



Education & Skills
Funding Agency



London Learning Consortium:
**ESF Community Grants
Strategy
London South
2019**





Introduction

London Learning Consortium (LLC) has a track record of demonstrating the strategic and local impact of community initiatives on the communities and lives of Londoners. In light of this LLC has been awarded a contract to manage ESF Community Grant funding for London South.

The London LEAP has set a number of objectives that clearly set out the way in which these funds are to be used and how these funds are to be enhanced by matched external sources.

Our strategy is to take forward this direction and to fund providers across the South London Region that focus on initiatives and schemes that impact directly on the lives of disadvantaged Londoners and the communities in which they live.

Our strategy also sets out how we are to take forward our commissioning as well as evaluate the work which we fund and how in turn this should be developed in the following year.

One key area of our work will be the development of progression opportunities which will enable project participants to move onto further training and employment where appropriate. We will prioritise partners who have already identified strong background of partnership working and aligning alternative funding sources to provide the best possible opportunities for participants.

As a part of this contract LLC will work closely with its partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries to implement best practice and proven strands of impact from existing provision. We will draw upon our extensive experience in both the Third and Further Education Sectors, to coalesce ideas in consultation with partners and stakeholders and to share best practise in order to exceed contractual targets.

Summary of contract requirements;

Contract Description	The management and running of a community grant programme funded by ESF in London (South)
Allocation Description	COMMUNITY GRANTS - London (South)
Specification Title	COMMUNITY GRANTS
LEP Name	London LEP
Start Date	01/04/2019
End Date	31/07/2021
Areas	Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton
Number of Participants	383
Overall Progression Rate	31%
Progression to Employment	17%
Progression to Education	14%
Age Range	16+
Participant Employment Status	<p>Specification states Unemployed or Inactive, with a specific focus on Economically Inactive</p> <p>Inactive = Not in employment and not registered as unemployed. Full time students are considered as inactive but not eligible for this provision as they are not available for work</p> <p>Unemployed = Persons who are without work, available for work and actively seeking work. Persons considered registered unemployed would be included. Where the period of unemployment is greater than 6 months for a person under 25 years old and greater than 12 months for who is 25 years old or older than the persons are classed as long-term Unemployed</p>
Subcontractor Eligibility	Third Sector Organisations (an organisation which operates within the Third Sector) or Small Organisations (Organisations that employ fewer than 49 full time equivalent staff and have an annual turnover equal to or under EUR 10 million or balance sheet equal to or below EUR 10 million)
Participants over 50 years of age	14%
Participants with disabilities	22%
Participants from an ethnic minority	25%
Participants who are Women	36%
Generic Priority Groups	Parents/mothers, Carers, Disabled people, Older people 50+, BAME groups, particularly those groups with low labour market participation Migrants and refugees, Homeless, Ex-offenders

This contract aims to implement best practice learning from existing Community Learning Trusts and examine the viability of a London VCS Community Learning Trust.

It also aims to deliver high quality learning provision that is community focussed and champions innovation.

LEP background

ESF in London is managed by the Greater London Authority who act as the Intermediate Body for ESF under the strategic direction of the Mayor and the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP).

The LEAP produced a detailed European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) Strategy in 2014 (refreshed in 2016) detailing how ESF should support the capital's Jobs and Growth aims. The LEAP has been allocated approx. £529m for the delivery of the ESIF Strategy for London 2014-20. <https://lep.london/publication/european-funding-strategy-2014-20>.

ESF in London is also underpinned by the strategic priorities outlined in the Skills for Londoners Strategy as well as the Mayor's other strategies, including the Economic Development Strategy and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

Many Londoners do not have access to the opportunities that this global capital city provides. London still has above average unemployment rates; the highest proportion of people in poverty of any UK region exacerbated by the high costs of living; high numbers of Londoners are in low pay, with little chance to progress to better-paid, more secure work; there is continued and persistent gender, race and disability pay gaps; and a high number of Londoners without basic skills in literacy, English language, numeracy and digital skills.

The Mayor set out his ambitions to improve social integration¹ as well as equality, diversity and inclusion² in London. His Skills for Londoners Strategy³ aims to empower all Londoners to access the education and skills to participate in society and progress in education and in work. For communities, equipping Londoners with essential skills makes it possible for people from all backgrounds to contribute and live interconnected lives. Not only is adult education and training fundamental to ensuring all members of society are able to secure and progress in work, but it also has an impact on social and wellbeing outcomes that can be felt across the city.

The LEAP, through the GLA's European Programmes Management Unit, is working with the ESF Co-Financing Organisations to ensure a comprehensive package of ESF provision is in place for the second half of the ESF 2014-20 programme to tackle London's challenges. More information about the London ESF 2014-20 programme can be found at https://lep.london/content_page/europeansocial-fund

Some groups – including mothers and carers, disabled people, care leavers, older Londoners, homeless people and some black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups – remain underrepresented in the workforce and are often more likely to be worse-off than other Londoners.⁴ Frontline community groups and voluntary organisations can often be best placed to engage with these groups. They play a vital role in building the trust of the most vulnerable and in need in local communities, working with them to improve resilience, reduce social isolation, develop skills, and bring them closer to the labour market.

¹ All of Us, the Mayor's Social Integration Strategy, Greater London Authority, 2018

² Inclusive London, Greater London Authority, 2017, <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mayorsequality-diversity-inclusion-strategy.pdf>

³ Skills for Londoners, Greater London Authority, 2018

⁴ Inclusive London, Greater London Authority, 2017

The LEAP will invest £6m of ESF to deliver a London-wide Community Grants programme. Working with the voluntary and community sector, the programme will support people with multiple and complex barriers to participation to address these underlying issues and to move closer to or into the labour market.



South London Lot: Croydon
Kingston upon Thames
Merton
Richmond upon Thames
Sutton

The successful candidate must cover **all** boroughs within a Lot area.

Activities delivered under this contract should be tailored to Participants' needs but may include:

- Outreach and engagement activities
- Motivational activities
- Skills and training support (including referral to externally funded formal skills training)
- Information, Advice and Guidance
- Support to remove barriers to labour market participation or engagement in learning e.g. provision of childcare
- Support to address poor basic digital skills (managing information, communicating, transacting, creating and problem solving),
- Signposting and referral to specialist advice and support services
- Employability support

- Volunteering and Work placements
- Action research
- Job Brokerage

LLC will also provide capacity-building support to the successful organisations delivering the grants. This could include developing their expertise in providing progression routes for their Participants and measuring success to build evidence of good practice. LLC will also include support to broker and build relationships between the grant recipients and statutory/strategic bodies at a local level.

Guidance for Organisations in their submission of bids for Community Grants

When assessing applications for Community Grants, LLC will prioritise bids that ensure that the Recipient Organisation will achieve the following:

- Active inclusion of Participants.
 - Participants either entering Employment, or being engaged in job search, or being engaged in education or training, or gaining a qualification upon leaving. (*Quantified target)
 - Benefits Participants who are Unemployed for 6 months or more or who are Inactive on starting provision. (*Output target)
 - benefits Participants who are more distant from the labour market and who may face multiple disadvantages to tackle their multiple, complex and profound barriers to work and to move towards or into employment, or to sustain employment.

Projects funded by Community Grants can deliver a wide range of activities including but not limited to:

- First contact engagement activities, e.g. activities that benefit Participants who are not normally in contact with official organisations for example but not exclusively DWP, FE Colleges, for example by arranging events or training in places that Participants feel comfortable to visit.
- Projects to improve confidence, motivation and social integration such as sport, gardening, music, art and other creative activities.
- Developing local networks and groups to support people to get a job or access learning e.g. Job Clubs or Learning Champion type activity.
- Softer skills development e.g. assertiveness, anger management and motivation.
- Innovative approaches to attract under-represented Participant groups into learning.

Projects must be delivered by the Recipient Organisation within the London South Area, and all funded delivery, and outcomes must occur before the end of the Contract.

*Quantified and Output targets as defined in the ESF Operational Programme.

Commissioning

Community Grant publicity and call for applications:

1. As part of the commissioning process LLC will:
 - a. Develop and deliver an engagement and marketing strategy which:
 - i. reflects the Lot Area specific requirements to encourage applications from appropriate organisations to apply for Community Grants.

- ii. Utilises partnership working with organisations engaged in similar provision in the Lot Area.
- b. Publicise the availability of Community Grants and make calls for grant applications in line with agreed priorities in the Lot Area.
- c. Develop, implement and administer a grant application process and timetable for Community Grant applications throughout the lifetime of the Contract. Note that this may be a rolling programme or through specific competitions during the Contract lifetime including:
 - i. Specifying what activities will be supported
 - ii. Specifying eligibility and priority groups
 - iii. Setting selection criteria
 - iv. Establishing the grant application scoring criteria
 - v. Setting the timescales
 - vi. Publicising the application process to be followed.
- d. Receive and assess applications for Community Grants using a common set of open and transparent criteria, which meet the specific requirements for the Lot Area set out above.
- e. Manage volume of applications from the Lot Area.
- f. Select successful Recipient Organisations, agreeing levels of approved Grant and planned outcomes and issuing Grant Agreement.
- g. Enter into agreement Grant Agreement with each Recipient Organisation which sets out the conditions on which the Community Grants are provided and contains as a minimum:
 - i. Payment mechanism
 - ii. Participant Eligibility requirements
 - iii. Evidence Requirements
 - iv. Monitoring arrangements
- h. Provide support to Recipient Organisations to help them manage ESF funds especially in maintaining records of actual grant expenditure to ensure a full audit trail.
- i. Ensure the Recipient Organisation keeps financial records such as invoices to support expenditure, bank statements, staff time sheets, job descriptions, expenses payments and is able to fully evidence any claims made in accordance with the Grant Agreement, Funding Rules and Evidence Requirements.
- j. Monitor performance and delivery by each Recipient Organisation in accordance with their Grant Agreement and report on performance to the ESFA including the impact of delivery in supporting employment outcomes for Participants.
- k. Ensure that Participants are eligible to access ESF funds as described above.
- l. submit completed returns to the funding agency and report the number of learner starts for the academic year in which the activity was delivered as set out in the Contract Specification.

Community Grants Award Process

2. LLC will design, implement and administer a Community Grants Award Process which shall:
 - a. Achieve a proportionate balance between fairness and transparency and administrative efficiency in the use of public monies
 - b. Includes a structured series of application rounds which is designed to optimise the benefits to be derived from ESF Funding.



- c. be sufficiently flexible to allow for the making of grant awards in circumstances where there is high demand for funding but low available budget.
 - d. Ensure that grants are only awarded to applications, which meet the Eligibility Criteria identified above.
 - e. Be designed to support delivery of the Programme Targets as above, over the course of the Contract.
 - f. Ensure that any successful applications meet the specific requirements for the Lot Area set out above. Note that whilst LLC shall have the responsibility for this process, the ESFA expects that representatives of the LEP would sit on any award panel where appropriate.
 - g. Provide support to unsuccessful Community Grant applicants to enable them to submit a future bid.
3. In addition, LLC shall:
- a. Agree the level of approved Community Grant funding for each Community Grant with the Recipient Organisation.
 - b. Issue a Grant Agreement to the Recipient Organisation which sets out the terms and conditions of the Community Grant award.
 - c. Ensure all Conflicts of Interest are assessed, recorded and managed in line with our Conflict of Interest Policy.

Support to Recipient Organisations

4. Finally LLC will:
- a. Provide support to Recipient Organisations to help them manage ESF Funding especially in maintaining records of actual grant expenditure to ensure a full audit trail.
 - b. Ensure that Recipient Organisations keep financial records such as invoices to support expenditure, bank statements, staff time sheets, job descriptions, expense payments in accordance with the Grant Agreement.
 - c. Support the recipient organisations to develop Required Community Grants Reports in line with Grant Agreement Requirements.

How to take your proposal and tender forward?

If you are interested in working with LLC as a part of this contract, complete the Community Grants expression of interest document which can be found here <https://www.londonlc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ESF-EXPRESSION-OF-INTEREST-Grants-19-09-2019.docx> , and return to community.grants@londonlc.org.uk. If you have any questions, please contact Zaia Merabet @ z.merabet@londonlc.org.uk or by telephone, 0208 774 4040.



How we will evaluate your proposals?

LLC has a panel of staff and external representatives that evaluates each proposal. We select provision and partners on how closely they demonstrate match to contractual targets and LEP priorities.

When will you know if you have been successful?

We have published a timeframe for our commissioning. This we intend to adhere to subject to unforeseen circumstances. Providers will receive a short summative feedback if they are unsuccessful.

Key Documents/Sites – Please review before preparing your submission

Eligibility Criteria: means the [ESF National Eligibility criteria set out here:](#)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/626878/ESF_national_eligibility_rules.pdf . **Inclusive London, Greater London Authority, 2017,**

<https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mayors-equality-diversity-inclusion-strategy.pdf>

ESIF Strategy for London 2014-20. <https://lep.london/publication/european-funding-strategy-201420>.

London ESF 2014-20 https://lep.london/content_page/european-social-fund