

Community Power Fund Development Partnership

Frequently asked questions

About the Community Power fund

What do you mean by community power?

By community power, we mean local communities being able to influence and change the places they live. As well as the services they use, and decisions that affect their lives.

While community engagement, consultation and development are crucial contributors to thriving communities. Community power is more than this, it supports and enables communities to influence and change the decisions that affect their lives.

What do you mean by the development phase of the Community Power fund?

The Community Power fund is a 10-year, £100 million commitment we have made, we aim to launch the Community Power fund in 2026. The development phase, which we are advertising here, is a 12 month partnership between us (The National Lottery Community Fund) and 10-15 partners. The partners will both deliver activities in communities that increase community power, agency and control and will work with us in partnership to shape the principles of the future broader programme. If you are involved in the development phase, you will be required to work with us and the other partners to share learning about barriers and opportunities, and host and attend visits

This may not be the right opportunity for your organisation, that is ok. The development phase is a small piece of the future funding for community power activities.

Do you have a fixed idea around the scale of place?

No, we are open to working with a mix of organisations working at different geographical scales, with different community characteristics and population sizes, and in different settings (rural, urban, etc.). We aim to learn what works under various conditions to inform the principles of the future programme.

How is the Community Power fund different from other initiatives like You Decide?

The Community Power fund focuses on how communities influence decisions that affect them broadly, not on grant funding for communities to make decisions over. You Decide involves engaging communities in decisions over which good causes our grant funding supports.

Are you focussing on working in areas of deprivation?

Yes, The National Lottery Community Fund aims to invest in communities that are experiencing the most disadvantage, discrimination and poverty. In the Community Power fund we are particularly interested in supporting and learning from projects that are working in and with communities experiencing low level of community empowerment, those least able to influence the decisions that affect their lives, the services they use and the places they live.

What is the research and evidence base for this work?

Our strategy, It starts with community, and the Community Power fund proposals are informed by extensive research and evidence (lived, learned and experienced) and stakeholder conversations. We are interested in hearing from the organisations we work with through this development phase about their definitions and descriptions of community power to help shape the principles of the future programme.

How will engagement with The National Lottery Community Fund be structured during the development phase?

As this is a partnership, we will work with the 10-15 organisations that are selected to join the partnership to shape the precise details. However, we envisage it taking the form of regular engagement to share learning with one another. We anticipate this may also involve hosting and attending visits and engaging in both face-to-face and/or online partnership working.

What budget is available?

There is £1.2 million available for the entire Community Power fund. This will be split between 10-15 partners. This means there is £50,000 to £80,000 available per partner.

Where a consortium enters the partnership it will be treated as one partner collectively. So the maximum budget available for one consortium is also £80,000.

Is onward grant making expected in the development phase?

Onward grant making is not the expectation within the Community Power fund but could be considered on a case-by-case basis. It will require additional legal and governance considerations and so may take longer to be put in place grant agreements. If you are predominantly interested in onward granting you may wish to consider our You Decide Partnership: nlcommunityfund.org.uk/youdecide.

Eligibility

You've said you are interested in partners working in a community of place, rather than a community of interest, what do you mean by community of interest?

A community of interest refers to a group of people with shared identity, interest or experiences, but that is not necessarily geographically located. The focus of the Community Power fund is on communities of place, meaning geographically defined communities.

Are consortia bids allowed?

Yes, we welcome consortia bids. All members in a consortium must meet the eligibility criteria. A consortium bid will be considered as one funded partner within the Community Power fund. We won't ask for consortium information at the expression of interest phase. If you are invited to full assessment we will ask you about your consortium.

Can organisations apply for multiple funds simultaneously?

Yes, organisations can submit expressions of interest for multiple partnership call-outs and to other funds available from The National Lottery Community Fund including Reaching Communities and National Lottery Awards for All. However, we cannot double fund the same activity. Please consider which opportunities align most with the activities you are proposing and your organisation's ambitions. We are only seeking to work with a small number of partners in this development partnership.

Does participating in the development phase affect future funding opportunities?

No, participating in the development phase will not prevent you from being part of the wider programme in the future. The goal is to develop a strong, inclusive partnership now, and organisations involved in this phase will not have an unfair advantage or disadvantage when the larger programme rolls out.

Do applicants need to have a history with The National Lottery Community Fund?

No, we are open to working with organisations that have never previously been awarded funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, as well as those we have previously funded.

What is the timeline for the development phase?

The development phase will last 10 to 12 months, this will be agreed with each successful partner when the grant offer letter is issued.

Can the funding be used for existing activity?

We're happy to fund activities you're already doing. We're also happy to fund part of your work if you have some other funding for it (sometimes called match funding). But we cannot pay for work that you already have full funding for (double funding) or that has already happened (retrospective funding).

Timeline and process

What are the next steps for applying?

- Expressions of Interest Open: 8 January 2025
- Expressions of Interest Close: 5 February 2025
- Invitations for Full Applications Sent: 28 February 2025
- Full Applications Due: 28 March 2025
- Decisions Announced: End May 2025

Where will I find the expression of interest form?

The expression of interest form will be available on 8 January 2025 at tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/communitypower.

What questions will I need to answer?

You will be asked to complete four free form questions and to confirm that you are interested in working in partnership with us in the development phase. You'll also need to provide some basic details about your organisation, and your key contacts. Details of these additional questions can be found on our website at:

tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/communitypower.

1. What would you like to do?

Give us a brief summary of the activities you'll carry out. Including whether you already have any secured funding.

2. Tell us about your organisation's experience of supporting communities to increase community power.

By community power we mean supporting communities to shape the places they live, the services they use and the decisions that affect their lives.

3. Describe the community or communities you intend to work in and with.

You could tell us:

- about the community you want to work with. Including its size and characteristics
- what the current levels of community power are
- how much engagement, voice and agency there is. By this we mean can people in the community you work in make their voices heard?
- how much say people have in decisions locally or in their community.

4. How do you demonstrate community empowerment through your values and work. How does your organisation make sure your work is open and equitable?

We are committed to developing an equity-based approach to tackling inequality. By equitable we mean recognising that not every community starts with the same resources, and supporting those that need it most. We'll expect partners to work this way.

Further support

If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact us at communitypowerfund@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk . You can also find more information about this programme, including recordings of the webinar, on our [Community Power fund](#) webpage.

This FAQ reflects our commitment to ensuring that funding is fair, accessible, and effective in meeting the needs of communities across England.