Local Connections Fund (Crowdfunding)

Factsheet

Essex County Council (ECC) is offering a funding grants scheme for crowdfunded projects

Purpose of the fund	The Essex Crowd seeks to support activity that brings people together behind good ideas that communities want to see happen. We look to support local good ideas that create connections and bring people together. The Local Connections Fund from Essex County Council is specifically designed to provide funding of up to £5000 (or a maximum of 40% of the crowdfunding target) to projects and activities based in and benefiting the residents of Essex. Projects need to crowdfund through Spacehive for the remainder of their target. Projects should help to deliver the priorities outlined within the Essex County Council Organisational Strategy.
Are you eligible?	**To be eligible for this grant your project must meet the following eligibility criteria:** • You must be currently crowdfunding on the Essex Crowd Spacehive page https://www.spacehive.com/movement/theessexcrowd • You must be based within the Essex County Council boundary (this does not include Thurrock and Southend-on-sea) and your project must transform or use a shared or publically accessible space in Essex that enhances and brings communities together • Your project should deliver outcomes that align to ECC strategic priorities (see section on "Things that are likely to be supported)
Things that are likely to be supported	Projects and activities that we would be interested in supporting are those aligned to our organisational strategy and priorities, as follows: **Enable Inclusive Economic Growth** Projects and activities that seek to: • improve educational achievement by helping people to prosper by increasing their skills • bring employment opportunities to the county **Help people get the best start and age well** Projects and activities that seek to: • improve the health of people in Essex • keep vulnerable children safe and help them to live life to the full • enable more vulnerable adults to live independent of social care **Help create great places to grow up, live and work** Projects and activities that seek to: • make communities a safe place for all residents • secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly communities • protect the environment **Transform the council to achieve more with less** Projects and activities that seek to: • develop the capability, performance and engagement of our people • use new and emerging technologies including social media as a way of achieving outcomes We are keen to hear about projects in general that 'think outside of the box'. Projects that bring communities together, that might not usually come together, therefore helping to strengthen communities. So whether it is a community tea time, a community planting or growing project, a new outdoor activity space, a BBQ or a music gig – we are open minded. As long as you can demonstrate a demand for your project from the community, by gaining support through pledges, we want to hear from you. Not sure your project fits – then get in touch for a chat.

Things that are unlikely to be supported	The Local Connections Fund will not normally support the activities, services and functions outlined below – this list is not exhaustive: • Activities which promote a political party or are of a religious nature • A project/initiative that is part of the applicants day-to-day work, including ongoing staffing costs related to such work • Any costs incurred in putting together an application for this fund • Day-to-day running costs of your organisation (for example utility bills, rent or insurance) • Contingency funds for unforeseen or upcoming general organisational running costs • Work associated with land or building projects where the ownership or lease is not yet in place • The cost of fundraising activities for your organisation or others • Items that are purchased on behalf of another organisation • Costs for the repayment of loans / interest or the payment of fines

Funding and Payment	**The maximum funding that can be awarded is £5000**
	(or a maximum of 40% of the crowdfunding target)
	
	1. Your application should demonstrate:
	    • costs that would reasonably be expected and justified
	    • sound judgement and financial management
	    • good value for money
	2. All costs associated with the project or activity must be justified, fully broken down and explained in satisfactory detail for applications to be properly evaluated
	3. Where the application includes the hire or purchase of equipment, items must be properly costed on the basis of quotations from recognised suppliers – the source and details of quotations set out within the application
	4. Any project expenditure incurred prior to accepting a pledge from the Fund will not be eligible to be claimed as part of the grant
	5. Funding will only be released once there is evidence that the organisation has met its crowdfunding target

Application Process	Applications must be pitched through the Essex Crowd Spacehive website via the following link: https://www.spacehive.com/movement/theessexcrowd • There are no fund deadlines – you can pitch to our fund at any time • When we receive your pitch we will confirm receipt via email • Should we decide that your project is not a good fit for the Fund we will email you to advise your application to the Fund has been unsuccessful, otherwise we will wait to see if your project receives support from the community and decide whether to pledge to your project • Once a decision has made to pledge to your project you will receive an email to confirm the amount and the terms and conditions of the pledge
Assessing your Application	The process for assessing your project for funding will include: **The Project** • Does the project meet the eligibility criteria of the Local Connections Fund • Does the application clearly outline what is being asked for and are the costings accurate, appropriate and represent good value for money • Does the project demonstrate an alignment to the priorities of Essex County Council • Will the project make a difference to the community In addition recognition will be given to public support and the effort of the projects creator.

	Public Support Has the need/demand for the project been adequately demonstrated? We will look at: - The number of unique pledges from the community and organisations - The average size of the pledges - The comments and replies on the campaign page - The comments / messages, posts and replies on social media - The level of interaction with funders – how many updates have been sent - The number of known events organised in relation to the campaign
Payment Arrangements	The Council's pledge will be released via PayPal to the Project Delivery Manager alongside the pledges of the crowd, once the overall project target has been reached.
Monitoring Requirements	Any projects that Essex County Council pledge to will be required to submit an Impact Report via the Spacehive platform.
Further Clarification or information	If you require any further information or clarification with regard to any of the items contained within this Factsheet, or want to discuss your project, please contact: Essex.crowd@essex.gov.uk