

Small Grant Application Guide

This guide outlines everything we need to see in a funding application.

Before you start, it may be helpful for you to read this guide so that you have an idea of what we are looking for in your application.

N.B. If you are applying as a branch using the head office's registered charity number, please also ensure that you have to hand:

- The latest published accounts together with the independent examiner's/auditor's report that were submitted to the Charity Commission under the registered charity number
- If you have your own branch accounts, please submit these as supporting information to help us understand your particular branch
- Written permission from head office to use the main charity registration number to apply

Please note that we are only able to accept one application per charity number and that reapplication rules will apply to that registered number, regardless of whether a different branch of the charity applies under the same registration number.

General advice before you start your application

- Try writing out the application in Word and then copying and pasting into the application form, this will make it easier to edit if you need to.
- Even if you have applied to us before, please write your application as if it's for a new audience.
- Keep it simple and include the key points, avoiding jargon.
- If using acronyms, please explain what they are for the first time so that we know what they mean.
- Ensure that your figures add up – check and triple check.
- You don't have to use all of the word count and avoid repetition. Remember, we read lots of applications and it really helps us if you are concise. Similarly, please think about the formatting so it's not just one long paragraph.
- Ask someone who doesn't know your organisation to read your application – does it make sense? Can they get a picture of what your organisation does? Can they identify the key points?

- Make sure that the Charity Commission number and your contact details are correct so that we are able to get in touch with you.
- Please ensure that you have your latest published charity accounts to upload and ensure that they are signed – this will reduce any delays.
- Please complete the application form in full and don't rely on supporting documents, You can upload up to two to support your application , for example evaluation reports, impact report, annual report and case studies.

About your charity

1. When was your charity established?

This is the year that the charity was formed. e.g. 1985

2. Which of the MCF Target Groups does your charity help?

Our grant programmes are:

- Creating the Best Start in Life for Disadvantaged Children and Young People
- Reducing Isolation in Later Life (targeted at older people over the age of 50 years)

Your organisation **must primarily** support one of these two groups for it to meet the eligibility requirements.

If you are unsure of which target groups you fall into, please visit <https://mcf.org.uk/get-support/grants-to-charities>

3. Please provide a brief description of your charity and its work – (Max 700 characters – approximately 100 words)

Think of: “What, Who, Why and How” that helps to summarise what your organisation does, the need it is addressing, who you are helping and how. This is the vital context that many organisations forget to convey!

We are looking for a snapshot of your organisation, similar to how you would introduce your charity in conversation. This could include the following:

- What is the main purpose of your organisation? e.g. a local charity for older people, providing advice, befriending and lunch clubs; mentoring for young people who are disengaged; specialist early years group for disabled toddlers; friendship and activity groups for isolated older people, etc.
- Who do you help? e.g. – older people, children, young carers, disengaged young people, etc. We do not need a lot of detail at this time as there is an opportunity further on in the application for you to do this.

- Why do they need help? What are the issues they are facing?
- How you deliver the service? e.g. face to face, telephone helpline, email etc.

4. Where in England and/or Wales does your charity work?

Please note that the MCF only funds organisations where the beneficiaries are in England and/or Wales.

This information helps us to build an overall picture of your organisation i.e. is your organisation a local or community charity, or do you work across a larger area. Please include:

- Villages, Towns or cities where your organisation operates.
- County or Counties where the charity works.

Size does not matter - the outcome of the application does not depend on how big or small your organisation is.

5. How many Staff and Volunteers does the charity have across all the locations it is based?

This includes how many full time and part time staff as well as volunteers you have working in your organisation.

Organisational Financial Information

We are aware that the information we have asked for on the form may not necessarily match how your charity's accounts are prepared, however we ask this so that we can ensure all have all the information we need.

- We do require you to complete the form as it is laid out
- The financial information submitted on the form must match the latest published accounts on the Charity Commission
- It may be helpful for you to request assistance from your organisation's finance department or accountant in order that this section of the application form is completed correctly
- Ensure that your figures add up correctly.

We have a comprehensive guide to help you complete the financial details on the form and we encourage you to use it to ensure that the form is completed correctly. This will avoid any unnecessary delays and hopefully make it easier for you.

About the Grant Request

8. What is the value of the grant you wish to apply for and over how many years?

- The maximum number of years funding available is 3 years.
- You will see that we have broken this down into: Amount requested Year 1; Amount Requested Year 2; Amount Requested Year 3.
- The maximum you can apply for is £5,000 per year or 15% of your average income over the last 2 years, whichever is the smallest. For example, if your charity's average income over the last two years was £80,000, the maximum grant you can apply for is £12,000, so £4,000 per year for 3 years.

9. Who does your charity help and what are their needs? (Max 1,050 characters – approximately 150 words)

This section is for you to describe in more detail who you help, why they need help and why this is important. Some helpful prompts:

- Who are your beneficiaries – i.e. children, families, older people, the age ranges of your beneficiaries
- What issues or challenges they may be experiencing
- The need your charity is addressing and why it is important
- Evidence of the need – you can use statistics and figures. It is helpful to use information that is from within the geographical area/s in which you work and not just national figures.
- The demand for your services, if there are any waiting lists, gaps in service provision in the area, current levels of service user numbers
- How you target appropriate beneficiaries – e.g. isolated older people – how do you know they are isolated? Disadvantaged children and young people – what disadvantages are they experiencing and how are they identified?
- How are beneficiaries referred to you? e.g. social services, health professionals, NHS, other voluntary organisations

10. What services and/or activities do you provide? (Max 1,400 characters, approximately 200 words)

Describe the services and activities in detail that your organisation provides to your beneficiaries. Please include:

- What services are provided? E.g. art therapy/classes, drama therapy/classes, complementary therapies, counselling sessions, practical support (and what this consists of), emotional support, home visits, drop-in advice, etc.
- How long are the sessions, visits, etc., and the frequency of contact
- How long does support continue for or is it unlimited?
- How is the service delivered? E.g. face to face, telephone, online etc.
- Do you use volunteers? If so, are they are trained, supported, DBS checked etc.
- Who delivers or facilitates the services and activities, e.g. key workers, specialists, or a ratio of volunteers to trained staff

11. Do you currently charge for any of the services you provide? (Max 1050 characters – approximately 150 words)

This helps us to establish how the services are funded. Please include:

- If there are charges for services/activities, and what they are
- Even if these are voluntary – a description of the donations from service users is helpful
- Any membership fees and whether these are annual or monthly
- Whether there is a hardship policy in place for those that cannot afford to pay and what it is, including subsidised fees
- Please include how much it costs you to provide the service

12. a. How many unique service users does your organisation directly help each year?

We need to know how many individuals your organisation supports – not the number of sessions attended, or hours of support.

b. Please explain how this has been calculated (max. 700 characters, approximately 150 words)

Due to the number of different ways organisations record user numbers, it is helpful to understand how you reach the figure provided.

13. What impact does your charity make and how do you measure this? (Max 700 characters – approximately 100 words)

This is a great opportunity for you to tell us the difference your organisation's work makes to those you help and how you measure your success

- In what way do people benefit from your work

- Can you provide figures and stats from evaluations of your work in the last year if you have them
- What the short and long term changes are from the services/activities beneficiaries access
- What form of evaluation you undertake to assess the impact of your work e.g. surveys, or questionnaires
- Whether you work in partnership with any organisation to carry out evaluation of your services
- Feedback from service users or referral partners – you may wish to attach case studies but it is important to reference these in the application and please do not include any private or confidential information
- Any results from independent research into the area of your work
- Any information from other organisations delivering similar services

14. How will this grant help you to better deliver your services? (Max 1400 characters – approximately 200 words)

If this is a multi-year grant, we will ask for a report at the end of each grant year to find out how the funding has helped and how it has made a difference. At the end of the grant, we will request an end of grant report summarising how the grant has helped your charity overall.

It may be useful to bear this in mind when completing this section.

- You may wish to use the funding for a specific purpose e.g. make a service more sustainable, support a salary, purchase of resources or equipment, utilities and rent etc.
- How will this funding help to strengthen your organisation and allow you to be effective in your work?

15. Have you ever received funding from a Masonic organisation?. (Max 700 characters – approximately 100 words)

This can include:

- Individual Lodges
- Provincial Masonic Charities

Please include the name of the donor organisation and the amount if known.

N.B. This will not impact on your application in any way

16. It is important that the MCF publicly recognises the generosity of its donors whilst also demonstrating how funds are spent - Please summarise what action you will take to promote your grant from the MCF. (Max. 700 characters - approximately 100 words)

This could include the following:

- Mentions in social media posts, website, newsletters, annual report
- Using the MCF logo where relevant – e.g. materials, flyers, press releases to local media outlets etc.
- Whether you would host a visit from local Freemasons to see your work and meet staff, volunteers and if appropriate, beneficiaries.

N.B. If you are successful, a 'Promote your Grant' pack with template press releases and social media photo props to support your promotion efforts will be sent to you.

17. How did you first hear about the availability of grants from the Masonic Charitable Foundation?

Please select the most suitable one from the list given.

18. What have we missed? (Max 700 characters – approximately 100 words)

If there is anything that you would like to add regarding your organisation or application that has not been included above and would be helpful to your application, then do use this space to tell us.