

Advice Services Transition Fund Q and A's (Updated 8th November 2012)

Programme Design

Why is Big Lottery Fund (BIG) launching this programme now?

BIG has a history of funding the advice sector, most notably through the Advice Plus programme. BIG has also listened to grant holders, heard directly from communities most in need and has held conversations with leading national organisations and the government. We have decided that it is timely to invest in the advice sector again and we have designed and developed the Advice Services Transition Fund in response to the needs we have identified.

Separately the government, through the Cabinet Office, has undertaken a review of the not-for-profit advice sector in England to identify the key success factors that will enable the sector to make the transition to a new funding environment. The Government set aside funding to support the advice sector in the March 2012 Budget and has decided that it is more efficient and effective to support BIG's programme of investment in the sector, rather than deliver a separate fund. The BIG programme will facilitate the changes government expects to see in terms of greater collaborative working, better joining-up of services for end users and more resilient and sustainable advice organisations.

BIG and the Cabinet office will each contribute 50% of the funding for the programme.

Eligibility

Can my organisation apply for funding on its own?

No. This programme is only open to partnerships of local not for profit advice providers. We will not fund applications from single organisations.

Do partnerships have to be based on second tier local authority areas?

Working together benefits clients through better co-ordinated services. We are particularly interested in supporting partnerships that will work across second tier local authority areas. We will consider local partnerships that work in a different way, perhaps across local authority boundaries, or in smaller areas within a single area where there is a clear benefit from that approach.

***New* (8/11/12) My organisation works across more than one second tier area. Can we be included in more than one partnership?**

In our programme materials, we say that organisations cannot be part of more than one proposal. We made this a requirement because the aim of the funding is for local not-for-profit providers to come together across a second tier local authority area and develop a proposal to improve local services. That aim cannot be achieved with a larger number of rival bids or complex multi-partnership arrangements.

However, some organisations located in one second tier area may also provide services in neighbouring areas. This could apply to some support providers, providers of specialist advice or frontline advice providers. These organisations could make a valuable contribution to bids in different areas. Where it can be shown in the application that including these types of partner will strengthen a proposal, then they can be included in more than one bid. Each bid that includes these types of partner will need to demonstrate that each grant request does not include duplicate funding. No organisation can lead more than one bid.

***New* (8/11/12) Can voluntary sector organisations that support frontline advice providers join partnerships?**

In the programme materials, we say partnerships can include other not-for-profit civil society organisations (i.e not advice providers) where it can be shown that it will strengthen a proposal. This includes organisations that provide support and developmental services to front line advice providers.

Can partnerships include for profit organisations?

The funding from this programme is solely for supporting not-for-profit advice providers to better help and support people about their rights and responsibilities. However, some partnerships also work closely with for profit organisations, such as private firms of solicitors, often on a pro bono basis. Such organisations can be part of a partnership in order, for example, to receive and make referrals, but cannot receive any funding from the programme.

Can BIG advise us on the size of partnership/amount of funding to request/who we should include in our partnership?

You are best placed to decide on the design of your bid. BIG has set out all our expectations in the application materials and these are sufficient to enable you to develop a proposal. You must read all of these carefully before you begin to design your bid. We set out in the Application Form what makes a good application. You may also want to refer to the list of support organisations on the ASTF website. These may help you find further information and help in developing your ideas.

***New* (8/11/12) My organisation is a branch of a larger organisation – can I apply?**

Yes. See question 7.11 in the application form.

We have received funding from Advice Plus/Transition Fund/Advice Services Fund – can we apply to the Advice Services Transition Fund?

Yes.

Developing your plans

Can we use the funds to pay for service delivery?

Up to 25% of your funding can be used to fund the delivery of services to people in need of help and advice where these are not already funded from elsewhere.

***New* (8/11/12) How do you define ‘direct delivery of advice services’, which may form no more than 25% of the bid?**

We have said that up to 25% of a grant can be used for direct service delivery. By this we mean funds for the continuation of frontline advice services run by partners in a bid. The development of new ‘direct delivery’ channels that will help the advice sector work together to improve services and become more enterprising and resilient should form part of the main bid.

Can the grant pay for a contribution towards the overhead costs of each partner?

You are best placed to decide on how the grant can best be used. You can apply for a contribution towards the organisational overheads of some or all of the partners in your project.

Where can we go to get help to develop our bid?

You can get help from:

- Other members of your partnership;
- The information available from national organisations (the programme website has a guide to these sources)

You can get further programme information from:

- BIG’s Advice Line (0845 4 10 20 3) for general enquiries. If you have a hearing impairment, you can contact us on 0845 6021659
- The programme e-mail inbox advice.transition@biglotteryfund.org.uk
- The programme webpage www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/astf (we will be updating the Questions and Answers section of these pages regularly in response to any questions we receive, so please check back regularly)
- You can also follow us on Twitter @BigLotteryfund #AdviceSTF

Will a bid that meets all the programme outcomes give us a better chance of funding?

- All bids must meet the two core outcomes set out in the “What are we looking for?” section of the application form. We give examples of how partnerships might meet these outcomes, but you do not have to address them all and there may be other approaches that are right for your partnership’s local circumstances.

We want to apply for less than £50,000 / more than £350,000. Can we?

No. Even for the smallest partnerships, the projects we are seeking need to be of the highest quality. We do not consider that transformation of this nature can be achieved, sustainably, for less than £50,000. We also need to make sure that the funding we have has the greatest reach so we will not

consider applications requesting more than £350,000 (although you are encouraged to bring match funding to a bid).

Will I be at a disadvantage if I have not secured match funding for my project?

No. Whilst we encourage bidders to secure additional funding for the project where possible, we recognise that this is not always achievable. It is, however, important in all cases to demonstrate that your project will enhance your partnership's ability to widen its funding sources in the future.

Can I spend money on capital* items like IT, buildings etc?

You can apply for up to £20,000 of capital expenditure. This can include such things as office and ICT equipment and any office adaptations required to deliver your project. Further details of our requirements for capital expenditure and competitive tendering arrangements will be available in the terms and conditions of grant that will be issued to successful applicants.

*We define capital expenditure as items with a cost greater than £10,000 or a series of related items which collectively have a cost greater than £10,000, and which can be used for more than one year, including items used to equip a new building, irrespective of the individual cost.