

# Multiply:

## VCS Grant Specification

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## 1. About Multiply

The overall objective of [Multiply](#) is to increase the levels of functional numeracy in the adult population across the UK. Government have identified the following success measures for the whole programme at a national level:

- More adults achieving maths qualifications courses (up to, and including, Level 2 – with GCSEs and FSQs as the qualifications of choice in England – or equivalent) and an increase in participation in numeracy courses. We expect local areas to evidence improvements in functional numeracy, rather than solely participation in Multiply interventions.
- Improved labour market outcomes e.g. fewer numeracy skills gaps reported by employers, and an increase in the proportion of adults that progress into sustained employment and / or education.
- Increased adult numeracy across the population – this overall impact, which goes beyond achieving certificates or qualifications, will track both the perceived and actual difference taking part in the programme makes in supporting learners to improve their understanding and use of maths in their daily lives, at home and at work - and to feel more confident when doing so.

Further information can be found in the [Multiply Investment Prospectus](#).

## 2. Background

Modelling undertaken by Learning and Work Institute using OECD's adult basic skills survey, shows that an estimated 440,000 people (24.1%) in the WMCA area have low literacy or numeracy skills. Of these:

- 17% are aged 16-24 and 83% are aged 25-64 —matching the age profile of current adult numeracy learners.
- 36% are out of work and 64% are in work — in direct contrast to the employment profile of current adult numeracy learners, highlighting the need to focus on engaging those already at work and on providing in-work support.
- At LA level, Sandwell (26%) and Wolverhampton (25%) have the highest proportion of residents with low essential skills. However, Birmingham has the highest number by volume of people with low essential skills — 40% of the total across the WMCA area — as a result of its large population.

Despite the scale of need, enrolments in AEB-funded maths provision in the West Midlands metropolitan area have declined over recent years — in part a result of the pandemic — before increasing again to 15,020 in 2021 /22.

During academic year 21/22, enrolments on AEB-funded maths provision across the WMCA, were as follows:

By level	37% entry level; 22% level 1; 40% level 2
By age	17% age 19-23; 74% age 24-49; 9% age 50+
By gender	73% female; 27% male
By ethnicity	31 %White; 30% Asian or Asian British; 23% Black or Black British; 4% mixed ethnic group; 7%other; 5% not known
By employment status	39% employed; 61 % unemployed

By local authority	52% Birmingham; 10% Coventry; 6% Dudley; 14% Sandwell; 3% Solihull; 8% Walsall; 8 %Wolverhampton
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WMCA investment in Basic English and Maths is already significant, with circa £19m allocated Community Learning and Adult Skills provision in 2020/21.

Notably, analysis of current math delivery in the region shows that it predominantly services unemployed residents. Given this, the focus of the WMCA Investment plan is to deliver Multiply Interventions to working adults across the region, supported by flexible delivery models which can be accessed outside of the traditional working hours and settings. WMCA has set out four distinct approaches:

- **Financial Literacy** delivered via our Local Authority Partners
- **Universal Credit Claimants** in Work delivered via West Midlands Colleges
- **Delivery through employers** delivered via Independent Training Providers
- **In work residents learning online with tutoring** delivered via Higher Education Partners

An overview of the WMCA regional focus of Multiply can be found on the [WMCA website](#).

### 3. Scope/Specification

The West Midlands Combined Authority is seeking to work with Voluntary Sector Organisations to support the identification of employed residents who would benefit from numeracy support. We are seeking proposals for small grants (minimum 25k) to connect our residents to the wider Multiply provision.

We are looking to work with VCS organisations who are uniquely placed to access groups who are predominantly in work and in low paid or unsecure employment.

The VCS organisation would be accountable for the identification and consequent approach to residents regarding the Multiply offer. They would act as an advocate for the Multiply programme, employing a 'Numeracy Champion' to engage with employed residents accessing their services to promote the benefit of enhanced numeracy skills and qualifications.

The successful organisations would provide a numeracy-based taster session (1-2 hours) to residents, with the intent of raising awareness and referring the residents to more formal training via the other Multiply strands or onto Adult Education of Community Learning provision.

Following initial engagement, the organisation would then facilitate a planned transition to WMCA Multiply or skills provider to facilitate any progression towards full qualifications.

The VCS organisation would be responsible for overseeing of the relationship between resident and training provider during the transition phase and until the resident has commenced learning

The expectation is that any activity would be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, with the opportunity to access further grant funding to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 depending on performance.

### 4. Aims and Mandatory Delivery Requirements

For a proposal to be successful you will need to be able to fulfil both the aims of the programme, and the mandatory requirements as set out below:

COHORT:	Adults in work without Maths skills
AIMS:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proposals should have a clear approach to resident engagement, and how they are uniquely placed to access employed residents.</li> <li>2. Proposals should set out who they will target and why they believe this is a group that could benefit from increased Maths skills.</li> <li>3. Proposals should set out how they would manage the transition to WMCA Multiply and skills providers including relationships that they have already established.</li> <li>4. Proposals should reflect how the identified cohort would be engaged, and how their progression onto formal qualifications through other Multiply and skills offers would be achieved</li> </ol>
REQUIREMENTS *	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The development of a coherent resident engagement strategy focused on accessing specific groups who are in work and would benefit from maths skills development.</li> <li>2. Evidence of resident engagement at the taster events, this may include a register of attendees (including Name, Date of Birth and Home Postcode).</li> <li>3. The current numeracy level of all engaged residents.</li> <li>4. Detail of progression to other WMCA Multiply or skills providers and the courses they commence.</li> <li>5. Feedback from participants about their views on maths and their reasons for participating.</li> <li>6. Bidders must be confident in their submissions and ensure that they have the capacity, capability and strategies in place to deliver the Multiply Taster sessions from day 1.</li> <li>7. Bidders must ensure their proposed activity does not duplicate any current or planned activity being undertaken by Local Authority Multiply projects.</li> <li>8. The service must comply with the contract and the performance management rules published by the WMCA.</li> <li>9. The project must comply with all Multiply branding guidelines. Prior to commencing delivery of the service, grant recipients must hold the appropriate approvals and authorities to deliver the service.</li> </ol>

*\* We accept that some of these mandatory requirements will depend on the intervention proposal and may not be applicable to all.*

## 5. Measuring Success and Reporting

Data will be submitted to WMCA via an established data platform, in addition to a monthly monitoring form.

The key indicators for this programme are:

- 1) Number of people engaged (including demographics) in outreach / engagement focused provision
- 2) Number of eligible people referred into and started on substantive learning via a WMCA Multiply or skills training provider

- 3) Increased number of adults participating / acquiring and evidencing skills through non qualification provision or towards a qualification including online learning

## 6. Funding and Target Groups

The total funding available for year 1, alongside priority groups, are outlined below:

Funding Available	Target Groups
Minimum subsidy available 25k (Year 1) for which the successful applicant must demonstrate associated costs. Maximum funding available £100k	<p>Delivery within the WMCA 7 Local Authority geography.</p> <p>Residents 19+ in work and in low paid or unsecure employment</p> <p>For a minimum of 25k the successful applicant should engage with a minimum of 100 employed residents. Any funding requested in addition to the 25k should reflect a maximum unit cost of £250 per resident engaged.</p>

## 7. Mobilisation

Organisations must be able to demonstrate that they are able to commence delivery by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 and complete year 1 delivery for the initial pilot by end of March 2024.

## 8. Payments Schedules

This activity will be funded from the WMCA Multiply allocation and managed in line with the WMCA funding rules. VCS organisations will receive the first three months of eligible expenditure (up to a maximum of 50% of the grant) upon signature of grant agreement then reverting to payment on a monthly basis, based on performance against profile up to the maximum grant value.

Due to the nature of the grant funding all payments must be underpinned by eligible costs as reflected in the Conditions of Grant document. An eligible cost profile must be submitted as part of the application process. This should be detailed in Section 4.0 of the Grant Application Form.

## 9. Response

The completed small grant application form (VCS Grants) must be returned via email to [MultiplyProgramme@wmca.org.uk](mailto:MultiplyProgramme@wmca.org.uk) by **25<sup>th</sup> August 2023 5pm.**

## 10. Timelines

Indicative timelines are shown in the table below and may be subject to change

Round 1 application closes	<b>25/08/2023 5pm</b>
Assessment period	<b>29/08/2023 – 18/09/2023</b>
Award Notifications	<b>19/09/2023</b>
Project Mobilisation	<b>01/10/2023</b>
Round 1 project completion	<b>31/03/2024</b>

End.