

Guidance

Please DO take time to read these notes before applying – it will make a difference!

Closing Date & Result

The Fund will close at **9.00am on Wednesday, 14th January 2026 or until all the funds have been allocated, whichever comes sooner**). Unfortunately, we will be unable to accept any applications after this time.

Applications will be accepted on a ‘rolling basis’, so the earlier you apply with a good quality application the better. We will aim to email the outcome of your application as soon as possible.

Purpose

The overall aim of the Cost of Living Community Grant Fund (CoLCGF) is to enable community groups, voluntary organisations, faith groups and town and parish councils to **support a range of projects focussed on keeping people warm, well-fed and connected to others in their community this winter**.

During the previous three years of the scheme, more than 75 projects have been supported. Projects include smaller ‘Warm Welcomes’ providing a warm space, refreshments and activities for residents, to cooking on a budget classes, support for food projects who are likely to see demand rise over the winter months, and many more. **This year, we are also including funding for community pantries and uniform banks in this fund.**

How much funding is available? Will you fund 100%? What about Match Funding?

The CoLCGF is funded by East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council through the Suffolk Collaborative Communities Board.

We are offering grants of between £500 and £1,000 for projects focussed on keeping people warm, well, fed and connected to others in their community this winter. We have a total pot of £60,000 and can fund 100% of the project costs. However, we particularly welcome applications that have some local match funding in place. This could also be in the form of volunteer time. Do articulate this if you can.

Can we apply if we received funding previously? YES! As long as.....

If you were previously awarded a Cost of Living Community Grant or Cost of Living Winter Grant, you **CAN** apply again (including for the same project) for winter 2025/26, **as long as you have sent back your monitoring return form(s)**. If you have not, sadly we will not consider your application – please contact grants@eastsuffolk.gov.uk if you have any queries on this.

Clear Community Benefit - Examples

Projects **MUST** have clear community benefit and provide local solutions to local needs. This needs to be articulated within your answers. To help you, below are just a few examples (*the list is not exhaustive*) of the **type of projects** we could consider supporting:

- *Existing or new groups/projects that will support people to access hot, healthy, nutritious meals in community settings*
- *Support for food projects that enable people to cook hot, healthy, nutritious meals at home*
- *Community pantries or food projects that give people access to cheaper, nutritious food with the aim of moving people towards food independence*
- *Projects that help people to stay warm at home or at a location in the community*
- *Warm Spaces that don't fit the criteria of the district-wide Warm Spaces grant programme e.g. because of shorter opening hours/a different offer*
- *Additional funding towards the running costs for established school uniform banks, providing second hand or, for certain items, free uniform to those families in need.*
- *Expenses associated with coordination of community food and energy support*
- *Volunteer costs for new and existing organisations that are supporting residents to access food and energy support*
- *Transport costs to enable people to access your project or activity*

So we would expect to see applications that articulate costs for things like:

- *the purchase of food or drink items or equipment to cook food and hot drinks (e.g. hot water urn, soup kettle, large slow cookers) and/or to store/chill food items*
- *heated items e.g. heated blankets, hot water bottles*
- *additional heating costs associated with the project (not ongoing/business as usual heating costs for the time that a venue is usually open)*
- *additional room/venue hire costs associated with the project (not usual premises costs for an existing project)*
- *materials for activities e.g. music, art and craft or reading materials*
- *the cost of providing additional advice services/support around food/energy etc.*
- *transport costs for those who cannot afford to access what is on offer*

All costs must be explained, as per the examples given on the application form. Projects must not duplicate any projects funded through OTHER elements of the '*East Suffolk Ease the Squeeze programme*' e.g. *Warm Welcomes*

When will the funding decisions be made and when must it be used?

- The applications will be assessed on a rolling basis and funding will be awarded until the £60,000 funding has been allocated. Please get your application in early.
- Projects must **commence as early as possible and run to March 2026**.
- Any funding awarded **must be used by end March 2026**.
- If any funds are **not used** or you want to **change the use** of any funding allocated, **you must** email the Funding Team as soon as possible please at: grants@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

You are more likely to receive a grant if you:

- Are clear about exactly **how** the grant will be spent and have **clear and accurate costings** i.e. not estimates
- Can demonstrate how the project will help **deliver the outcomes** i.e. helping individuals and families to stay warm, fed and connected this winter
- Can demonstrate a clear **need** for the project - and the **difference** that it will make
- Can show that the project has **local support** – ideally actively involving the community in planning and delivering the project
- Can show what your organisation has **achieved so far** – your track record
- Can show that you are considering the **needs of all members of the community and being as inclusive** as possible
- And **why the project complements and does not duplicate** projects that have already received funding from East Suffolk Council.

What we cannot fund:

- **National and regional organisations unless** they have a local base and/or their application is for a specific project that will benefit people in East Suffolk. If the project will not exclusively benefit residents in East Suffolk, any award will be pro-rata e.g. if 30% of eligible residents are estimated to come from East Suffolk, we may fund 30% of the total eligible costs.
- Projects that will **displace or duplicate existing provision**. However, we would welcome an application that demonstrates collaborative working with another provider (existing or new)
- **VAT**: If you are able to claim back VAT, then VAT is not eligible as part of the costs of your project and should not be included
- **Bursaries or sponsorship for individuals**
- **A specific individual or family** – your project needs to support multiple people or families
- Groups operating as a **business for profit**
- Applications to cover **core costs, business as usual, or loss of income** for your organisation
- Activities that are **statutory obligations** e.g. curricular activity in schools
- Payments towards **endowment funds, deficit funding or loans**
- Activities promoting **political or religious beliefs**

- **Political parties** or organisations intending to **support or oppose any particular political party, or to discriminate** on the groups of race, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation
- **Sponsored or fundraising events**

Completing the Application Form & Acknowledgment

- **Take 5!** Please check you have answered EVERY question. Unfortunately, some funding applications either leave out information or have figures that do not add up. This delays the process and causes both yourself and us extra work! **And please don't forget to attach your policies and procedures (or give a web-link to them).**
Thank you....and of course, we want you to submit the best application possible!
- If you have any queries or difficulties with the application form, please email us as soon as possible at: communities@eastsuffolk.gov.uk. We will endeavour to respond as soon as possible.
- If you do NOT receive a confirmation email within 5 working days of sending your application, please email us at the above address ASAP!....
- **Please send your application as a WORD document (not a PDF).**

Thank you and for all your community efforts too!