

Youth Opportunity Fund Grant Guidance & Criteria

Introduction

Oxfordshire has a good range of opportunities for young people, providing excellent support to young people and helping them to live fulfilling lives. In order to extend these opportunities further, Oxfordshire County Council has developed the Youth Opportunity Fund. This fund will support voluntary and community organisations to establish new youth opportunities and extend existing activities to additional sessions, areas or groups of young people.

The fund is open to community and voluntary organisations with a total of **£1 million** available. Funding will be **for two years** from the date of award, and up to a maximum of **£70,000** across the two years. All bids to the Fund should include any on-costs relating to employing members of staff – including pensions, national insurance and mileage.

The fund will be allocated across Oxfordshire to ensure all areas can benefit from the financial support available. Once the available resource is used the Youth Opportunity Fund will be closed.

The Fund

Organisations wishing to bid will need to identify the local need of young people and can use local evidence from within their community. This might include using existing data and/ or anecdotal evidence. The applicants will need to demonstrate how the bid will meet the identified needs.

Activities may include, for example, providing guidance and support about their lives and issues relating to school, family life and peers. Applications may, for example, facilitate the provision of a safe space for young people who would otherwise have nowhere to go, including a safe space to talk, some food, and the ability to enjoy some self-directed or group/organised activities.

Bids will need to demonstrate that they are offering new youth opportunities or extending existing ones for young people between the ages of 11 to 18 (25 where young people have special educational needs), and how these opportunities will support them to live a full and varied life.

We are keen for opportunities to be accessible to all young people, therefore applications demonstrating how they will extend their reach to young people who have not previously engaged with these opportunities are encouraged.

The Youth Opportunity Fund is open to applications from community and voluntary sector organisations, including existing organisations and organisations in the process of setting up, as well as town, parish and district councils. Organisations are encouraged to work with other voluntary and community organisations, and with town, parish and district councils.

The Fund cannot be used to promote the views of a religious organisation or party-political groups. Religious groups may apply for non-religious activities that they are organising for young people.

Grant Criteria

We will assess applications according to:

- Whether the proposal is providing new opportunities or extending the existing ones for young people to additional sessions, areas or groups of young people.
- How the proposed provision will meet the needs identified
- How it will support young people to live a full and varied life
- How it will add value to the local community
- How the funding will be used.

We believe supporting young people should become an indispensable part of their community and young people who have benefitted from support should continue to do so after the funding period. Applications therefore are encouraged to present their plans as to how they are going to make the provision **sustainable**.

Applicants must ensure they always have procedures in place to safeguard young people. Members of staff are required to complete the online safeguarding training offered by Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board free of charge (please see <https://www.oscb.org.uk/learning-zone/training>) as a minimum to familiarise themselves with principles and processes to follow.

Organisations need to provide the details of a safeguarding lead who would be the first point of contact for any safeguarding concerns that may arise during the sessions.

Support available

Oxfordshire Youth, the lead organisation for youth sector in Oxfordshire, is available to provide support to organisations wishing to bid for funding and needing support with this. For more information and to contact them for support, please see: <https://oxfordshireyouth.org/>

The Application Process – Key Dates

- **w/c 7th October 2019** - The Youth Opportunity Fund opens
- **October 2019** - Applicant workshops (tbc)
- **12 noon on Friday 22nd November 2019** – Closing date
- **25th and 26th November 2019** - Scoring process
- **W/c 2nd December 2019** - Evaluation panel meetings
- **15th December 2019** - Applicants notified of recommendations
- **21st January 2020** - County Council Cabinet, for final decision
- **28th January 2020** - Applicants notified of final decisions

We encourage applicants to contact us with any questions they might have as early as possible.

Please complete and submit the application form electronically, along with your most recently available, year-end accounts by **12 noon on Friday 22nd November 2019**. We require all application forms to be submitted electronically, unless agreement has been sought for alternatives prior to the closing date.

How will applications be assessed?

Officers will check all applications to the Youth Opportunity Fund against the criteria set out above. All applications meeting the criteria will be discussed at the Panel.

Applications for larger grants may be offered the opportunity to present their proposal to the Panel.

The panel will make recommendations for award and the final decision will be made by Cabinet on 21st January 2020. Cabinet decisions become effective 7 days after the Cabinet date, which will be 28th January 2020.



Awarding the grant

Successful applicants will be asked to sign a legal agreement with the Council. Once the legal agreement is signed, the funds will be transferred to the organisation's bank account.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified without delay.

Monitoring

Successful applicants are expected to comply fully with any monitoring requests from the Council and must agree to this when signing the funding request form. This may include a review of their project during the period of funding, checking how the money was spent, reports on the activity funded, feedback from young people and any other record of the activity funded (e.g. promotional flyers and posters).

Successful applicants will need to complete a monitoring report towards the end of the funding agreement. A copy of the monitoring report will be sent out with the signed grant agreement, at the beginning of the funding period.

Any unspent grant funding will be recovered by the county council.

Contacting Us

If you have any queries about the **Youth Opportunity Fund** or the application process, please contact us:

Email: youth.opportunities@oxfordshire.gov.uk