

Community Initiatives Fund

Guidance Notes 2018/19

What is the Community Initiatives Fund?

The Community Initiative Fund (CIF) is a small grants scheme funded by Essex County Council, for Essex communities (excluding the administrative areas of Southend and Thurrock).

It has been designed to be as flexible and responsive as possible to the needs of a community, and will fund projects that:

- Create, procure or develop new community assets;
- Enhance existing community assets; or
- Enhance or develop initiatives that strengthen a community.

Applications will be considered on their merits and on strong community support, and need.

Particular emphasis should be given to those projects that support the attainment of the aspirations set out within the [Vision for Essex](#) and the strategic aims and priorities set out within the [Essex Organisational Strategy 2017-2021](#) that underpin the achievement of our ambitions to ensure Essex is a great place to live and work.

What does it fund?

There are two strands to the CIF small grants scheme, these being:

- CIF; and
- CIF Response

CIF

This fund is subject to a maximum application of **£20,000** for any one project and is for **capital** funding only.

CIF funding applications are considered once, on annual basis only.

Eligible areas of funding could include, but not limited to:

- Community, social and recreational facilities e.g.
 - Village halls and church halls
 - Community shops (general stores and pubs in some circumstances).
 - Community transport initiatives (no single use group)
 - Land acquisition.
 - Playground equipment,
 - Environmental works.
 - Any related feasibility, design and planning work.

CIF Response

This fund is subject to a maximum application of **£15,000** for any one project and is for **capital** funding only.

CIF Response is a rolling programme and applications are considered on a monthly basis.

Eligible areas of funding are as per those set out for CIF above.

Applications for CIF Response will only be considered where the need is evidenced clearly by the applicant that funding is required for:

- Projects that are time-critical (and can be substantiated)
- Projects where funding contribution is time-limited.

Who does it fund?

Applications are invited from bodies which are within the administrative area of Essex County Council (excluding Southend and Thurrock) and are representative of their local community.

Eligible bodies may be but not limited to:

- Town and Parish Councils or Parish Meetings
- Constituted Neighbourhood Committees, Residents Associations, Community Groups and Voluntary Organisations.
- Private enterprises operating for or providing social benefits e.g. Community Shops only.

Qualifying Criteria

Essex County Council is passionate about better lives for the people in Essex. Our [Organisational Strategy](#) sets out our areas of focus over the next four years. It articulates how we will achieve better outcomes for Essex and secure the ambitions set out in the [Vision for Essex](#), to help make Essex the best place to live and work, whilst ensuring we enable people to help each other, and themselves.

It is important that we spend taxpayer's money wisely, on issues that matter the most to our residents and we all work together towards delivering better social outcomes in Essex.

Essex County Council welcomes applications that contribute towards our vision and towards the delivery of one or more of our strategic aims, these being:

- Enable inclusive economic growth.
- Help people get the best start and age well.

- Help create best places to grow up, live and work.
- Transform the Council with more for less.

Demonstration of need:

Applicants must:

1. Demonstrate evidence of alignment of the local community need to one or more of the four strategic aims and underlying priorities within the Essex Organisation Strategy 2017-2021.
2. Demonstrate clear evidence that the project meets a local need and has full community support. Applicants should provide strong evidence on co-production of their project's needs, accessibility and benefits through engagement and consultation with their local community and community partners.
3. Consult with and obtain support from their County Councillor(s) and where relevant the Parish Council.

Financials:

Applicants must:

4. Look to attract match funding or a contribution towards their project, and inform Essex County Council if they are receiving any other financial contribution from a public body.
5. Demonstrate financial viability and whole life costs / on-going revenue costs. . CIF funding is not utilised to support on-going revenue cost of day to day operations of any organisations.

6. Must be transparent in their amount of unrestricted reserves, and such reserves should be fully justified in formally ratified reserves policy. If not, a contribution may be sought towards the project costs.
7. If applying as a Town or Parish Council, demonstrate why the agreed annual precept cannot fully or partially fund the project for which they are applying for funding.
8. As the CIF is a small grants scheme it is prudent to minimise the amount of CIF grant funding that may be required for direct project costs (e.g. administration) assuring the greatest value of the grant is attained to achieve the maximum benefit to the local community. Therefore applicants should be fully transparent on the total project costs and where funding will be allocated.
9. To ensure that grant funding is spent due diligently, Essex County Council reserves the right not to release funding dependent upon achievement of any agreed project milestones or delay or incompleteness of the project. Essex County Council will reserve the right to claw back all or partial funding should owing to the performance of the project delivery and benefits realisation.
10. Essex County Council may request an audit of the projects accounts and gain assurance that the agreed funding has been spent due-diligently.

It should be noted:

That all funds awarded must be spent by 31 March 2020.

Accessibility:

Applicants must:

11. Ensure that the project or facility is available to all sectors of the local community:

- To ensure that diversity is maintained amongst the beneficiaries of CIF funded projects, no funding shall be provided to organisations which evangelise (the practice of preaching or spreading religious beliefs) or proselytize (the practice of trying to convert people to one's own beliefs or religious views).

Essex County Council recognises that faith based organisations undertake valuable work in supporting disadvantaged and marginalised communities in Essex, and we wish to fully support this and work in the spirit of the Essex Faith Covenant.

- Projects should not be of a political nature.

12. Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 states that public authorities must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and for them to consider how their policies or decisions affect people who have protected characteristics under The Act.

These protected characteristics are:

- Age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, and marriage and civil partnership.

Essex County Council is committed to the positive advancement of equality, fostering good relations between different groups and tackling unlawful discrimination.

Applicants must:

When submitting applications organisations will be asked to demonstrate how their projects will help advance the following of the Public Sector Equality Duty and The Act, the aims being:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, *i.e. projects that seek to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.*
- Advancing equality of opportunity, *i.e. projects that provide opportunities to those with protected characteristics*
- Fostering good relations, *i.e. projects that encourage those with protected characteristics to participate in public life, bringing communities together to share commonalities and promote community cohesion and inclusion.*

Projects that are not eligible:

Although, this is not an exhaustive list, grants will **not** be made for the purpose of:

- The promotion of religion or political ideals.
- Work that has already taken place, contracted or order placed.
- Activities for which a statutory body is responsible.
- Animal welfare.
- Anything that has individual benefits only e.g. equipment that is not shared.
- Fabric appeals for places of worship
- Fundraising events or activities
- VAT or other taxes that cannot be recovered.
- On-going revenue and operating costs.

The Evaluation Panels will reserve the right to use its sole discretion when assessing any grant applications for acceptance.

Timescale and application process - CIF

Please note that this fund is subject to a maximum application of £20,000 for any one project.

For **CIF** the timescales for **2018** are as follows:

Receipt of completed Expression of Interest	Friday 24 August 2018
Receipt of completed Application Forms	Friday 21 September 2018
Evaluation Panel & Decisions	Throughout November 2018
Offer/unsuccessful letters emailed	December 2018
Applicant to claim/spend grant	By 31 March 2020

1. The applicant must complete the **Expression of Interest** form which is available here: www.essex.gov.uk/cif
2. Once completed they should be emailed to: CIF@essex.gov.uk
3. Your project will be initially assessed on the information that you have provided. You may be contacted to discuss your project further. At this stage your project may be rejected for funding. You may also be signposted to other potential funders.
4. If your expression of interest is successful at this stage then a full application form will be emailed in return.
5. Evaluation panels for each of the Districts, Borough's or City will meet during November (dates to be confirmed).
6. Successful applicants will have until the 31 March 2020 to claim/spend the grant.

Timescale and application process – CIF Response

Please note that this fund is subject to a maximum application of £50,000 for any one project.

The CIF Response is a rolling programme and your application will be considered on a monthly basis.

Final Receipt of completed Expression of Interest	Friday 25 January 2019
Final Receipt of completed Application Forms	Friday 22 February 2019
Evaluation Panel, Decisions and unsuccessful letters emailed	Monthly Throughout 2018/19
Applicant to claim/spend grant	By 31 March 2020

Application Returns

All completed application forms and supporting documents for both CIF and CIF Response should be emailed to CIF@essex.gov.uk

A Note on Evaluation Panels

CIF

- Evaluation Panels will be held in the District, Borough or City administrative area relevant to the project.
- Panels will be usually chaired by the Chairman or Mayor of the District, Borough or City (who will have no voting rights) with representatives from Town or Parish Councils; local Centres for Supporting, Voluntary action and other community based affiliated groups and organisations.
- Panel Members will not be allowed to adjudicate any grant application where they have a personal or pecuniary interest in the project, or outcome. All Panel Members shall be required to formally declare their interests.
- To ensure projects represent the very best community need and attained support, Panel representation shall be sought from citizens of the local communities in which the project will benefit. Such community representatives shall be not directly connected to the project delivery or grant claimants.

- To assure fair and equitable distribution of funding, Panel Members will be made aware of any synergies with other projects, initiatives or services that may already pre-exist that could address the localised need. The Panel may identify additional opportunities to foster partnership working and the joining up of services to increase capacity, accessibility and enhance the benefits realisation of project outcomes.
- Panel Members attend the Panels by invitation and are not remunerated for their attendance or expenses.
- The decisions of the Panels are final. There is no appeal process.

CIF Response

- The CIF Response is a rolling programme and applications are considered on a monthly basis.
- Applications are considered by an Essex County Council internal evaluation panel consisting of Officers and the relevant Member Portfolio holder.