

## **Reaching Communities questions and answers**

### **1. How much money is there available for this initiative?**

There will be up to £100 million available for each year until 2013.

### **2. How has this programme been developed?**

Our major public consultation showed that there was still a strong demand for a lightly prescribed funding programme that allowed communities to identify their own needs and develop projects to meet those needs. People told us they wanted us to fund community driven projects through demand led funding streams. Reaching Communities has community involvement at its heart –every project we fund will have to show how communities are involved in the project.

Also it was clear from the consultation that applicants wanted a quicker, simpler process, and we have responded to that by developing a more proportionate approach for those applicants seeking up to £40,000 each year.

### **3. What is the overall aim of this initiative?**

The key aim of the programme is to fund projects which help meet the Big Lottery Fund's mission: "to bring real improvements to communities, and to lives of people most in need." We will be using the Fund's strategic themes and outcomes as the framework against which projects will be developed, but the emphasis will be on communities developing projects that respond to their needs and issues.

Projects can meet any of the following four outcomes:

- people having better chances in life, including being able to get better access to training and development to improve their life skills
- strong communities, with more active citizens, working together to tackle their problems
- improved rural and urban environments, which communities are better able to access and enjoy
- healthier and more active people and communities.

### **4. What activities will this programme support?**

This programme is for you to tell us what projects you want funded – we have not set any restrictions on the kinds of activities we will fund as long as your project aims to meet a clear need in your community and also meets at least one of our key outcomes mentioned above.

We expect that applicants who want larger amounts of grant over longer periods of time should demonstrate how their project will be sustained beyond the lifetime of our grant, and in particular to show how the project will complement or fill gaps in regional economic and/or community strategies.

### **5. Will you fund new and existing projects?**

Yes. We are willing to consider new projects as well as existing projects. We have decided that we will consider funding existing projects if they can demonstrate success in making a difference in responding to the needs of their communities.

## **6. Who will the programme benefit?**

Funding from this programme should aim to help those most in need. We have not identified any particular priority groups, but we expect these to include a wide range of groups including those who may live in deprived areas, those who are in need through age, disability or illness, those from minority ethnic groups, those with multiple needs such as homeless people etc. We also expect to fund those who are hard to reach. We are also working with other partner or helper organisations in our regions to ensure that those groups who experience barriers to participation will be able to develop projects for funding from this programme.

## **7. Who can apply to the programme?**

The programme will be open to registered charities, charitable or not-for-profit companies, statutory bodies, and social enterprises. It will provide funding mainly for voluntary and community organisations as part of our undertaking that 80 per cent of our funding will go to the voluntary and community sector. But we also want to include organisations and public bodies such as schools, as they play an important role in community activities.

We will fund new and existing organisations. While we anticipate that the bulk of applications will be from small and medium sized organisations, we do not want to miss the opportunity to continue to make grants that have a high regional impact from larger organisations that will be delivering their project locally.

## **8. What sizes of awards will we make?**

We will make grants of between £10,000 and £500,000. And we will continue to fund projects for up to five years.

### **9. Why have you introduced a smaller grants stream of up to £40,000 per annum?**

During our consultation organisations questioned why, if they required a smaller amount of money to run a project, did they have to go through the same process as if they wanted a large sum. We agreed with this and so introduced a smaller stream of funding for those organisations that only want up to £40,000 each year, with a maximum grant size of £200,000. For these projects there will be a simpler application process and quicker decision making.

### **10. What do you mean by an average of £40,000 per annum?**

Under Reaching Communities we will fund smaller projects that ask for up to £40,000 each year, with a total value of up to £200,000 over five years. Although there may be some flexibility in the amount requested each year, generally we would not look to vary this amount significantly. Following the submission of your Outline Proposal BIG staff will assess your application and send the appropriate full application form.

### **11. How many times will you fund the same project?**

There is now no limit to the number of times a project can be funded by Reaching Communities. Projects previously funded by Reaching Communities can now apply for continuation funding. Projects previously funded through other Big Lottery Fund programmes can also apply to Reaching Communities for continuation funding if eligible, with the exception of those funded through BASIS or Research.

Applicants will be required to send in an evaluation report with their full application form. The evaluation report should show:

- Evidence how the existing project is making a difference
- Demonstrate that there is a still a need for it or provide evidence of changing needs
- Show what worked well and what could be done better with further funding

Applicants that wish to apply again for continuation funding for their project should send in their application **within 12 months** of the end of their current award. Please note that we expect demand to be high. Applications for continuation funding will be treated the same as all other applications.

### **12. How many projects can I apply for under the Reaching Communities Programme?**

An organisation can make multiple applications to this programme as long as they are applying for distinctive projects. The organisation themselves will need to work out how they divide the work of their organisation into projects as they are best placed to do this. They will need to submit one outline proposal form for each project they want us to consider. The outline proposal form allows us to tell you whether we want to consider funding your project and will therefore help us decide whether to send you a full application form for that project.

**13. Reaching Communities is an England programme, does this mean that the project must be based in England or that the beneficiaries must be from England?**

Reaching Communities is a programme designed to meet the needs of local communities in England. We want to fund projects that primarily benefit people living in England. We would therefore consider funding a project based in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland if the target beneficiaries were primarily from England. When considering whether the project was appropriate for this programme we would look at whether the applicant has clearly shown that there is a need for the project to be targeting beneficiaries from outside of the local area, or that there is a need for the project to be delivered outside of the area in which the beneficiaries live.

**14. Why do we need to send a written evaluation of our existing project with the application form?**

Under Reaching Communities we want to support projects that respond to locally identified needs and involve communities in delivering projects. If you want us to fund an existing project we need to know that your project is successful and can demonstrate that it has made a difference, there is still a need for it, what has worked well and what you could do better if you receive more funding.

**15. What changes have you made to the Reaching Communities guidance notes and outline proposal form?**

We have taken this opportunity to provide clearer guidance and more information to assist applicants put together better applications to the Reaching Communities programme. We have also taken the opportunity to pick up on some common weaknesses in project applications that we have identified, and address those issues within the new guidance notes and outline proposal.

If you are applying for up to £40,000 each year there will be a simpler application process and quicker decision making than if you are asking for more than £40,000 each year. In particular this should benefit smaller organisations.

**16. What is the purpose of the pre-application checklist?**

The checklist is designed for applicants to check their basic eligibility for the Reaching Communities programme. It should be used in conjunction with the programme guidance notes.

The checklist is simple, and if you cannot answer 'Yes' to all the questions it is unlikely that your project will be eligible for funding. Please note answering 'Yes' to all the questions does not mean that you are likely to be funded. We reserve the right to disagree with your self-assessment.