Westminster VCS Core Funding Programme 2023 – Application Guidance

* Please refer to the programme prospectus on the main webpage for full details on funding context, objectives, and eligibility criteria. It is essential that you read both the prospectus and the application guidance before applying.
* Please refer to Appendix 1 at the bottom of this document for a copy of the application questions.

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# 1. What we are looking for

**We are looking to fund organisations:**

* whose work aligns with our Fairer Westminster goals
* who have a track record of working effectively and relationally with Westminster communities
* who are dedicated to strengthening their organisations so that they can be in the best positions to serve local communities
* who are ambitious about attracting additional funding to their organisation
* (not exclusively but ideally) who work with Global Majority (BAME communities) and other marginalised groups such as (but not limited to) those with disabilities, **and** that are also led by them.
* (not exclusively but ideally) who are led by and for people with lived experience related to the charitable objectives at hand.

**We are looking to fund organisations who are passionate about achieving at least one of the following outcomes for their organisation:**

* Services or activities are more stable and consistent and may have been able to expand or grow
* Finances are healthier and/or additional external funds have been successfully bid for (compulsory outcome)
* Strategic planning, good management, governance and/or appropriate systems are better embedded in the organisation​
* Staffing and volunteer recruitment, retention or skills are improved

# 2. What you will need to provide as part of this application form:

* 3-year cost breakdown for what you are applying for - we understand this can change, please include what you plan to spend the money on for years 1, 2, and 3. A budget template is provided.
* Annual report or equivalent published in the past 12 months (only if not uploaded to Charity Commission or Companies House). This is so we can see a portfolio of your work – if you don’t have an annual report, you can send us individual project reports produced for funders or trustees or a summary of the work your organisation has done in the past 12 months.
* Your last published annual accounts (only if not uploaded to Charity Commission or Companies House)
* Name and email of an existing or previous funding partner - this can be a council officer where applicable or an external funder.

# 3. What you will need to present after you have received a grant offer:

* Up-to-date safeguarding policy, general health and safety policy or risk register, and equalities policy for staff and volunteers
* Confirmation of DBS checks for staff if the organisation works with children or vulnerable adults
* Copy of your public liability insurance cover certificate
* Copy of your employee liability insurance where applicable (if your organisation has more than 5 employees)

**NB** In the case that your organisation has already provided these policies to the council within the last 12 months for another fund like the Community Priorities or Healthy Communities Funds, you will be able to indicate this at the end of the application.

**NB** If your organisation does not have any of these for any reason, you will be able to indicate at the end of the form and you should still submit an application. One Westminster is able to support organisations to develop policy and governance documents.

# 4. Important note on budgets and part funding

* All staff costs must be budgeted at the London Living Wage or above (currently £13.15/hour).
* Successful organisations will receive the amount they request, as detailed in the 3-year cost breakdowns submitted with the application. Therefore, unless an exceptional circumstance, this programme will **not** offer part funding. This means that intentional and reasonable budgeting should be carried out. Please seek advice from your partners or from One Westminster if there are costs you would like to include that you are not familiar with. This will help to ensure that they are as accurate as possible.

# 5. Please remember

You cannot apply to this fund if:

* Your organisation’s expenditure exceeds £450k per year (based on last published accounts)
* You are not a charity, CIO or CIC
* You have never received grant-funding before
* You have been working with Westminster communities for less than 12 months
* You or your organisation is under a criminal or safeguarding investigation

# Appendix 1 - VCS Core Funding Programme – Application Questions

* Applications must not be submitted as a Word document unless there are exceptional accessibility reasons.
* Applicants should prepare and save their answers in a Word document before completing the online application. The online form cannot be saved mid-way and must be completed in one sitting.
* The application must be completed online via the website.
1. **Organisation Details**
* Organisation name
* Link to your organisation via Charity Commission or Companies House
* Name and email of an existing or previous funding partner: this can be a council officer where applicable or an external funder
* Organisation address including postcode

* Contact name of the person handling this application
* Contact number of the person handling this application
* Email of the person handling this application
* Link to your website and/or main social media platform
* If this is a partnership bid, we take the organisation filling in this application to be the ‘lead applicant’. Please include the name of your partner(s) if applicable.
* Please select your organisational status and supply your registered organisation number where applicable:

Registered Charity \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Community Interest Company \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Charitable Incorporated Organisation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Is your org led by any of the following groups? Please note that we consider an organisation to be 'led' by said groups if your management team or board has at least 75% of representation from people of said group and at least 50% of your paid staff team (if applicable) are representative of said group.

Global Majority (BAME) led

Female led

Disabled led

LGBTQ+ led

Led by a young adult (24 years or under)

None of the above

Prefer not to say

Other (please elaborate) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Organisation aim

(50 words max)

* Is your organisation led in any way by people with lived experience of the charitable objectives relevant to your organisation?

No

Yes

If yes, please share how \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Tell us briefly how your organisation is run. We want to understand the structures, boards, roles or teams you have in place that are responsible for guiding decisions, planning, and delivery. If relevant, please include thoughts on any aspirations you have for changing or improving this.

(150 words max)

**2. Building a Fairer Westminster**

The Council has committed to building a Fairer Westminster – this includes Fairer Communities, Fairer Housing, Fairer Economy, Fairer Environment and a Fairer Council. In line with these, please select which of the options listed below most reflects the main activities or services of your organisation (we understand there may be multiple - for this question, please just select one)

Fairer Communities

o Support Westminster’s residents to reduce poverty, inequality or discrimination

o Help residents to remain active and reduce health inequalities

o Provide cultural and learning opportunities for residents

o Provide services to young people, older people, people with disabilities or any other cohort of vulnerable people

Fairer Housing

o Reduces homelessness or provides support for the homeless

o Provides additional housing support to residents over and above the support available through the Council

Fairer Economy

o Create local job opportunities for residents

o Support residents to upskill and acquire new qualifications

o Support residents to become more entrepreneurial or help them to secure good quality jobs.

Fairer Environment

o Support Westminster to be safer, cleaner and greener

o Provide access to high quality green spaces and services

o Encourage active travel

Fairer Council

o Information, advice and guidance services for residents or any activity that provides a service to the residents of Westminster

* How long has your organisation been working in Westminster with Westminster communities?
* Tell us about the type of work you do with Westminster residents, why you think this work is essential, and what impact it makes on people’s lives. Please reference any specific groups or communities that you work particularly closely.

(300 words max)

* Tell us what percentage of your service users live or study in Westminster?

**3. Details about your application for funding**

* How much are you applying for from this fund? Please refer to the application guidance for a reminder of how much your organisation is eligible for.

Per year \_\_\_\_\_

Total for 3 years \_\_\_\_\_

* What does this equate to in terms of a percentage of your annual expenditure? Please remember that organisations must not apply for more than 50% of the total value of their yearly expenditure.
* Select which of the following areas most reflects your intentions for using the funds. Please refer back to the application guidance for description of what each area could include.

* Staff costs relating to the effective running of the organisation​
* Costs related to organisational development​
* Costs related to strengthening or scaling up an existing activity or service ​
* Running costs that, being covered, allow the organisation to focus on other areas​

* Below are the key outcomes that this funding intends to enable. Not every grantee will achieve every outcome. The finances outcome is a compulsory outcome for all applicants as it will be an important measure of success for this programme. You will be asked a specific question on this later in the application. For this question, please select one of the three other outcomes that most represents what you intend to achieve with this funding.
* Services or activities are more stable and consistent and may have been able to expand or grow
* Finances are healthier and/or additional external funds have been successfully bid for (compulsory)
* Strategic planning, good management, governance and/or appropriate systems are better embedded in the organisation​
* Staffing/volunteer recruitment or retention are improved and/or staff/volunteer skills have increased

**4. Ambitions of your organisation**

* Describe in detail how you would like to use this funding and tell us about the intended change or impact that this would have for your organisation. Remember to clearly link this back to the outcome you have selected above. (500 words)

*(Consider the following prompts to prepare your answer: What would this funding enable you to do that you can't currently do? Or, what would it enable you to do better or more effectively? How would this directly or indirectly have a positive impact on the communities you work with?)*

* It is important that this funding enables you to build healthier finances. This includes increasing our wider income. Outline your plans to build your financial capacity as an organisation. This can be in bullet point form, indicating some key steps that you would take to generate income over the next three years.

*(We want to see evidence of plans to proactively strengthen the organisation’s finances. This could be plans to apply to specific funding opportunities, make partnerships with new donors, release a new fundraising campaign, make strategic savings in certain areas, etc. These may relate directly to what you are applying for, e.g. if you have included the costs of a fundraising consultant in your budget, or it may go beyond)*

* Briefly describe 3 clear milestones that you would like to achieve in the next 3 years. We want to understand your vision for the future of your organisation.

(200 words max.)