

# Guidelines for LAA Fund



Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in the LAA Thriving Third Sector Fund. This is an exciting programme aimed at supporting a 'thriving third sector', throughout the administrative county of Essex.

The Local Area Agreement agenda was made between the Government and the Essex Partnership of public, private and third sector organisations. Its purpose is to deliver the county's priorities, which all contribute to enabling Essex people to realise their potential. One of these priorities is to create an environment for a healthy and thriving third sector. A £2 million endowment fund has been established with funding originating from the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Performance Reward Grant which comes through Essex County Council. The fund is managed by Essex Community Foundation (ECF), an independent grant making trust and all interest and enquiries about the Fund should be made directly to ECF. An important principle of the Fund is that the money is endowed in order that income from the fund can be distributed annually, in perpetuity, enabling funding to sustain charitable organisations active in Essex.

These guidelines are to assist your organisation in making an initial proposal to the fund. Proposals will be reviewed by the LAA Fund Panel (more details below) made up, in the main, of experienced Chief Executives working within Essex charities. The Panel are keen to understand the barriers and issues in the development of your organisation and how the proposed work will contribute to a thriving third sector. These guidelines should provide enough information for you to make an initial proposal, examples of previous grants are available on our website. However, should you wish to discuss this further, please contact Caroline Taylor, details are below.

Essex Community Foundation

121 New London Road

Chelmsford

Essex, CM2 0QT

Tel: 01245 356018

Email: [grants@essexcf.org.uk](mailto:grants@essexcf.org.uk) or [www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk](http://www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk).

### What is a thriving third sector?

The Panel has considered and discussed the many definitions that exist and have agreed, quite simply that,

*A healthy and thriving third sector is independent, confident and viable, both in economic terms and in the way that it is valued and respected by all stakeholders.*

### What is the aim of the fund?

The Panel recognise that the voluntary and community sector has an opportunity to develop their organisations in order to carry out activities or deliver services that strengthen community cohesion, increase environmental sustainability or tackle social and economic disadvantage. As such, the aim of the fund is to ensure the long-term, sustainable future of voluntary and community organisations in Essex.

Funding can be given to support the future development of your organisation but is not aimed at supporting your everyday activities. The Panel are keen not to be over prescriptive about what can be funded; rather they invite you to tell them what barriers you face in developing your own organisation, and how your proposal will offer the appropriate solutions and contribute to a thriving third sector. Examples of likely developments:

- Investigate new ways of working
- Investigate collaborative working
- Develop new partnerships, new ways of working with other organisations
- Secondments of CEO to work with, and learn from, other organisations
- Develop skills in influencing and negotiation
- Develop strategic thinking and vision
- Investigate new ways of generating income
- Participate in leadership development
- Develop new Information Communication Technology
- Development of skills in Governance, business development or marketing
- Undertake research that will inform new areas of work

Each applicant must demonstrate how funding will help your organisation thrive, although applicants will need to demonstrate to the assessors how supporting their one single organisation will **contribute more widely** to a thriving third sector.

This is an opportunity for your organisation to set your own agenda and address some of the issues and barriers that you see impeding your sustainability.

It is important to note that applications seeking funding to continue everyday activities without demonstrating **future sustainability** will not be considered.

The LAA Thriving Third Sector Fund will make **strategic grants** and there is a preference to award larger amounts if the case is made. **It is not a small grants programme.**

As the aim of the fund is to support the development of your organisation we appreciate this may take time and therefore **multi-year funding** is possible.

### What organisations can apply?

All voluntary and community organisations, or other non-profit making organisations, that are charitable in purpose and work for the benefit of people living within the administrative county of Essex.

### How much can we apply for?

Please note that there are **no upper limits** on amounts that can be awarded. For your reference the average grant to date is £33,700 and the panel will select proposals that will have the greatest impact and can clearly demonstrate benefit to the wider sector.

As the aim of the fund is to support the development of your organisation we appreciate this may take time and therefore **multi-year funding** is possible.

The Panel recognises that this Fund offers a great opportunity for the sector in Essex to develop, but in the early years, there will be much learning on what are the most effective routes to sustainable development creating a thriving third sector. It is expected that recipients of LAA Fund awards will be happy to share the experiences of their funded work with the Panel, and therefore, with the Sector.

### How do we apply?

A proposal must be made and submitted to ECF by **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2010**. This should be no longer than 700 words and include:

1. Name of organisation, charity number (if appropriate), contact person, contact telephone and email
2. A brief summary of your charitable purpose
3. What issues you are seeking to address
4. How your proposal will contribute to a thriving third sector
5. How funding will contribute to the sustainability of your organisation
6. How much funding you need and over what period of time

**Please could you avoid the use of bullet points in your proposal as they cause issues between different operating systems and our database.**

Your proposal must be emailed to [laafund@essexcf.org.uk](mailto:laafund@essexcf.org.uk) by Thursday **9 September** 2010. If successful you will be notified after 23 September and invited to make a detailed application by **15 December** 2010, final decisions will be given at the end of January 2011. The next funding round for this programme will be in September 2011.

### How will our proposal be assessed?

Proposals will be received by ECF and presented to the Panel for discussion and agreement. If successful you will be asked to submit a full application: unsuccessful applicants will be notified and where possible alternative sources of funding may be suggested. Successful applications will have demonstrated that the funding will have a strategic impact on the health of the third sector.

### Who makes the decisions?

The LAA Fund Panel is chaired by an ECF Trustee and has been established to make recommendations to Essex Community Foundation Grants Committee, who are responsible for all funding made by the Foundation. The Panel members bring a cross section of skills and experience and are, in the main, CEOs from the voluntary and community sector operating across Essex and a representative from Essex County Council and the LAA Management Board.

Full details of panel members is available at [www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk](http://www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk)

If you have any questions or wish to discuss a proposal please contact Caroline Taylor at [caroline@essexcf.org.uk](mailto:caroline@essexcf.org.uk) or by calling 01245 356018

### Examples of Successful Grants

**Hythe Community Centre Association**, Colchester were awarded £39,909 over 2 years for a collaborative project that will use the strengths of one successful community centre to develop and strengthen neighbouring centres through partnership working. The Hythe Community Centre is the lead organisation and will work with three other Community Centre Associations located in other deprived wards of Colchester to share best practice, cost-effectiveness and increase the use of each of the centres. It is expected that at the end of the two year period, Community Associations will have developed a strategic vision for their Centre in order for them to successfully run their building as a major community resource.

**Tendring Community Voluntary Services**, were awarded £33,282 over 3 years to establish a trustee network which will provide an annual programme of events to increase and strengthen knowledge and skills, partnerships and relationships whilst implementing good practices and networking opportunities of Tendring based trustees.

**Support 4 Sight**, Uttlesford were awarded £19,900 over 2 years to develop Essex Vision Strategic Partnership, a new strategic partnership that brings together sight loss charities across Essex to improve services and to drive forward the UK Vision Strategy. The new Essex Vision Strategic Partnership will create a stronger force with an ability to influence and negotiate with local authorities, PCT's and service commissioners. This will open up new opportunities for partner organisations for greater involvement in service delivery and funding in the long term, thus assisting with their sustainability and contributing more widely to a thriving third sector across the county.

**Uttlesford Crossroads - Caring for Carers** were awarded £42,000 over 3 years to take the lead in the merger of the 6 Crossroads Care schemes in Essex as national research demonstrated that many small local charities are less sustainable in the current funding landscape, many Crossroads Care branches, have now merged with positive benefits.