National Grid - Community Matters Fund
Guidance Pack for Future Skills fund applications

Please note - the Community Matters Fund will offer one or more further phases of the fund in 2026, the themes for which will be confirmed at a later date.

Organisation eligibility

The following types of organisations can apply:

- Registered charities
- Non-profit companies limited by guarantee
- Constituted charitable organisations with no charity number

Organisations must be based and projects must be delivered in one of the following regions:

- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- South West England
- South Wales

The following funding limits are in place for applicants:

- Registered charities or non-profit companies limited by guarantee can apply for up to £5,000
- Constituted charitable organisations with no charity number can apply for up to £2,000

Project eligibility

Applications must meet the following criteria to be considered for funding:

- Funding must be spent by 31st October 2026
- Project must be delivered by 31st October 2026
- If the applying organisation has previously been funded via the Community Matters Fund, they must have completed their project and returned any outstanding monitoring reports.
- Schools and other statutory bodies **are not eligible to apply**

We will accept applications under the following themes:

- Offering placements, work experience, and professional accreditation programmes.
- Developing key professional skills to help people into skilled trade roles e.g. construction, mechanics, plumbing, electrical work, and clean energy

- Boosting employability, e.g. through CV masterclasses, workshops and interview coaching.
- Supporting people returning to work after a long-term absence, for example due to chronic health conditions, full-time caring roles or military service.

What projects won't be funded?

- Organisations based outside of the regions listed above
- Projects based outside of the regions listed above
- Projects focusing on people in full time education/training
- English language training without a focus on employability
- Projects offering volunteering inside the applicant's organisation without evidence of onward support into paid employment
- Projects focusing on people aged below 16
- Existing core costs/general staffing costs
- General mental wellbeing/confidence activities without a focus on employability
- Political parties or party-political activities
- The promotion of religion
- One-off events or parties
- Land purchase/surveying/planning permission required
- Distribution of grants/funds directly to individuals or other organisations ("re-granting")
- Applications directly from schools or statutory bodies
- Purchase of laptops/tablets/cameras
- Sole focus on creation of marketing/online training resources or physical booklets
- Trips/excursions
- Costs incurred before 4th May 2026 or after 31st October 2026

Tips for a high-quality application:

- Your project overview should provide a detailed account of your proposed activities, the costs which need to be covered, and demonstrate how you will achieve your impact in line with your chosen project theme.
- You should aim to demonstrate that you have a clear idea of who will benefit from your project, alongside a plan to engage them, and a realistic estimate of the impact the work that you do will have on them.
- You will be asked to list up to three outputs (key elements of your project) and the corresponding outcomes each will have - make sure they are realistic and measurable numerically. For example:

Output	Predicted outcome
3 work taster days provided by local businesses for 30 people	At least 5 participants sign up for a work placement

20 people gain a Construction Skills Certification Scheme card	10 people receive at least one work interview by the end of the project timeframe

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I make sure that my organisation is based in an eligible area?

To be eligible for funding, your organisation and project must be based in National Grid's electricity distribution area. Please double check you are eligible by entering your postcode here.

Our charity covers several of National Grid's electricity distribution network regions. Can we apply multiple times?

No - we are only able to fund an organisation once; however, your application can deliver activities and benefits across more than one eligible region.

We are based outside of National Grid's electricity distribution distribution network regions; however, we deliver services in one. Can we apply?

No - organisations must be based in an eligible region to apply to the fund.

Can my project involve infrastructure improvements or building work?

Small adaptations required to better deliver outcomes in line with the themes of the fund are permitted. Any work requiring surveys or planning permission will not be approved. General facility repairs/improvements should not be the focus of an application.

Is there a limit on what annual income an organisation can have to be eligible?

There is no limit to the annual income an organisation must have to be eligible to receive funding. Registered charities or non-profit companies limited by guarantee can apply for up to £5,000; constituted charitable organisations with no charity number can apply for up to £2,000.

When can I apply for funding?

The application window opens on Tuesday 17th March 2026 and runs until 5PM on Thursday 23rd April.

When does my project need to start and end?

Projects should start from the week of 4th May 2026 onwards and be completed, with all funding spent, by 31st October 2026.

When will I find out about the outcome of my application?

All organisations who submit a complete application will be informed of the outcome by May 2026.

When do I need to return monitoring?

At the end of the funding period, you will be required to complete our monitoring form. This will include information about the delivery and the success of your project. We may also ask for less in-depth information from you as your project progresses to capture any short-term outcomes you have identified in your application.

We will also ask you to kindly supply a quote and a relevant photograph from your project so that the grant organisers can promote your organisation and the impact of the funded work. We would appreciate receiving this in a timely manner.

Can I use the funding for a 'larger project'?

No - to receive funding from the Community Matters Fund, you will need to show how the funding request you are making covers all costs required to deliver activities and outcomes specifically related to the funding themes.

Can I apply for funding for core costs?

This fund is looking to deliver project funding. Therefore, applications looking solely for funding for core costs are not eligible.

How does the free membership with Localgiving work?

If you are not an existing or past member of Localgiving, and you are successful with your funding application, you will be provided with a complimentary annual membership with Localgiving. With the membership, you will be provided with access to Localgiving's suite of online fundraising and crowdfunding tools, along with access to other funding opportunities.

How do I get help with my application if I have a question?

You can contact the Localgiving Help Desk via help@localgiving.org.