

Small Grant Application Guidance

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

Before you start, please read this guide so that you have an idea of what we are looking for in your application.

The MCF Small Grant programme offers unrestricted funding to charities where the majority of service users are within one or both of the MCF's target support groups. Unfortunately, we do not offer funding for specific projects if most of the charity's service users are not within one or both of the target groups.

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 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

We are only able to accept one application per charity number and re-application rules will apply to that number, regardless of whether a different branch of the charity or head office has applied under that same registration number.

Some Top Tips!

- Please detail all services that your charity provides, even if not all of them fit the target group. We need to understand your charity as a whole.
- 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 is for a new audience.
- Keep it simple and include the key points, avoid jargon and please explain acronyms the first time you use them.
- Ensure that your figures add up – check and double check.
- You don't have to use all of the word count and please 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 is not just one long paragraph.
- Please ensure that you have your latest published charity accounts to upload and ensure that they are signed – this will reduce any delays.
- 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 complete the application form in full and don't rely on supporting documents. You can upload up to two documents to support your application, for example

evaluation reports, impact report, annual report and case studies. If you choose to upload a document, please reference its purpose in your application.

- Please check that the whole form has been completed, incomplete forms will not be assessed.
- 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?

Detailed guidance for the Small Grant Application Form

About Your Charity

1. When was your charity established?

This is the year that the charity was formed. e.g. 1980

2. Please tell us what your charity does and who it supports? – (Max 700 characters – approximately 100 words)

We are looking for a snapshot of your organisation, similar to how you would introduce your charity in conversation. Think of: what is the main purpose of your organisation, who do you help, why do they need help, and how do you help them?

3. 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, cities and counties.

4. 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.

Financial Information

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

- We do need 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
- Please ensure that your figures add up.

We have a comprehensive guide to help you complete the financial details and we encourage you to use it to ensure that the form is completed correctly.

The guide can be found here. <https://mcf.org.uk/get-support/grants-to-charities/application-resources/financial-information-guidelines/>

About the grant

6. 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, Year 2 and Year 3. This will make up the total of the amount you wish to apply for.
- The maximum you can apply for is £5,000 per year or 20% 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.
- The minimum grant offered is £1,000.

7. Please tell us about the needs of your beneficiaries? (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 and what is their age range?
- What issues/challenges are they experiencing and how is your charity addressing these?
- Evidence of the need – please use statistics and figures if possible. It is helpful to use information that is from within the geographical area/s in which you work and not just national figures.
- Is there demand for your services, e.g. waiting lists, gaps in service provision etc.?
- How you reach appropriate beneficiaries and how are they referred to you?

8. Please tell us about the services and/or activities you provide. Please include pre-COVID-19 services as well as what you currently offer. (Max 1,400 characters, approximately 200 words)

Please ensure that all services are included, not just those that are relevant to the target group. Some helpful prompts:

- What type of services are provided?
- How long are the sessions, visits, etc. and what is the frequency of contact?
- How long does support continue for or is it unlimited?
- How is the service delivered?
- Do you use volunteers? If so, are they 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
- Have these services changed due to COVID-19? If so, how?

9. How much does it cost you to run the services you provide and do you charge for any of these? (Max 1050 characters – approximately 150 words)

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

- How much it costs to provide the service
- If there are any charges for services/activities and if so, 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

10. How many unique primary beneficiaries does your organisation directly help each year?

A primary beneficiary is someone who directly benefits from the project as it is aimed at supporting them.

We would like to know how many individuals the whole organisation supports, not the number of sessions attended or hours of support.

11. Please tell us how many secondary beneficiaries your organisation helps each year?

A secondary beneficiary is someone who indirectly benefits from the support provided to the primary (main) beneficiary. For example, where a child (primary beneficiary) being supported with their mental health, the family is the secondary beneficiary as they will also be positively impacted by the intervention.

12. Please explain how these figures have been calculated (max. 700 characters, approximately 100 words)

Due to the number of different ways organisations record user numbers, it is helpful to understand how you reach the figure provided. Please include a breakdown of how many of these service users fit within the target group.

13. Please tell us about the impact your charity makes and how do you measure this? (Max 700 characters – approximately 100 words)

We need to understand the difference your organisation's work makes to those you help and how you measure your success. Please include:

- Any figures and statistics from evaluations of your work
- What the short and long term changes are from the services/activities that beneficiaries access
- What types of monitoring/evaluation you undertake to assess the impact of your work e.g. surveys, or questionnaires
- Whether you work in partnership with any organisations to carry out evaluations 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 700 characters – approximately 100 words)

Our small grants are unrestricted, however this section will help to give us an idea of how you may use the funding to help your organisation.

- You may wish to use the funding for a specific purpose e.g. to 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. What outcome are you working towards through this grant?

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 all grants, we will request an end of grant report summarising how the grant has helped your charity overall. This section will be referred to in your report to help track progress.

You will be asked to select one of the below:

- a. Maintaining core services integral to the charity's function.
- b. Increasing efficiency of the organisation.
- c. Other – please detail.

16. Please confirm that the charity has an up to date safeguarding policy

You will need to upload a copy of this policy at the end of your application.

17. Please confirm that the charity has obtained appropriate disclosure and barring checks/approval for all staff and volunteers who are working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

If the answer to this is “no” or “not applicable”, please explain why.

Publicity

18. The MCF is funded entirely by freemasons, their families and friends. Charities receiving a grant are asked to publicly recognise our grant and our donors. Please summarise how you could work with our communications team to publicise the grant and our donors. (Max. 700 characters - approximately 100 words)

Please consider:

- How you can work with the MCF Press Team to gain media coverage.
- Inviting local Freemasons to visit the project and meet staff, volunteers and if appropriate, beneficiaries.
- Arrange or help to facilitate relevant photography during such visits or other events.
- Promote our grant through your own communications activities, such as social media, annual reports, and newsletters.
- How you could use the MCF and/local Freemasons logo where relevant and any naming opportunities.
- Any other means of publicising the grant.
- If there are limitations to the publicity opportunities, please provide details.

Additional Information

19. Have you previously received funding from a Masonic organisation in the past? If so, please detail. (Max. 700 characters, approx. 100 words).

This can include individual Lodges or 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

20. Is there anything further you would like to add to your application? (Max 700 characters – approximately 100 words)

For example, your response to COVID-19. You may have already told us about this in your other answers, but there is more space here to expand if you wish.

In addition, you will also need your latest published charity accounts to upload and your most up to date safeguarding policy. You can also upload up to two further documents to support your application, for example outcomes of a successful pilot or evidence of the success of an existing/previous programme.

If you have any questions, please visit our FAQs <https://mcf.org.uk/get-support/grants-to-charities/faqs/> or call the Charity Grants team on 020 3146 3337.

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