



Community Choices Fund 2018/19

Information and Guidance For
Community Organisations
&
Community Councils

Introduction

This document provides information and guidance for Community Organisations and Community Councils applying for the Community Choices Fund 2018/19.

Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting (PB) is recognised internationally as a way for local people to have a direct say in how public funds can be used to address local needs. It originated in Porto Alegre, Brazil in the late 1980s and has since spread to over 2,500 localities around the world. PB was born from a desire to reallocate public money locally and democratically to where it was needed most. Used well, it can help individuals feel connected to each other and to their communities and can instil a sense of ownership, trust and connectivity to improve local democracy. For more information refer to the [Introductory Guide to PB](#)

PB supports one of the principles of Public Service Reform, that people should have equal opportunity to participate and have their voice heard in decisions shaping their local community and society. It complements aspirations for the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 which will help give communities more powers to take forward their own ambitions. It can also help deliver the Public Sector Equality Duty by eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between different groups.

In Scotland, PB is better known as Community Choices because the Scottish Government's Community Choices Fund supports and promotes PB nationally.

Community Choices Fund 2018/19

First launched in 2016/17, the Community Choices Fund supports PB in Scotland. Targeted particularly at work in deprived areas, the fund aims to build on the support provided by the Scottish Government for PB since 2014 as part of a broader agenda around democratic innovation and engaged citizenship. PB empowers local people to make decisions on local spending priorities and contributes to local participatory democracy.

To continue the growth of PB in Scotland, the Community Choices Fund is available to community organisations and community councils in 2018/19. For the first time the fund is not open for applications to public authorities. Instead the fund will continue to provide practical support for public authorities and the third sector. The Scottish Government and COSLA will work in partnership to provide a targeted and co-ordinated programme for Local authorities to support the agreement that at least 1% of local authority budgets will be subject to PB by 2020/21

The PB Scotland website www.PBScotland.scot provides more information about community choices events, policy and resources in Scotland, and profiles examples, pictures and videos of PB in action. Useful links are: [Various PB Guides](#), [Examples of PB Events and Reports](#) and [2016/17 Community Choices Event Report](#)

Who can apply?

The Fund is open to Community Organisations and Community Councils. The fund will be available to community-led organisations that can demonstrate democratic governance, strong links to their communities and the ability to stimulate high levels of voluntary activity. Projects can be place based or thematic.

To be eligible for funding, a Community Organisation should be able to show (through a written constitution, articles of association, etc):

- The community to which the body relates.
- That the majority of the members of the body are members of that community.
- That the community body is open to all members of that community.
- Is controlled by its members.
- The aims and purposes of the organisation.
- That the funds and assets of the organisation are used for the benefit of that community.

Community Councils must have an agreed Scheme of Establishment with the Local Authority, have a written constitution and hold a bank account.

Please note that to make the application process as fair as possible, applications from recipients of the Community Choices Fund 2016/17 **and/or** 2017/18 will be assessed separately to new applicants. These applicants will need to demonstrate how further funding will add value to their Community Choices programme. This could be increasing the scope and reach of the programme by building on existing partnerships and promoting collaboration with other sectors. Also any ambitions to strategically link or embed PB into local action plans.

Securing additional funding from other partners/stakeholders to match fund the Community Choices Fund would be an advantage. There is no intention to ring fence funding and all applications will be judged on their own merit.

How much is available?

Targeted particularly at work in deprived areas, a total of £750,000 is available and applicants can apply for a minimum of £20,000 up to a maximum sum of £100,000. This includes project funding and support costs.

Project funding is the pot of money available for members of the community to vote on. This could be a community of place or interest.

Support costs is the sum available for practical support to take forward a robust PB process and build capacity in the local community. Examples of support costs could include staff time, training, volunteer expenses, venue and catering, publicity, marketing, evaluation and any other practical administrative costs to run an inclusive event. A detailed breakdown of support costs must be included in your application. For example a cost for volunteer expenses, venue, catering, marketing, etc needs to be included but a detailed breakdown of each is not required. Support costs should be a reasonable portion in the context of the overall full project funding to be allocated.

Compulsory Training

Please note that *all* applicants will be asked to nominate a staff member or volunteer to take part in Scottish Government funded training. *All successful* applicants will be required to engage with the training on offer which is designed to support the organisation to plan and conduct a PB process effectively.

Application Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

Communities: Please detail how the project will meaningfully involve local people directly in financial decision making. For example what decisions will be taken by local people and how will you ensure that the process builds on the skills and experience within the community? Also what will be the three main outcomes arising from the project and how will you evidence this has been achieved?

Shared Outcomes: Please detail how the project will contribute towards collaboration and partnership work, both between the members of a community or residents of a locality, and also with and between public agencies and other organisations. For example is the project that you are proposing a new, stand-alone initiative for your community, or is it intended to add value to an existing programme of work that your community has previously undertaken?

Tackling Inequality: Please detail how the project will enable all sections of the community to participate in the process, particularly in areas of deprivation and how it might support the engagement of groups or individuals who face barriers to participation.

Sustainability: What do you intend to do to continue supporting community participation in decision making and how will this project support you to develop your role? For example how will the project contribute to develop active citizenship for the long-term in your area? Indicate how you plan to evaluate your process and capture the learning from it.

Criteria are weighted as follows: Communities: 30%, Shared Outcomes: 20%, Tackling Inequality: 25%, Sustainability: 25%

How to Apply

Applications for the Community Choices Fund 2018/19 can be found at:

[Application 2018/19](#)

[Application Checklist 2018/19](#)

[The Frequently Asked Questions 2018/19](#) may be helpful

Timescale for applications

The closing date for applications is **midnight Friday 13 July 2018** and applications received after this time will not be considered. Please ensure that you answer all the questions in the application as incomplete ones will not be considered or followed-up. The Application Checklist should help. Please email the completed application form and checklist to community.empowerment@gov.scot You will receive an acknowledgement email shortly after receipt.

Assessment process

Applications will be subject to a two stage assessment process:

- An initial sift will be carried out by Scottish Government staff to ensure that the application meets the criteria as set out in the application criteria above.
- All eligible applications will be assessed by a panel of representatives from the Participatory Budgeting Working Group and the Scottish Government.

We aim to complete the assessment process and inform all applicants of the outcome by mid-August 2018. Successful applicants will receive their grant offer shortly afterwards and once the necessary acceptance paperwork is completed, the funding will be paid in one lump. Please note that the grant must be distributed by 31 March 2019. If small grants, it is advisable to have a process in place to get feedback from successful bidders on how they have spent the money but this data will not be required by the Scottish Government.

Monitoring and evaluation

Successful applicants will be asked to:

- provide a report to the Scottish Government by 30 April 2019 outlining how the funding was spent, to include full details of the project, the number of participants (PB voters) for each event, the impact PB has had and future plans to promote and support PB in the future. The report should include the views of participants on the process and describe the plan or method used to undertake your evaluation.
- share any blogs, pictures and videos of the PB event on the PB Scotland website www.pbscotland.scot
- Participate, where possible, in PB learning networks and workshops to share knowledge, expertise and good practice.
- Provide an on-going contact point to speak to other groups in the area about the organisation's experience of PB.

Contact details

Completed applications should be emailed to community.empowerment@gov.scot

For any further information please contact Kathleen.glazik@gov.scot