

Thurrock Council

Community Environmental Development Fund (CEDF) guidance for applicants 2022/23

1. Community Environmental Development Fund

The Community Environmental Development Fund (CEDF) is designed to support communities within the geographical area of Thurrock. Its focus is on public involvement and support to find community-led solutions.

We are also keen to understand how proposals help to build resilience within communities, post-coronavirus (COVID-19), and how investment in projects will support longer-term sustainability.

Applications must be for projects that can show they either:

- renew, improve or create a community asset that helps to develop resilient and connected communities
- transform a community asset so it supports the longer-term sustainability of a local organisation or initiative that is Thurrock-based and Thurrock-focused
- directly benefit local communities, specifically improving the lives of children, young people, older people and vulnerable communities through community-led activities and solutions that are accessible to all

When we talk about a community asset, we mean buildings or land used for the well-being or social interest of the local community. Examples of community assets that have been supported by the programme in the past include village halls, parks, community centres and leisure facilities.

The purpose of this fund is to make a real difference to the quality of life of people living in Thurrock. We want applicants to be imaginative and innovative in designing bids that will have a positive impact on as many members of their communities as possible.

This is a capital budget, which means it is restricted to infrastructure improvements. It cannot be used to support revenue costs, such as ongoing operating expenses.

The fund is intended to support more than one project in Thurrock. If you have more than one project, you must make a single application that contains all projects and explains how they are connected. You can apply for a grant of **between £5,000 and £75,000**.

2. Types of proposal the grant scheme will assist

This grant scheme supports projects and activities that can show evidence that they:

- meet a community need and make a difference locally
- improve the lives of children, young people, older people and vulnerable communities
- are value for money
- are well planned, consider potential risks and will be well managed
- have long-term benefits
- can keep going without further funding from the council
- have expenditure that can be accounted, with evidence through receipts
- can get **at least 15%** of capital funds from another source
- follow government guidelines for the effective control of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Projects showing a financial contribution of more than 15% from sources other than the CEDF will score higher than those seeking 85% funding from the CEDF.

3. Types of proposal that are ineligible for grant scheme assistance

Examples of ineligible proposals include those that relate to:

- fundraising events
- campaign activities
- administrative costs
- recoverable VAT
- projects or activities that have already taken place
- feasibility studies
- organisations that failed to meet the terms and conditions of funding in previous years
- projects with no long-term sustainability
- projects relating to the purchase or installation of Christmas lights
- projects that don't adhere to government guidelines for controlling coronavirus (COVID-19)
- repairs or improvements to land or buildings leased to a community group or organisation on a 'peppercorn' rent or full repairing lease
- projects that create any new maintenance liability for the council, including where the applicant is not willing to enter into a service level agreement for maintenance
- projects that neither have in place, nor have started applying for, relevant permissions

Before you apply for a CEDF grant, it is your responsibility to check whether any permissions are needed for your project. If you have not checked beforehand, your application will be excluded.

Project expenditure is ineligible for grant assistance if it is incurred before a decision on the grant application is announced.

4. Who can apply

You can apply for the CEDF if you are:

- a community group that has a constitution or set of rules clearly defining your group's aims, objectives and procedures, and has a bank or building society account in the name of your organisation that requires at least 2 signatures on each cheque or withdrawal, and you can provide evidence that you have permission to submit an application on behalf of the group
- an individual with a constituted community group that is able to take receipt of the grant, with a bank or building society account in the name of the group, requiring at least 2 signatures on each cheque or withdrawal

5. What a constitution should include

An organisation's constitution should include:

- its name, aims and objectives
- details of how it achieves its objectives
- details of how its committee is elected or appointed
- details of how people can join the organisation
- details of what will happen to the assets of the organisation if it closes
- the date when the constitution was adopted and signed on behalf of the organisation

6. Adherence to coronavirus (COVID-19) guidelines

You must make sure you are able to comply with all relevant government guidance related to the effective control of coronavirus (COVID-19) and other such viruses, both during:

- the application process – for example, whilst collecting quotes
- the project delivery phase

Upon submission of your application and as a condition of any subsequent grant funding, you will be expected to declare you have complied with government guidance and taken measures to maintain safety at all times.

7. Financial information

You must provide as much detail as possible about:

- the actual or estimated cost
- the actual or estimated funds to be raised from other sources

All projects must raise at least 15% of their total capital cost via resident contributions or a grant from another source.

Projects showing a larger financial contribution will score higher than those seeking 85% CEDF grant support.

Bids seeking external funds from a number of sources must have a good indication of when the outcome of other applications will be known. Funds from CEDF that are dependent on other sources of external funding will only be held for 6 months from the date of an offer letter.

8. When to make an application

It is a requirement of this grant scheme that all applications for grant assistance must be submitted before projects commence. Projects will be rejected if they commence before a grant decision.

Applications will be invited from **Monday 11 July 2022 to 11:59pm, Sunday 18 September 2022.**

Incomplete applications will be rejected. Applicants are expected to answer all questions in full and gather all necessary information before applying.

An awards panel will assess applications, with the intention that funds will be used to support a variety of projects across the borough, benefitting as many residents as possible.

The assessment process is unlikely to conclude before December 2022 – keep this in mind when applying as we are unable to fast-track applications.

9. Where to get an application form

Application forms are available from www.thurrock.gov.uk/cedf

10. Application process

Send your completed application form to cedf@thurrock.gov.uk

If you need to send your application form by post, email the Community Development and Equalities team at cedf@thurrock.gov.uk for guidance.

On receipt of your application:

- the Community Development and Equalities Team will check if it is complete and make sure all the necessary information has been enclosed, including a signed declaration that confirms your adherence to guidelines for effective control of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- we will acknowledge receipt of your application within 5 working days or return it if it is incomplete – **if you do not receive an acknowledgement**, email cedf@thurrock.gov.uk as we cannot accept responsibility for applications that have not been acknowledged
- the application will be scored by a grants panel – all applications will be considered on the merit of the information provided, and it is the applicant's responsibility to make sure they provide all relevant information necessary to support their bid
- successful applicants will be sent a grant offer letter, after which a grant funding agreement will be developed in consultation with the applicant
- no funds will be released until the grant funding agreement is signed by both parties – applicants should not meet any costs until the agreement is signed as these will not be eligible for grant funding
- once the community group has accepted the terms and conditions of the grant and returned the grant funding agreement, the grant will be paid directly into the group's bank account, with larger grants likely to be paid in stages
- you must comply with grant conditions and use the grant only for the purpose set out in your application form
- you must complete a project evaluation form and a certification of expenditure form together with details of all relevant expenditure within 3 months of the project completion date, and no more than 12 months from the date of the grant funding agreement – grants may be clawed back if we do not receive this information, or if discrepancies arise from the original project application

Only 95% of grant funding will be released to projects receiving a grant over £20,000. The remaining 5% will be released once a project evaluation form and supporting information have been received, so you should make arrangements to meet this condition.

Applications received after the closing date will not be considered.

11. If your grant application is unsuccessful

If your grant application is not successful, we will tell you the main reasons why in a letter. You may contact cedf@thurrock.gov.uk for advice and further assistance at this time.

Where we are unable to support a funding bid submitted to CEDF, we will try to help you find alternative funding opportunities.

12. Completing the form

Please complete the application form in full, providing as much information as possible about your idea and how it might benefit your local community.

13. Community involvement and engagement (Section 4)

Before submitting your application, you must speak with members of your local community and be able to state clearly why the project is needed in your area.

You must be able to state which community stakeholders support the project – for example, ward councillors, faith groups, schools, businesses – and show the local benefits it will help to deliver.

This information must be provided in Section 4 of the application form.

You will be expected to explain how you will maintain communication and involve residents through the delivery of the project.

You must also use Section 4 to state clearly how your proposal will help to rebuild communities, post-coronavirus (COVID-19).

14. Permissions (Section 5)

Section 5 of the application form asks what consent you have obtained – or need to obtain – from the landowner or the owner of the community asset.

As the applicant, it is your responsibility to research and understand all permissions you may need in advance of submitting an application.

You are expected to begin the process of obtaining permissions before you apply for funding. We will reject applications where there is no evidence that permissions have been sought or acquired.

Ideally you will have permissions in place before making your application, although we recognise that permissions may still be pending. Projects that can show they have permissions in place, including planning permission, will score higher than those waiting for permission to be confirmed.

Question 5.4 asks you to confirm that landlord permissions have been obtained, where relevant. If you currently lease a council-owned building or land either on a 'peppercorn' rent – that is, a token or nominal payment – or with full repairing terms, you are excluded from applying for repairs or improvements to the council-owned building or land. For further guidance, contact propertyfm@thurrock.gov.uk

Question 5.7 asks you to confirm whether you are willing to commit to a service level agreement if the project involves new maintenance requirements. Your application will be excluded if it involves the creation of a new maintenance liability for the council – for example, installing equipment on council-owned land or space such as a park – and you are not willing to enter into a service level agreement for future maintenance. For further guidance, contact cedf@thurrock.gov.uk

15. How to estimate the cost of the project (Section 7)

Section 7 of the application form asks 3 questions that relate to the cost of your project. When estimating a cost:

- think about the different elements of the project, and the various costs of each element – it is useful to break this down as much as possible, and to show all costs
- your total cost (section 7.1) should include everything you think you will need to spend to achieve the project – you can include any staff or revenue costs but please be clear that these costs cannot be met through CEDF, which is a capital programme
- you must show the amount you are requesting from the CEDF (section 7.2)

- you must estimate how much you might be able to contribute (section 7.3) – your project must raise **at least 15%** of the total capital cost via resident contributions or a grant from another source, and match funds must be independent of other council funds
- projects that show a larger financial contribution will score higher than those seeking 85% CEDF grant support
- you must provide **a minimum of 2 quotes with the project application** to show that value for money has been considered and the best supplier for the project has been selected – all quotes must have the same requirement description
- you do not have to have the funds at this point – we are keen to know what you expect you might be able to raise as a match fund, and know some groups will be waiting to hear back from other funders that they have approached with bids

Bids seeking external funds from a number of sources must have a good indication of when the outcome of other applications will be known.

Funds from the CEDF that are dependent on other sources of external funding will be held for only 6 months from the date of an offer letter.

16. Sustainability (Section 11)

Question 11.3 invites you to explain how your project will support climate change adaptation and a reduction in carbon emissions to meet a target of net-zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2030.

17. Equality and diversity (Section 12)

Your project must be open and accessible to all members of the community. You must:

- explain how your proposal will meet these requirements
- provide a copy of your organisation's equality and diversity policy or statement

18. Sharing images or video presentations

If you would like to share images or a pre-recorded presentation in support of your proposal, send them together with your application and other supporting documents, to cedf@thurrock.gov.uk

19. More information and guidance

For information and guidance on:

- applying for planning permission, go to www.thurrock.gov.uk/planning
- building regulations, go to www.thurrock.gov.uk/building-regulations
- licences for works on a council-owned property, email propertyfm@thurrock.gov.uk
- the Community Ownership Fund that provides targeted investment for communities to save and sustain community assets that would otherwise be lost to community use, go to www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-prospectus
- the FCC Community Action Fund that provides grants of between £2,000 and £100,000 to not-for-profit organisations for amenity projects eligible under Object D of the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF), go to fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk