



# Women's Urgent Support Fund Round 2

## Guidance Notes

### Summary of the fund

The Women's Urgent Support Fund is supported by over £5 million of funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK, to respond to the cost-of-living crisis. Thanks to National Lottery players, £5.4 million will be awarded in grants to c.100 small, local community organisations led by and serving women.

The Women's Urgent Support Fund Round 2 was designed with 9 grant partners from Round 1 who support the priority groups for the Fund and have multiple lived experiences. Taking on board feedback from these sessions, Smallwood shares this opportunity that aims to account for the needs of disabled and/or neurodivergent applicants, is open and flexible in recognition of women's increasingly complex needs and the current funding landscape, and is welcoming to small, grassroots organisations.

You can learn more about Round 1 and which organisations were funded [here](#).

### Round 2 will:

Provide funding over 3 years for organisations delivering frontline services with an income of £1,000,000 or less that are led by, for and/or supporting women. Funding will enable frontline services to respond to the spike in demand of priority basic needs from women who are most at risk of poverty, because of the cost-of-living-crisis.

The core objectives of the fund are:

1. Frontline organisations led by and/or supporting women can respond to an identified increase in demand, brought on by the cost-of-living crisis
2. Frontline organisations can meet the basic priority needs of women at most risk of poverty, because of the cost-of-living crisis
3. Frontline organisations led by and/or supporting women will be strengthened during the cost-of-living crisis

The Women's Urgent Support Fund Round 2 is a two-stage application process comprised of an online Expression of Interest form and a full application form.

We provide detailed information in these guidance notes to help you make an informed decision about the suitability of this Fund for your organisation and what is expected at the full application stage.

**The deadline for submitting an Expression of Interest Form is 5pm on 21<sup>st</sup> June.**



## Funding and the cost-of-living crisis

We know that the ongoing cost-of-living crisis is having a devastating impact on frontline organisations and services supporting women in poverty. The Women's Urgent Support Fund Round 2 will continue to protect frontline services supporting women most affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

It is for this reason that we are expecting to receive many more applications than we are able to fund. We know how busy frontline women's organisations and services are and hope the guidance notes help interested organisations make informed decisions about whether to spend time filling in an application for this funding.

We expect a high volume of applications and for this reason We encourage you to apply if you are confident that your funding request is a good fit for the programme.

In this guidance for the Expression of Interest Form, we have been as transparent as we can about the amount of funding available, the Fund aims and priorities and how Smallwood makes decisions.

## Fund Overview

*The anticipated impact for the fund is:*

1. Women affected by the cost-of-living crisis and poverty gain confidence, tools, skills and support to build their financial resilience and improve their mental health.
2. Vital frontline jobs/roles and services will be protected or enhanced by additional funding enabling organisations led by and serving women to meet increased demand for their services.

## Who can apply?

You can apply if you are one of the following:

- Are delivering frontline services led by, for and/or serving women
- Are responding to identified priority needs and demand as a result of the cost-of-living crisis
- Are based England, with an income of less than £1,000,000

Are not-for-profit and one of the following:

- Registered charity
- Charitable Incorporated Organisation ("CIO")
- Charitable Trust
- Co-operative Societies\*
- Community Benefit Societies
- Community Interest Companies limited by Guarantee
- Community Interest Companies limited by Shares
- Company limited by Guarantee\*\*
- Unincorporated Association/Organisation

\*Must have a not for profit/asset lock clause(s) in your Society Rules AND be registered with the Financial Conduct Authority.



\*\* Must be a registered charity OR have a not for profit/asset lock clause(s) in your Articles of Association.

**If your Expression of Interest is successful, we will ask you to submit a full application.**

**Alongside this, you must also have the following:**

- Have and be able to submit a written governing document (for example a constitution, memorandum and Articles of Association or set of rules) with objectives that meet the aims of the Fund and the Smallwood Trust
- Have a governing body or management committee with at least three unrelated members / directors
- Have a UK based bank account that requires the signatures of at least two authorised signatures, who are unrelated and do not live at the same address, to sign cheques or make a withdrawal.
- Have an appropriate adult safeguarding policy
- A copy of your most recent latest audited or independently examined accounts
- Completed Smallwood Trust application form (we will support community language applications and other accessible formats where we can)
- A copy of your Adult Safeguarding policy and procedures Management accounts may also be requested from applicants.

**Therefore, we ask that you only apply if your organisation can provide these documents at a later date, should you be invited to submit a full application.**

**If you are not a registered charity, we will also ask you to provide the following at full application stage:**

- A copy of your constitution/governing document
- A copy of your most recent management accounts showing a profit and loss account, balance sheet and a cash flow statement. We have a template you can use.

If you are an existing recipient of Smallwood funding, we will need to know of any key changes in these documents since your last application.

If you are a local branch of a larger organisation that is delivering frontline services to women, you may still be eligible to apply. We ask that you are able to provide the following in order to apply:

- Your own UK based bank account
- Your own management committee with at least 3 unrelated members
- A written governing document (for example a constitution, memorandum and Articles of Association or set of rules) specific to your branch activity
- A set of accounts showing under £1,000,000 income

### Priority Groups

The fund aims to support women most impacted by poverty and the cost-of-living crisis. As a result, we will be prioritising organisations and/or services supporting the following groups:

- Women experiencing racial inequality
- Disabled women
- Women with No Recourse to Public Funds
- Women that are the sole parent to children under 18 years



- LGBTQ+ communities experiencing financial insecurity

***We aim to commit at least 50% of grants to projects that support women experiencing racial inequality and/or disabled women.***

We encourage applications from eligible smaller organisations that fall within the Fund criteria and Smallwood's mission on gendered poverty and will do what we can to support capacity building or non-financial needs as they emerge throughout the programme.

58% of successful applicants from the Women's Urgent Support Fund Round 1 had an income of under £200,000.

If you are unsure about whether this is the right opportunity for your organisation, we encourage you to get in touch with us.

### How much can I apply for?

Between £15,000 and £60,000 over three years. This should be split across the three years, with a maximum of £20,000 per year. This will help organisations to both respond to the immediate cost-of-living crisis and in years two and three support these vital services to be sustained.

We expect projects to commence from November/December 2024 and all funding must be spent by November/December 2027.

The Expression of Interest form asks you to provide an amount requested. This can be an estimation at this stage. If invited to submit a full application, we will ask you to provide a final figure and budget.

### What will we fund?

Your funding request must meet at least one of the core objectives of the Women's Urgent Support Fund Round 2:

1. Frontline organisations led by and/or supporting women can respond to an identified increase in demand, brought on by the cost-of-living crisis
2. Frontline organisations can meet the basic priority needs of women at most risk of poverty, because of the cost-of-living crisis
3. Frontline organisations led by and/or supporting women will be strengthened during the cost-of-living crisis

Our aim is to continue to protect essential services for women most impacted by poverty and the cost-of-living crisis that we know is disproportionately affecting women and the organisations supporting them.

Below are some examples of how funds may be used where there is a need for support and basic needs for women over 18:

- For organisational costs such as increasing or protecting the role of a key worker who is the first line of response to women in crisis.
- For organisational costs such as covering increased rent for meeting spaces to allow and organisation to continue delivering services meeting basic needs of women in your communities.



- For services such as emergency provision of clothing, food and welfare packs to offset the cost-of-living crisis. These should be purchased by the organisation to distribute to women in your community.

### What types of costs will we fund?

- Emergency support and to meet the priority basic needs of women in the community through, for example, normal charitable support including welfare packs, food or clothing (these should be purchased by the organisation to distribute to women in your community, using your usual policy and processes);
- Dedicated organisational capacity development;
- Staff salaries;
- Project activities;
- Running costs;
- Equipment;
- Organisational development;
- Contributions to fixed costs.

### What types of cost will we not fund?

The following costs are NOT eligible:

- Cash grants to individual women you support (Smallwood has a separate programme that provides individual grants)
- Work with men. Please note, if your organisation also works with men, any funds including overheads can only be spent for the benefit of women.
- Work with women under 18
- Payment that supports lobbying or activity intended to influence or attempt to influence Parliament, Government or political parties, or attempting to influence the awarding or renewal of contracts and grants, or attempting to influence legislative or regulatory action (any lobbying activity);
- Using grant funding to petition for additional funding;
- Input VAT reclaimable by Grant Recipient from HMRC;
- Payments for activities of an exclusively religious nature (Grant Recipient can fund religious organisations if their Programme benefits the wider community and doesn't include religious content);
- Payments reimbursed or to be reimbursed by other public or private sector grants;
- Contributions in kind (i.e. a contribution in goods or services, as opposed to money). Note this does not affect the provision of emergency support and to meet the priority basic needs of women in the community through, for example, normal charitable support including welfare packs, food or clothing;
- The acquisition or improvement of fixed assets by the Grant Recipient (unless the grant is explicitly for capital use – this will be stipulated in the Grant Offer Letter);
- Gifts to individuals other than promotional items with a value of no more than £25 a year to any one individual. Note this does not affect the provision of emergency support and to meet the priority basic needs of women in the community through, for example, normal charitable support including welfare packs, food or clothing;
- Entertaining (entertaining for this purpose means anything that would be a taxable benefit to the person being entertained, according to current UK tax regulations);
- Statutory fines, criminal fines or penalties;



- Liabilities incurred by the Grant Recipient before the issue of this Grant Agreement unless agreed in writing by the Fund. Liabilities incurred by an onward recipient might be eligible to improve a Grant Recipient's liquidity in line with the objectives of the Programme;
- Use in respect of costs reimbursed or to be reimbursed by funding from any other source;
- Use to purchase buildings or land;
- Activities that make profits for private gain; or
- Campaigning activities or political activities
- Loan payments.

## How to apply

To apply, please complete our online [Expression of Interest Form](#). This is designed to be a simple first stage in which we ask you to provide some information about your organisation, the women you work with, and what you'd like to do with the funding. We will assess all Expression of Interest forms and those that are the strongest fit with the Fund will go through to the full application stage.

The closing dated for completed Expression of Interest forms is **5pm on 21<sup>st</sup> June** and we are unable to accept late applications.

The Smallwood Trust will host 'How to Apply' webinars to develop their Expression of Interest forms and answer any questions that have not been answered here. These will take place on the following dates. Follow the links below to book:

- **11am-12pm, 14<sup>th</sup> May** – [register here](#)
- **1pm-2pm, 22<sup>nd</sup> May** – [register here](#)
- **11am-12pm, 13<sup>th</sup> June** – [register here](#)

All webinars will have BSL interpretation and subtitles. If you have any other access needs, please let us know in advance.

We urge you to contact us if you have any queries about submitting an Expression of Interest form. Please email Rosie at email [grants@smallwoodtrust.org.uk](mailto:grants@smallwoodtrust.org.uk) if you'd like to speak with one of our Grants Managers. Please use 'WUSF2' as the email subject line and provide your organisation name, contact name and contact number so we can get back to you.

You can also submit your Expression of Interest form as a video or audio file. You can find guidance on how to do this [here](#).

We have a small fund available for applicants who require accessibility support to apply to the Women's Urgent Support Fund Round 2, such as BSL interpreter, translator or extra staff time required to complete the Expression of Interest form. Please email us to request further guidance and a short application form.

If you would prefer to fill in the Expression of Interest form in another language, please contact us at [grants@smallwoodtrust.org.uk](mailto:grants@smallwoodtrust.org.uk). We will try to support you to apply in your preferred language and will discuss this with you.



## What is the timetable for the fund?

- Fund opens for Expressions of Interest: 10<sup>th</sup> May
- Deadline to submit Expressions of Interest: 5pm 21<sup>st</sup> June
- 1st round applicants are invited to complete a full application: Week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> July
- Deadline to submit full applications: 23<sup>rd</sup> August
- Decisions communicated by 22<sup>nd</sup> November
- We expect grants to commence from November/December

## Previous Smallwood Success Rates

In similar, previous funding rounds we had enough funding to support:

- 1 in 4 of every application for two different emergency Covid funds (Winter 2020)
- 1 in 10 of every application for the Thrive Fund (Spring 2021)
- 13% of applications for the Women's Urgent Support Fund Round 1 were successful (July 2023)

During the Women's Urgent Support Fund Round 1 we shared the main reasons why organisations were not successful and expect these reasons to also apply to Round 2:

- *A lack of clear evidence of track record in delivering dedicated services for women in poverty*
- *Limited information about the specific needs of beneficiary groups during the cost-of-living crisis*
- *Limited information on how the application was targeted at or met the needs of women most affected by the cost-of-living crisis*
- *Limited information on how the funds would support staff, volunteers and the organisation during the cost-of-living crisis*
- *The organisation did not meet our eligibility/due diligence checks (including checks on supporting documentation).*

## Decision making

All Expression of Interest forms will undergo basic eligibility checks in line with the fund criteria and an initial assessment. Expression of Interest forms will be shortlisted based on:

- Passing the eligibility checks
- Purpose that supports women in poverty
- Clearly demonstrating the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis
- Having a clear focus on the priority groups for the Fund
- Clear alignment of anticipated outcomes with Fund outcomes

All applicants will be informed of the outcomes of their Expression of Interest week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> July. We aim to invite back up to c.100 applicants and are able to make approximately 36 grants.



All final decisions will be approved by a Grants Panel comprising of 50% members of the Trustee Board of the Smallwood Trust and 50% women with lived experience of gendered poverty.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their full application by 22<sup>nd</sup> November.





## Expression of Interest (EOI) questions

In this section you will find the questions from the online Expression of Interest form and guidance to help you answer these.

EOI questions	Guidance
Eligibility checklist	<p>Applicants that meet the following criteria are eligible to apply for this funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have a track record of delivering frontline services led by, for and/or serving women</li> <li>• You are responding to identified need and demand as a result of the cost-of-living crisis</li> <li>• You are based in England with an income of less than £1,000,000</li> <li>• You are a not-for-profit including               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Registered charity</li> <li>- Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)</li> <li>- Charitable Trust</li> <li>- Co-operative Societies</li> <li>- Community Benefit Societies</li> <li>- Community Interest Companies limited by Guarantee</li> <li>- Community Interest Companies limited by Shared</li> <li>- Company limited by Guarantee</li> <li>- Unincorporated Association/Organisation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• You are able to submit a written governing document (for example a constitution, memorandum and articles of association or set of rules) with objectives that meet the aims of the Fund and the Smallwood Trust</li> <li>• You have a governing body or management committee with at least three unrelated members/directors</li> <li>• Have a UK based bank account that requires the signatures of at least two authorised signatories, who are unrelated and do not live at the same address</li> <li>• You can provide audited accounts, financial statements or income and expenditure statements (depending on your organisational size) and management accounts (where requested)</li> <li>• You have an appropriate safeguarding policy in place</li> </ul>



Contact Information	Please provide details about your organisation and the main contact for this Expression of Interest form
Please provide a summary of your organisation and its aims	<p>Please clearly tell us about the purpose of your organisation with reference to your charitable purpose and/or stated organisation aims. Please include what your organisation does and what it's trying to achieve.</p> <p>If your organisation focusses on any priority groups for the Fund, please make this clear.</p>
Please tell us how the cost-of-living crisis has impacted the women you support.	Please clearly tell us how the cost-of-living crisis has impacted the women your organisation supports. Here we are looking for a good understanding of the key issues your beneficiaries are experiencing that have emerged and/or worsened as a direct result of the cost-of-living crisis.
Please tell us about the work you are applying for funding for.	Please clearly tell us about the potential activities that will be undertaken and how this will address the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. Please draw a clear connection between this answer and your answer to the previous question.
Please tell us 2-3 anticipated outcomes of this work.	By this we mean outcomes that will follow as a direct result of the work you are applying for funding for. Please write no more than 1-2 sentences per outcome.
How much are you planning to apply for?	Please tell us an estimated figure of how much you are planning to apply for. You do not need to provide a budget at this stage.
Is this project targeted at a specific group? Please tick all those that apply.	<p>By this we mean services that provide support specifically aimed at and addressing the specific needs of particular groups that have been impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>Please tick all those that apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women that are sole parents to children under 18 years</li> <li>• Women with No Recourse to Public Funds</li> <li>• Disabled women (this can include women with long term health conditions)</li> <li>• LGBTQ+ communities facing financial inequality</li> <li>• Faith communities</li> <li>• Migrant women</li> <li>• Educationally/economically disadvantaged women</li> <li>• Older and younger women</li> <li>• Women who have experienced domestic violence, economic abuse or sexual abuse</li> <li>• Women that are care-experienced or care-givers</li> <li>• Women that have had contact with the criminal justice system</li> <li>• Women that have experience of homelessness or are currently homeless</li> <li>• Other specific groups – please provide more detail</li> </ul>



<p>Does the leadership of your organisation self-identify as having lived experience in the following?</p>	<p>By this we mean whether the majority of your leadership (this can be staff and trustees) identify within any of the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women experiencing racial inequality</li> <li>• Faith communities</li> <li>• Migrant women</li> <li>• Educationally/economically disadvantaged women</li> <li>• Disabled women</li> <li>• LGBTQ+ communities</li> <li>• Older and younger women</li> <li>• Women and girls</li> <li>• Other specific groups – please provide more detail</li> </ul>
<p>If you will be supporting women experiencing racial inequality and/or disabled women as part of this work, please tell us how long your organisation has been doing so and how your frontline services are informed by the lived experience of your beneficiaries.</p>	<p>We aim to commit at least 50% of grants from the Women's Urgent Support Fund Round 2 to organisations and/or projects working with women experiencing racial inequality and/or disabled women, so we are interested in understanding more about this specialism.</p> <p>Please clearly tell us about how long you have been supporting these groups, in what capacity and if your organisation involves lived experience in its decision making or programme development.</p>
<p>If you are invited to submit a full application.</p>	<p>We will let you know the outcome of your Expression of Interest by the week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> July. If you are successful at this stage, we ask that a full application is submitted by 23<sup>rd</sup> August. If shortlisted, are you likely to be able to submit a full application by this date? If not, please let us know here.</p> <p>Please note that this will not impact the outcome of your full application. We will always try to be flexible around the needs and schedules of Smallwood applicants.</p>