



UK Government



West Midlands
Combined Authority

UK Community Renewal Fund

Invitation to Submit Project Bids

Introduction

The West Midlands Combined Authority is seeking bids from organisations wishing to deliver activity as part of the UK Community Renewal Fund.

Please read the UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus and the UK Community Fund Technical Note for Project Applicants and Deliverers before starting work on a bid. They are available [here](#).

The Prospectus provides detailed information on the objectives of the Fund, the types of projects it intends to support and how it operates, including the process and selection criteria that will be used to assess bids.

Successful UK Community Renewal Fund bids will be for 2021/22 only and activity must end in March 2022.

Background

To help local areas prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the UK Government is providing funding in 2021/22 through the UK Community Renewal Fund. We are interested in bids that build on local insight and knowledge, and project proposals that align with long-term strategic plans for local growth, target people most in need and support community renewal. In addition, projects should show how they complement other national and local provision. A focus for this Fund is to support innovation and new ideas in these areas, investing in pilots that draw on local insights and which will help places to prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022.

The West Midlands Combined Authority has been designated as a lead authority by the UK Government. As a lead authority, The West Midlands Combined Authority is responsible for:

- issuing this invitation
- receiving bids
- selecting the bids that will be sent to UK Government for consideration
- paying grants to successful projects and managing their performance

Full details of the role of lead authorities can be found in the [UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus](#).

What type of bids are we looking for?

Projects must deliver activity that is line with the UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus and align with at least one of these investment priorities:

- Investment in skills
- Investment for local business
- Investment in communities and place
- Supporting people into employment

There are no financial allocations to these priorities.

The UK Government anticipates supporting a range of projects by theme and size, but applicants are encouraged to maximise impact and deliverability through larger projects (£500,000+) where this is possible.

As 90% of funding available through the UK Community Renewal Fund is revenue funding and only available in 2021/22, projects should be predominantly, or exclusively revenue based. Projects that focus predominantly on the construction or major refurbishment of buildings, the purchase of land or the purchase of large pieces of equipment will not be supported.

Local Priorities

The West Midlands Combined Authority will prioritise those that that have the greatest potential to deliver against key regional priorities in selecting bids that will be forwarded to the UK Government for consideration. To support you with this we have identified the following Regional Strategies and Areas of Priority that we are keen to receive bids for:

Overall Theme	Regional Strategies	Areas of Priority
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Skills Plan • Local Industrial Strategy <p>Supporting Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Advisory Panel Report <p>To find out more about regional support offers currently available see: https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/productivity-and-skills/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting workers to transition to roles in the health or green/environmental sectors - including support to upskill or redefine roles • Supporting workers in high carbon sectors

Overall Theme	Regional Strategies	Areas of Priority
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Industrial Strategy • GBSLEP Sector Action Plans • Black Country LEP Sector Action Plans • Coventry & Warwickshire LEP Sector Action Plans • Recharge the West Midlands • WM Digital Roadmap <p><i>Supporting Evidence:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of the Region 2020 • MIT report • MIT Further information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of jobs and growth, in particular supporting entrepreneurs or established business to take on new employees • Increasing business innovation • Helping businesses decarbonise
Community and Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levelling-up the West Midlands - Community Recovery Roadmap • WM Digital Roadmap <p><i>Supporting Evidence:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health of the Region Report (to highlight beneficiaries we want proposals to target) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCFSE sector resilience and growth • Tackling digital exclusion for key beneficiary groups • Rebuilding a financial inclusion ecosystem • Using social economy clusters and inclusive public realm to build resilience in towns, local centres and high streets • Designing out homelessness • Cultural activities that contribute to the vitality of place
Supporting Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Support Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 50's pan regional support • Self-employment, particularly for individual who work in the gig economy • Support for communities who are furthest from the market and outside of JCP support, including multi agency approaches • Support for young people including early interventions and NEET
Net Zero – Cross Cutting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WM2041 Strategy • WM2041 Five Year Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted energy efficiency and retrofit • Community energy and micro-generation • Access to green space

Geographic Coverage

Government has earmarked [100 “priority places”](#), including 5 local authorities in the West Midlands (Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton).

The WMCA primary focus will be on “priority areas” – MHCLG have indicated that for proposals to be in the highest band, they will need to score at least 80% and take place at least 50% in a priority place. WMCA will adopt this approach in preparation of the shortlist, focussing on schemes that are at least 50% in priority places.

Bids may cover a single local authority area, several or all of the areas listed below:

- ***Birmingham City Council**
- ***Dudley**
- ***Sandwell**
- ***Walsall**
- ***Wolverhampton**
- Coventry
- Solihull

* *Identified as “Priority Area” in WMCA Region.*

How Bids Will be Assessed

As the lead authority The West Midlands Combined Authority will assess all bids submitted aligned to [UK Government UKCRF Assessment Process](#). Bids will be assessed against:

- the gateway criteria set out in the UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus – bids that fail to meet these criteria are ineligible support and will be rejected
- Strategic fit aligned to local priorities as set out in this document
- the extent to which they meet the objectives of UK Community Renewal Fund
- Deliverability, effectiveness and efficiency
- the extent to which bids would support the delivery of local growth and employment support priorities

Following assessment, The West Midlands Combined Authority will submit those eligible bids which most strongly meet the UK Community Renewal Fund and local priorities to the UK Government for consideration, up to a maximum of £3m per place.

The UK Government will assess all bids submitted by lead authorities against the criteria set out in the UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus.

The UK Government will announce the outcome of the assessment process from late July 2021 onwards.

The West Midlands Combined Authority will enter into a funding agreement with successful bidders.

Third Sector Support Offer

The West Midlands Combined Authority have engaged with regional third sector organisations in 'priority places' to provide support to voluntary and community organisations in understanding the Community Renewal Fund and coordinating applications.

If you are organisation from the sector within one of the 5 priority places the West Midlands Combined Authority recommend you engage with your area lead, as detailed below. If you are from Coventry or Solihull, please reach out to us directly at CRF@wmca.org.uk

AREA	ORGANISATION	LEAD	CONTACT
Birmingham	Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC)	Brian Carr	BrianC@bvsc.org
Sandwell	Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)	Mark Davis	Mark@scvo.info
Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC)	Ian Darch	idarch@wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk
Walsall	One Walsall	Manjit Dehal	ManjitD@onewalsall.org
Dudley	Dudley Council for Voluntary Service (Dudley CVS)	Andy Gray	andygray@dudleycvcs.org.uk
Birmingham, Sandwell, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley	Social Enterprise Support from iSE	Sarah Crawley	sarah.crawley@i-se.co.uk
Coventry & Solihull	WMCA	WMCA	CRF@wmca.org.uk

Submitting a Bid

Bids must be submitted using the UK Community Renewal Fund Application Form, which is available [here](#). Bids submitted in any other format will not be accepted. The assessment of bids will be based on information provided in the Application Form only. Do not attach appendices or include links to websites.

Bids must be submitted to The West Midlands Combined Authority using this email address: CRF@wmca.org.uk

Bids must be submitted by **noon on Wednesday 12th May 2021**. Bid received after this time and date will not be considered.

The UK Community Renewal Fund is a competitive process and The West Midlands Combined Authority, and the UK Government will not enter into discussions with bidders.