted funding to support learning, reflection, and peer support. Please select this option on the application if you are interested in joining.

Organisational / Group Eligibility

In order to apply to the **York Community Fund** your organisation must be:

- Either a small voluntary organisation, community group, small charity or other type of not-for-profit organisation, provided that the purpose of the grant is wholly charitable, such as CIC or CBS (see our [FAQs](#) for additional requirements for CIC's & CBS's)
- Be based in and delivering activities or services in the City of York
- Have a governing document (also known as a constitution, rules, memorandum, or articles of association) in the name of their organisation which outlines their charitable objectives and includes a charitable dissolution clause with a named body in their asset lock
- Have a bank account in your group/ organisation's name with at least two authorising signatories, who are not related to one another

- Have an annual income of under £500k per annum

Who and what cannot be funded?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Businesses or individuals • General appeals or sponsorship • National organisations and their affiliates • Work which has already started or taken place / retrospective funding • Work normally funded from statutory sources • Work undertaken by or on behalf of statutory bodies as part of their statutory activities • Prize money • Purchase of gifts • Work of a political nature • Loans, deposits or on-granting • Teacher training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work undertaken by / on behalf of schools, colleges or universities as part of their statutory curricular activities • Work where the main beneficiaries are animals • Work which does not directly benefit people living in the area of benefit • Overseas holidays or trips • Organisations that mainly give funds to other organisations or individuals • Work for the advancement of religion (applications are accepted from religious groups working in the community provided that the main focus of the project is not proselytising) • Work normally undertaken by infrastructure organisations
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How to apply

1. Ensure you meet all the eligibility and fund criteria above and that the fund is currently accepting applications.
2. Complete the online application form, and / or Expression of Interest (EOI) if you are wishing to apply for a Collaboration Grant. Links to these can be found on the <https://tworidingscf.org.uk/fund/york-community-fund/> page of the Two Ridings' website. If your EOI is shortlisted, we will email a link to the full Collaboration Grants application form. The online application process is straightforward and provides an option to save your application as you go so you can dip in and out of the application before you submit it. If required, a paper version of the application form is available on request.
3. Attach your supporting documents (listed below) to the online application. If you have requested a paper version, please send your completed application form along with copies of your supporting documents to: Two Ridings Community Foundation, Pavilion 2000, Amy Johnson Way, YO30 4XT
 - The organisation's constitution/governing document/set of rules
 - Contact details (home address & email) of your management committee / trustees / directors.
 - The organisation's most recent annual accounts or financial records that show your organisation's balance of funds, income and expenditure. If you do not have financial records that cover a full year, then you will need to provide a set of management accounts.
 - A safeguarding policy if your organisation works directly with children or vulnerable adults.

Applications will only be processed when all documentation has been received.

If you do not have all these documents, please do get in touch; we may still be able to consider your application or signpost you to further support.

- If your application is successful, you must provide a copy of a Bank Statement (dated within the last three months) or Paying in slip in the name of the organisation applying. We cannot accept transaction lists or screenshots of transaction. [Click here](#) for some guidance on your bank statement.

NOTE – if successful, you must submit your bank statement within 4 weeks of your ‘grant awarded’ notification otherwise your application will be withdrawn. Please make sure you have access to a statement when you apply.

Assessment and Award

- All eligible applications will be assessed. One of our volunteer or in-house assessors may contact you to chat about your application to help us better understand your funding request. This may be over the telephone or online via Teams. We will contact all applicants who submit a full application for a Collaboration Grant.
- When assessing applications, we will look at the following:
 - How your group/activity is set up and managed
 - How well your finances are managed
 - Evidence of need for your project
 - Your commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion
 - Value for money offered by the project
 - How well the project meets the fund criteria and the priorities
- All eligible applications will be considered by the funding panel as stated above. The final decision cannot be changed, and no discussion will be entered into, although we will try to provide constructive feedback if we can. In certain circumstances applicants will be awarded a pledge. This is the promise of a grant if/when certain conditions are met within a defined timescale.
- There is no appeals process for grant awards. If an applicant feels dissatisfied with the outcome they can make a complaint and our [complaints policy](#) provides the detail of how to do this.
- Following the panel meeting, we will contact you by email to let you know the outcome. We aim to give you a decision within 8 weeks of the application deadline.

Reporting and Evaluation

- When your project is complete, you must fill in an End of Grant Report Form. This is available as an online form very similar to the online application form and, should your application for funding be successful, the link to your end of grant report will be sent to you when your grant payment is made. After your grant period, you will not be eligible to apply for further grants from this scheme until we have received this form, as it finalises your grant.
- To help us better understand sector and group needs, we may contact you to arrange a learn and share visit. We only visit a small proportion of grantees and will contact you if required.
- Successful applicants must ensure that Two Ridings is included in any publicity, and our logos will be provided for this purpose.

If you require any assistance with the completion of your application or EOI please contact Two Ridings on 01904 929500. We are happy to help.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Two Ridings is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion and ensuring an equity of access to all groups and organisations. We expect groups and organisations applying for grants to show that they are aware of equity, diversity and inclusion and can demonstrate commitment to them.