



THE
MERCERS'
COMPANY

Philanthropy

How to apply Young People & Education Programme Early Years Special Initiative

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EARLY YEARS SPECIAL INITIATIVE

There is growing evidence to show that an attainment gap can appear very early in life with some children, particularly those facing socio-economic disadvantage, falling months behind their peers before they reach school age. Without intervention, the attainment gap can continue to grow affecting their future learning and work prospects.

Through the Early Years Special Initiative, the intention is to support evidence based interventions working towards one or more of the following outcomes:

- An increase in children's numeracy, literacy and language skills;
- An improvement in school readiness (personal, social and emotional development); and/or
- A reduction in the attainment gap.

What we will be looking for

The Special Initiative will work with charities, social enterprises, and schools and or partnerships who are working with children aged 2-5 years.

Your organisation should be able to clearly demonstrate the following:

- Why the project is needed;
- How and why you are targeting the children and families you work with;
- How the proposed activity will contribute to achieving one or more of the outcomes stated above;
- A deep understanding of, and strong partnerships in, the communities in which you want to work;
- Evidence of previous early years related work and why you are well placed to deliver the proposed project;
- A commitment to robust and thorough evaluation of the proposed project; and/or
- How the project could be sustained after the lifetime of the grant and any potential for longer-term impact.

Type and scale of funding

- We expect to award grants of up to £350,000 per organisation;
- We will provide funding for up to three years; and
- As part of your application we want to know the difference your work is making and would expect to fund evaluation as part of the award. For successful applicants we will offer ongoing support and tailored development, delivered by an external provider.

Where we fund

Our focus is on supporting organisations working with young people in London. We will also consider organisations working in London that do, or could have a national sector.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for a grant you will need to submit an online application form by the 31st July 2020 with supporting documents, both of which can be found [here](#).

Supporting documents

When submitting an application you will be required to upload the two supporting documents – Proposal Plan and Budget Template.

Proposal Plan

Please submit a Proposal Plan that describes three to five outcomes of your proposed work, including numbers of people involved, timeframes and measurement indicators.

We will work with effective organisations that make a real difference to people's lives that:

- Demonstrate clarity of purpose;
- Provide a clear link between outcomes and activities;
- Work in ways that might be scalable or replicable;
- Involve local people in planning, delivery and evaluations; and
- Aspire to create lasting and measurable change.

What we will be looking for in your project plan:

- Clear outcomes that align with and deliver to the funding criteria;
- A clear and logical link between proposed activities and outcomes;
- Outcomes that are attributable to activities and could/would not be achieved without them;
- For existing projects – an ability to evidence/demonstrate previous outcomes/impact;
- For new projects/pilots – an ability to provide evidence to support project design;
- A clear plan for how to measure/monitor progress against projected outcomes;
- A clear plan of how to extract practical, transferable learning from the project for wider sharing;
- Appropriate baseline measures have been identified;
- Appropriate, realistic and reliable monitoring/evaluation methods over an appropriate/realistic timeframe have been chosen;
- Feedback mechanism for an appropriate range of stakeholders e.g. beneficiaries (children and parents), staff, volunteers, external professionals (including teachers, social workers etc.); and
- A commitment to working with external evaluators to support individual project and analysis of wider programme.

Budget Template

Please submit a budget to indicate how our funding would be used. Please include all costs incurred to run a project or a specific organisational activity. These can include staff costs and activity costs (venue, material, equipment, travel, etc). If you are applying for core funding, please send us a copy of your organisation's budget.

What we will be looking for in your Budget Template:

- A clear rationale for how costings have been reached (including an explanation of any assumptions);
- If applying for core costs, that the amount asked for is no more than 50% of the organisation's income; and If applying for a contribution towards a large project, it is clear how and when the remaining funding will be secured – or how the project will be affected if this is not secured.

Note: if your organisation has high levels of reserves, we will review your reserves policy as part of our consideration process. Applicants should be able to justify a large or small reserve if asked.

How we make decisions

Your application will be considered by a member of our Philanthropy Team who may seek further information by email, phone or arrange to visit you.

A member of the Team will contact you regarding the outcome of your application within four months.

What we don't fund

- Applications from individuals;
- We may fund capital costs but only where there is a clear link with our funding opportunities and an obvious lack of alternative local facilities;
- General appeals or support project or capital costs that have already been incurred;
- Any overseas work. Our work is focused in the UK within specific geographical areas as described under each programme;
- We usually fund registered charities but are open to applications from any inclusive not-for-profit organisations; and
- We are only likely to accept applications from constituted, not-for-profit organisations with some experience of working in disadvantaged communities and with a track record of evaluating their work.

Why your application was unsuccessful

We realise that each application is time consuming and regret that owing to the high volume of applications we receive each year we are unable to provide thorough feedback on individual applications.

Common reasons why applications are unsuccessful:

- Incomplete information or lack of evidence;
- Further information not received upon request;
- Your application is not as strong as other organisations;
- Your application does not sufficiently meet our programme priorities;
- Your application is outside our geographic area;
- The organisation is not a charity/not-for-profit; and
- The organisation demonstrated poor proposal planning.

If you require any further information please [contact us](#).