



Ministry
of Defence



Armed Forces
Covenant

Covenant Fund – large grants
Expression of Interest guidance



Please note: This guidance is only valid for expressions of interest submitted up to 24 September 2015.

Covenant Fund Large Grants

Expressions of Interest Guidance

Background

The Armed Forces Covenant sets out the relationship between the nation, the government and the armed forces. It recognises that the whole nation has a moral obligation to current and former members of the armed forces and their families, and it sets out how they should expect to be treated.

The Armed Forces Covenant is supported by the Community Covenant and the Corporate Covenant. The Community Covenant encourages local communities to support the Armed Forces community in their area and promote public understanding and awareness. The Corporate Covenant is a public pledge from businesses and other organisations who wish to demonstrate their support for the Armed Forces community.

The Covenant Fund

The Covenant Fund has £10 million each year to support the Armed Forces Covenant by funding projects which address specific priorities (below).

There are two funding routes:

- small grants, for applications up to a maximum of £20,000 and
- large grants, for applications of between £20,001 and £500,000.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the expression of interest form for large grants. If you wish to apply for a small grant you should use the small grants materials available on our [website](#)

The key criteria

We'll assess whether your project fits with what the Covenant Fund is all about. There is a two stage application process for the large grants programme; this expression of interest form is the first stage. If your project is one we invite to stage two, you will be asked to complete a full application form.

At stage one - the expression of interest - the main assessment criteria are:

- ✓ how well the project addresses one of the three priorities
- ✓ how it will meet the specific requirements of that priority
- ✓ engagement, partnership working and collaboration
- ✓ how well targeted the project is

At stage two - the full application - the main assessment criteria are:

- ✓ how well the project is likely to be delivered
- ✓ to what extent the project represents value for money
- ✓ to what extent we can have confidence that the project will have lasting impact, delivering changes that last beyond the funding period

Please note also that:

- we cannot fund a service that is or should be provided by others (for example, by Government Departments or local authorities)
- projects must not generate a profit, top-up an existing Grant-in-Aid or raise funds for the charitable sector
- MOD can only provide one off funding so where there is an ongoing cost – such as maintenance or staff costs, we will look for clear and realistic plans for future funding

Priorities for financial year 2015-16

The following three priorities have been set for the financial year 2015-16 and will be reviewed for 2016-17:

1. Community integration
2. The coordination and delivery of support to the Armed Forces community
3. Former service personnel in the criminal justice system

There is more information about each of the current priorities below.

In the expression of interest form you will be asked which of the three priorities your project will address and how it will meet the specific requirements of that priority. This is a critical part of the assessment. If your project does not clearly address one of the priorities or you cannot demonstrate how it will meet the specific requirements, it will not be funded.

1. Community integration

Under this priority we will fund projects which help integrate Armed Forces and civilian communities across the UK.

Projects must create strong local links between the Armed Forces community (i.e. current and former members of their armed forces and their families) and civilian communities; and be able to clearly demonstrate how they will have impact in overcoming barriers to better integration; and improving perceptions, attitudes and understanding.

We want to see projects which are rooted in their communities and which have grown out of a specific local need.

It is important too that the project is not just the Armed Forces delivering something for the civilian community or vice-versa. For the project to be truly effective in achieving community integration there should be shared development, delivery and benefits for both communities.

Please note, we envisage that most of the applications submitted under this priority will be for local community projects which will apply through the Covenant Fund small grants.

2. The coordination and delivery of support to the Armed Forces community

Under this priority we will fund projects which offer support for serving armed forces personnel, veterans, and their families across a number of areas: financial, housing, mental and physical health, employability and social support.

Projects must be well connected, both to their beneficiaries and to other relevant organisations, and be able to demonstrate how the services they provide will be well-publicised, accessible, joined up and end-to-end.

We are especially interested in applications from lead organisations working with delivery partners, or bringing together portfolios of projects which work together to create integrated pathways through this service provision.

Applicants must be able to show evidence of a good track record of delivering similar strategic projects across regions and nationally.

Please note, we envisage that most of the applications submitted under this priority will offer strategic solutions and will apply through the large grants route. However, we recognise the value of local schemes and acknowledge that some gap filling may be required, and therefore some applications under this priority will come through the small grants route.

3. Former service personnel in the criminal justice system

Under this priority we will fund projects which help provide a joined up service to former members of the armed forces that come into contact with the police, courts and prisons.

It is particularly important that this does not replicate statutory or other existing support. We will expect to see evidence of how your project complements and works together with other services to create person-centred service provision that is well-publicised, accessible, joined up and end-to-end.

We are especially interested in partnerships and portfolios of projects which work together to create integrated pathways through this service provision. Projects which aim to meet some of the challenges in the report produced by Stephen Phillips QC in November 2014 would be welcomed.

Applicants must be able to show evidence of a good track record of delivering similar strategic projects across regions and nationally.

Please note, we envisage that most of the applications submitted under this priority will offer strategic solutions and will apply through the large grants route. However, we recognise the value of local schemes and acknowledge that some gap filling may be required, and therefore some applications under this priority will come through the small grants route.

Who can apply?

The expression of interest must be from a statutory body or a registered charity. This organisation will be the accountable body for the grant. However, we will be asking for evidence of real engagement and partnership working - in the case of a non armed forces charity or statutory body - with either an armed forces charity or a armed forces unit.

If you are a registered Community Interest Company you may also apply.

We will ask the lead organisation to enter into a partnership agreement (which we must approve) with their partner organisation(s) before the project can start.

If you are planning to deliver a portfolio of projects, the lead organisation will be responsible for ensuring that suitable management arrangements are put in place, and that the portfolio projects meet the requirements set out in the terms and conditions of grant (which can be found on our [website](#)).

Connecting your project to services provided by other organisations and complementing other related provision is a key criterion for the large grants programme.

As we have a limited amount of money it is highly unlikely that we will award multiple grants to one organisation, so you should focus on one main application rather than try to be involved in many applications as a lead or partner organisation.

Who cannot apply?

Individuals cannot apply and cannot be a partner organisation.

Unincorporated organisations which are not registered as charities cannot apply. If they have been properly constituted under an adopted governing document and have been operating under that governing document for at least three years then they can be a partner.

As partnerships and some forms of social enterprise are not registered charities or Community Interest Companies, they cannot apply but they can work as a partner with an eligible lead applicant.

What can you apply for?

We can pay for most of the things you'll need for your project whether it's people's time, buying or hiring equipment, or minor improvements to land or buildings.

There are a small number of things **we can't pay for** either because they are not in the spirit of the Covenant Fund, or because of relevant legislation or tax rules. These include:

- Topping up existing grants and aids from another Government Department
- Where money only benefits one person
- Repeat or regular projects that require a source of uncommitted funding
- Investments
- Paying for ongoing costs of existing partnership activity
- Organisational fundraising activities
- Endowments (to provide a source of income)
- Projects, activities or services that the state has a legal obligation to provide
- Retrospective funding for projects that have already taken place
- Excessive contingency costs; management or professional fees

This is not an exhaustive list as we feel it is more useful to focus on what you are you are trying to achieve and how you are going about this than to issue long lists of eligible and ineligible costs.

If your project strongly addresses one of the funding priorities; the spirit of the Covenant Fund large grants and the criteria set out in this guidance, your costs should be eligible. You can find further information about eligible costs in the Frequently Asked Questions on our [website](#).

If your funding request is over £300,000 or requires more than £100,000 capital funding, **you should contact us before you apply**, initially by sending us an email at COVENANT-GrantTeamMailbox@mod.uk . We will then contact you to talk through your project and give you a view on your likelihood of success. Projects requesting over £300,000 or requiring more than £100,000 capital funding will have to be very good, high impact exemplars, in order to be successful.

Local Covenant Partnerships

You need to make sure that your project fits well with other similar, and linked provision in the area you want to deliver it. You should talk to other relevant organisations to ensure you complement - and do not duplicate - other services, and that there is a local need for your project. One of the first things you should do therefore is to talk to the local covenant partnership in the area you plan to deliver your project, as they will be able to offer you advice and support. If you are not sure, you can find details of community covenant partnerships by region [here](#).

When to apply

There is a two stage application process for the large grants programme. The first stage is this expression of interest form. If your project is one we invite to stage two, you will be asked to complete a full application form.

Stage one, expressions of interest

The deadline for expressions of interest this year is:

- Noon on **Thursday 24 September 2015**

You can submit your expression of interest before this date but our assessment and decision making dates are fixed, so that we can consider applications' relative merits together, and therefore we will not be able to give you a decision any sooner.

If you send your expression of interest to us after the deadline we will not be able to accept it.

Further deadlines for future funding rounds will be announced on www.gov.uk in early 2016 along with any changed criteria or themes. We want to continually improve our materials and processes, so the expression of interest form will be out of date after 24 September 2015.

Do check that you have fully answered all the questions because if not, we might not be able to consider your expression of interest.

If you have any questions about completing the expression of interest form then please contact us.

After you submit your expression of interest

We will check your expression of interest to ensure that you have provided all the information we have requested. We will conduct an eligibility check within ten working days of the deadline for the receipt of expression of interest form. If your expression of interest is not eligible, we will not be able to process it any further and it will not be considered for funding. If your expression of interest is not eligible, we will write to you to let you know and we will explain our decision.

Stage one decision making

We will review the information you provide in your expression of interest and, where relevant, data and information from the Charity Commission, Companies House or other regulators' websites relating to your constitution and audited accounts from the past two years.

We will assess your expression of interest against the key criteria and we will then send your expression of interest along with all other expressions of interest received and deemed eligible to Regional and Devolved Administrations Boards (RDA) for areas in which your project will operate. The RDA Boards will look at each expression of interest and comment on whether the project:

- is a good project
- fits with local need

- is too risky.

Final decisions on which projects to invite to submit a full application will be made by the National Panel who will review all expressions of interest together using balancing criteria in addition to the key criteria. The balancing criteria include the relative strength and value for money of the project when viewed as part of a national portfolio of projects and the need to ensure the right mix of projects across the UK.

Please see Frequently Asked Questions on our [website](#) if you want more details about the RDA Boards and the National Panel.

Stage two, full application

If you are invited to submit a full application, there is no guarantee that you will be funded. Projects will undergo detailed assessment and have to meet high quality standards in order to be successful.

As far as possible, we will support and work with applicants during the full application stage to give them the best chance of success.

The National Panel will meet again to agree which stage two projects to fund, using similar criteria to those mentioned above, but also taking into account the assessment of the stage two criteria.

Funds are limited and therefore the National Panel will use its discretion to choose which projects to fund in order to ensure that we have a good spread of funded projects and to differentiate between projects that are considered fundable.

Please note that we may also take the decision to part-fund proposals (this may involve awarding less money than was applied for).

If we do not offer you a grant, we will tell you the reason why in a feedback letter.

Accepting our offer

If we plan to fund your project you'll need to accept our grant offer and the terms and conditions within **4 weeks** of receiving the offer letter, and we'll ask you to send us a copy of a bank statement for your organisation's account that you'd like us to pay the grant into.

Payments will be staged according to the type of expenditure and the project milestones, and will be dependant on project progress.

2015 Timetable

Open for expressions of interest



13 August 2015

Closing date for expressions of interest



24 September 2015

Expression of interest decisions communicated –
and invitations to stage two sent out – by



26 November 2015

Deadline for stage two applications



13 January 2016

Stage two decisions communicated by



10 March 2016

Complaints

If you are not happy with the way we dealt with your expression of interest, please contact us and we will discuss this with you.

Please note that you can only complain if you believe we have not followed our published guidance when dealing with your expression of interest. You cannot appeal against the decision.