

The London
Community
Foundation

M O P A C

MAYOR OF LONDON
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

VAWG Cost of Living Fund

Fund Guidelines
March 2023

londoncf.org.uk

VAWG Cost of Living Fund Guidelines

About the Fund

This £1 million cost of living fund is being launched by the Mayor of London to immediately support vital Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) services, in response to organisations tackling VAWG in London reporting that the cost-of-living crisis is disproportionately impacting women and girls.

The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) commissions a large number of VAWG support services in London, including specialist and/or grassroots services supporting Black and minoritised groups in the capital. Those services supporting victims and survivors of VAWG, and their families, are all reporting concerns about the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on victims-survivors.

Services are reporting an increased need for financial support for basic items such as food and travel, as well as rising costs of household bills and accommodation. There are also increasing reports of women affected by VAWG advising of financial-related barriers preventing them from being able to leave abusive relationships and/or households, resulting in them continuing to be at risk of harm. These reports correlate with findings from the 2022 Women's Aid [survey and report](#).

The cost-of-living crisis follows 2 years of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on services, where VAWG organisations have already seen an unprecedented increase in demand and complexity with no sign of this abating. This cumulative impact of crisis has compounded the structural inequalities affecting women and girls. [The joint statement from the VAWG Sector](#) highlights that the majority of women and girls being referred to specialist VAWG services are struggling with the rising cost of living and that this is leading to women and children staying in dangerous situations because they fear they are unable to survive economically on their own¹.

The Mayor's renewed action to build a safer London for everyone comes as recent incidents across the UK have highlighted the growing epidemic of VAWG and the need for more to be done to achieve the Mayor's ambition of eradicating VAWG, and to ensure those most vulnerable during the cost of living crisis have access to the help they need.

This Fund will provide grants of up to £30,000 to community-based organisations tackling VAWG in London, enabling organisations to respond to the immediate impacts of the cost of living crisis on the women and girls they support in their communities.

¹ End Violence Against Women Coalition statement on behalf of VAWG organisations in England and Wales on the cost of living crisis (November 2022): <https://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/VAWG-Sector-Cost-of-Living-Statement-FINAL.pdf>.

Grant size and type

- Applicants can apply for a grant of between **£10,000** to a maximum of **£30,000**. (Please note, we recommend that organisations do not apply for more than 50% of their total annual income).
- To be spent within **6 months** of grant award date: the short timeline reflects the fact that this is emergency response funding².
- **Flexible grants:** although grants will be restricted to address the cost of living crisis and your application needs to explain how you expect to spend the grant, you can change plans and redirect the funding as needed to respond to the crisis. For direct costs to support women and girls, you can do this without having to formally request changes or wait for approvals – time is of the essence, and we want to support you to use grants as needed locally. As long as it's focused on your work toward supporting victims-survivors of VAWG to respond to needs compounded by the current cost-of-living crisis (see 'Grant purpose' section below), we trust you to make any changes needed. For and changes towards core costs, you will need to submit a change of expenditure request form for approval.

Geographical area

Applications are welcome from organisations based in **any London borough**, whose services support victims-survivors of VAWG. This fund will review the geographic location of applicants as part of the shortlisting process, taking into account the importance of ensuring a spread across different boroughs and avoiding duplication and/or gaps in areas of support.

What can we fund?

Grant purpose

Organisations **must** be responding to the **immediate impacts of the cost-of-living crisis on the women and girls affected by VAWG that you currently support, and those you will come to support during the course of the grant period**. For example, supporting:

- food security
- essential items for women and girls, and/or their children
- emergency hardship grants
- supporting access to services (for example funding travel to attend appointments, access to technology such as smart phones or a computer)
- access to:
 - legal advice
 - financial advice
 - welfare advice
 - housing advice
 - counselling and therapeutic support
(please note, as part of your application you will be asked to confirm the relevant qualifications and/or accreditation held to deliver these services)

As well as funding your direct support to women and girls, part of the grant can be used to **support your organisation**. This means some funding for **core organisational costs**, including but not limited to:

² Please note that requests to extend the grant period beyond 6 months from when grants are awarded will be considered on an exceptions basis, up to a maximum of 9 months and no later than 31 March 24.

- salaries
- rent and bills
- additional staffing capacity to respond to the crisis

Please note that the core aims of this fund is to address the immediate needs of women and girls affected by VAWG, therefore we cannot fund applications for core organisational costs only. Core costs will be considered up to a **maximum of 50%** of the total application amount.

Programme priorities

We will first prioritise applications from **specialist led by and for VAWG services working in the community to support women and girls who are likely to be disproportionately impacted by the cost of living crisis** as a result of systemic inequality.

Preference will be given to organisations which are led by and are for communities experiencing inequity. By and for organisations for the purpose of this programme are defined as grassroots organisations, that are rooted in, and led by, the communities that they serve. This includes communities of survivors who may or may not live in the same local area but who are connected by their social identity and shared concerns, e.g. a community of disabled women or a network of Black and minoritised survivors of VAWG. **This means at least 80% of trustees and staff are from the protected characteristic the organisation aims to work with.**

Priority will be given to specialist led by and for VAWG services supporting the following groups of people as their primary beneficiaries:

- Black women and girls and women and girls from minority ethnic backgrounds
- Women and girls with disabilities
- Neuro-diverse women and girls
- LGBT+
- Young women and girls
- Older women
- Women with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)

Some preference will also be given to organisations whose work addresses the intersectionality of more than one of these priority groups.

We recognise that while women are more likely than men to experience violence and abuse and therefore are the primary beneficiaries of this fund, organisations supporting all survivors, including male victims of domestic abuse and those who identify as nonbinary are also eligible.

Organisations with an annual income of up to £500,000 in the previous year are eligible to apply for this fund. If we have a high volume of applications, we will further prioritise organisations with an annual income of less than £300,000, and those who operate in areas with higher levels of deprivation.³

Examples of organisations that might be funded include:

- *A specialist VAWG service for women from black and minority ethnic backgrounds providing welfare advice related to the cost of living for women, and that is also struggling with its own increased rent and utilities costs.*
- *A support service for older women who are survivors of VAWG, providing food, basic necessities and cash or vouchers as a result of increased need for essential supplies during the crisis.*
- *An organisation offering trauma-informed holistic provision, supporting women and their children affected by domestic abuse in their community with gaining access to housing or legal advice.*

³ LCF and MOPAC retain discretion for ultimate decisions based on evaluating applications against the priorities/criteria and taking into account the volume of applications received.

Eligibility criteria – who can apply?

Please note that organisations which do not meet these criteria, or which do not submit the required documentation at the time of application will not be considered for this fund. These are crisis response grants which need to be distributed as quickly as possible to support organisations and communities, so we won't be able to spend extra time following up on information that isn't provided with applications. If you have any problems with your submission, please contact us at applications@londoncf.org.uk.

Specific eligibility for this programme

- Confirmation that your organisation is not receiving funding for the same costs from elsewhere.
- We will fund organisations with a total annual income of up to £500,000 in the previous year.
- Organisations with an income of over £500,000, who operate as partnership leads and manage funds on behalf of partnership/s, should declare this as part of their application. Applications of this nature will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and exceptions on the upper income limit may be made for organisations operating primarily as lead partners.
- All posts (including staff members, sessional workers, part-time or full-time posts, freelance workers) funded by these grants must be paid at or above the London Living Wage (currently £11.95/hour).
- This fund will not give grants directly to individuals; however, we can fund organisations planning to provide cash grants or vouchers to individuals of up to £500 per individual. You will be asked as part of your application to demonstrate that you have a robust process for managing this.

LCF's core eligibility criteria

- **Eligible legal structures** – there must be a signed governing document in place appropriate to the legal structure which includes an asset lock (or equivalent clause), and the purpose of all funded activities must be charitable (not for profit):
 - Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
 - Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) – may also be registered as a Charity or a Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee (CICLG)
 - Trust
 - Unincorporated Association
 - Community Benefit Societies (CBS). Ideally, the CBS will also be registered as charitable with HMRC, however this is not essential.
- **Governance**
 - You must have at least three unrelated members legally responsible for the governance of the organisation; trustees/directors/management committee as appropriate to your structure. Please note that this refers to the highest level of governance, a management committee that sits below a board of trustees (e.g. charities, CIOs) or directors (CLG or CICLG) does not count towards this.
 - The organisation must have submitted required financial information to the Charity Commission/Companies House for the last two completed financial years.
 - The organisation must not have two years of net current liabilities within the two most recent completed financial years.
- **Bank account:** a bank account in the same name as the organisation applying with a minimum of two unrelated signatories must be in place by the start of the grant.
- **Safeguarding:** you must have a safeguarding policy in place that has been reviewed in the last two years.

- **Previous LCF funding:** all conditions from any previous The London Community Foundation grants must have been met, and any monitoring that is past its due date must have been submitted on time at the point of application. This means that we cannot fund an organisation that has overdue monitoring, but we can fund organisations with future monitoring due on other grants with us.
- **Registration:** if the income for charitable purposes is more than £5,000 at the point of application, organisations must have submitted an application to register with the Charity Commission or the relevant regulator (e.g., Companies House, CIC regulator or Financial Conduct Authority). If the LCF grant will take the organisation over £5,000, please visit [this website](#) for guidance on setting up a charity, including information on legal structures.

Who and what are not eligible

- The following types of organisation are not eligible:
 - Companies limited by shares (including CIC limited by shares)
 - Statutory organisations, such as local authorities
 - NHS bodies
 - Co-operative societies
- Grants cannot be used for:
 - activities that promote religious or political views
 - purely commercial ventures (for profit)
 - spending that has already taken place (i.e. retrospective funding)
 - activities where people are excluded on the basis of religion, sexual orientation, gender or ethnicity (unless the issue is group-specific)
- There must be no [personal benefit](#) attached to the grant.
- Organisations where trustees are paid are not eligible unless evidence of approval is provided from the Charity Commission and/or this arrangement is referenced in the governing document.

Monitoring and evaluating your work

As this is an emergency response fund, we aim to keep reporting requirements to a minimum. However, LCF and MOPAC also need to understand the impact of the fund and community need so that what we can use this information to try to raise more funding, learn and improve our future programmes.

Questions are likely to include:

- What did you use the funds for? (groups do not need to report against an agreed budget, it's fine to have changed from the original plan)
- What impact did the funds have on the community you work with over the 6-month grant period? How you have addressed the needs of the women, girls and children you support as outlined in your application.
- What impact did the funding have on your organisation?
- Who did the funding support? The organisation, staff, volunteers, older women, disabled women, etc. Please tell us how many people benefitted.
- Can you share one story or case study relating to how the funds were used?
- What are the biggest ongoing needs of the women, girls and children you support?
- What are your biggest ongoing needs as an organisation to be resilient, sustainable and to keep supporting your community? (types of funding, organisational development, training, learning, networking, specific topics etc). This will help us think about our future funding programmes.

How to apply

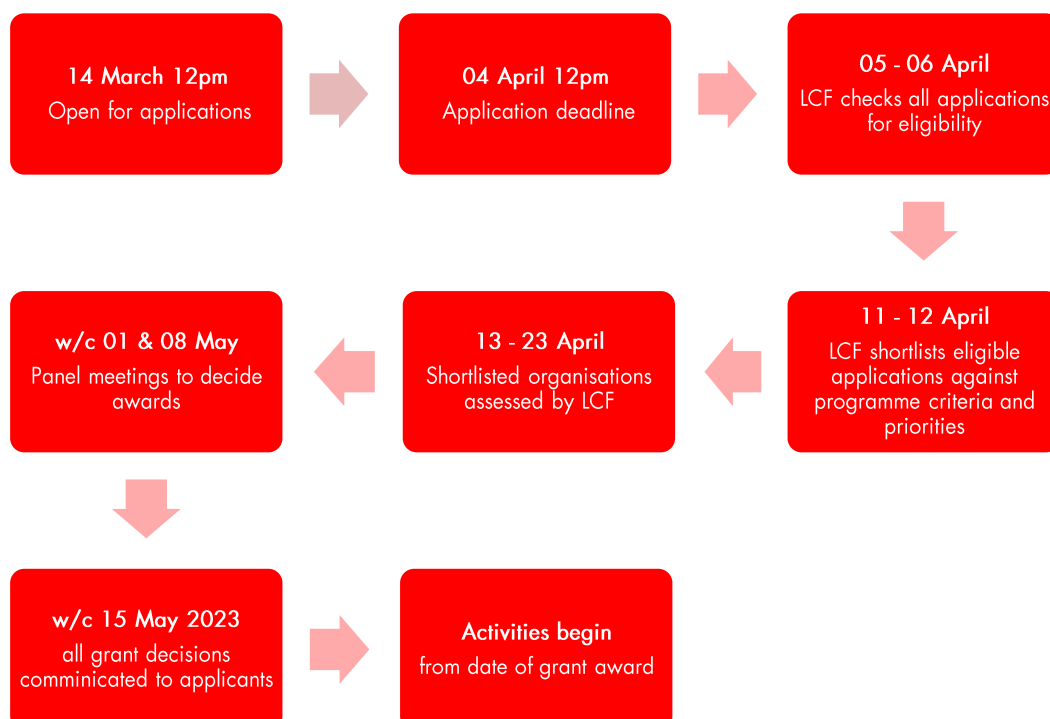
We aim to make the application process for this emergency programme as quick and easy as possible. The online application form can be accessed by clicking on the 'Apply now' button on the webpage: <https://ukcf.secure.force.com/forms/LondonCF/VAWGCOLF>

1. Please read the instructions carefully.
2. Tick to confirm you agree and have understood them.
3. Enter your e-mail address.
4. Click on the "Send e-mail and continue" box.
5. Once you have done this you will automatically be sent an e-mail with a link to your unique online application form. You should receive the e-mail within a couple of minutes (please check your junk mail folder).

Programme Timeline and decision making process

So that we can get grants out as quickly as possible, this programme will have a short 3-week application window. After the deadline, all applications will be checked to ensure they are eligible and then shortlisted based on the priorities in this document. Shortlisted applications will be assessed in detail before the final funding decisions are made, based on the total budget available. Decisions will then be communicated to applicants in line with the timetables given below:

Programme Timeline	
Open for applications	14 March: 12 noon
Application deadline	04 April: 12 noon
LCF checks all applications for eligibility and shortlists eligible applications against programme criteria and priorities	05 – 12 April
Shortlisted organisations assessed by LCF	13 – 2 May 2023
Panel meetings to decide awards	w/c 01 & 08 May 2023
All grant decisions communicated	w/c 15 May
Activities begin	From date of grant award



Please make sure you have submitted all three of the required supporting documents:

1. Organisation's governing document
2. Up to date safeguarding policy (must have been reviewed within the last 2 years)
3. Annual accounts for the last completed financial year

Please note we are unable to consider applications submitted after the deadline or which do not have the relevant, up-to-date supporting documents included.

Online Q&A webinars

We will be holding two online Q&A sessions to answer your questions about the programme, the application form, the eligibility criteria, priorities, decision-making process and anything else that comes up. The details of the two sessions are below and these will be recorded and posted to our Fund web page after the event.

Online Q&A 1

Date: Monday 20 March / Time: 2-3pm

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/584857944857>

Online Q&A 2

Date: Thursday 23 March / Time: 12-1pm

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/584867523507>

Some top tips for applications:

- Draft responses before completing the online form and save them in a Word document.
- Make sure that every question has been answered in full (the form will prompt you).
- Ask somebody to read through the application before sending, preferably someone who knows nothing about the organisation. This is a great way to pick up on any mistakes or lack of information and rectify it before submitting.

Further information

Please contact applications@londoncf.org.uk or call us on 020 7582 5117 if you have any questions about the programme.