

# **Civil Society Roots Fund Request for Proposals**

November 2019

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## Summary

The Mayor of London, in partnership with City Bridge Trust, is launching a new pilot fund to support specialist civil society infrastructure in London.

We are offering two-year grants of up to £100,000 to specialist civil society infrastructure organisations in London.

Four grants are available for organisations working to support the following sectors:

- Black and Minority Ethnic led organisations
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ+) led organisations
- Women's led organisations
- Criminal Justice System (CJS), supporting organisations working with victims of crime and offender management

One of the grant themes has been left **open** and will be awarded to a specialist equalities regional infrastructure organisation that can make a case for support for their area of need.

These grants are to develop the organisation's offer of support for their respective sectors and strengthen London's civil society. We are interested in supporting organisations to develop a programme of work based on their understanding of need in their sector, and in partnership with frontline organisations.

Submissions are to be made by providing the following documentation to the GLA:

1. Project Proposal – maximum 6 pages
2. Due diligence documentation

Please email submissions to [civilsociety@london.gov.uk](mailto:civilsociety@london.gov.uk). The closing date for proposals is 20th January 2020.

## Background

London's civil society is critical in supporting communities, delivering services and making London the vibrant place that it is.

The GLA as a regional body has a strategic role to ensure that civil society can be supported and can flourish. This has been highlighted in the Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Social Integration strategies and the GLA-commissioned philanthropy review *Harnessing the Capital's Giving*. We define civil society as: where and when people take action to improve the lives of others. It includes formal organisations such as voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, informal groups of people who come together for a common purpose, and individuals who act to make their community a better place to live.

City Bridge Trust is London's largest independent funder, making grants of £20m annually. Our vision is for London to be a place where everyone can thrive, especially those experiencing disadvantage and marginalisation. We aim to reduce inequality and to grow stronger, more resilient and thriving communities and believe that a healthy, vibrant and well-resourced voluntary sector plays a vital role in this.

Civil society plays a key role in supporting London to thrive economically, building resilience and providing fundamental support to communities and Londoners most in need. If we look at recent significant events in London, whether it's the Grenfell fire, supporting EU Londoners with resettlement or addressing serious youth violence, it is civil society that has the reach and skills to support communities. Despite growing demands on services, we are seeing continuing cuts in funding which are only likely to increase, impacting on the capacity of civil society organisations to support Londoners.

As with any system, in order for grass roots and front-line organisations to themselves be resilient and robust there is a need for a diverse and effective support system. This takes the form of civil society support organisations, who exist to:

- Develop the work and capacity of civil society organisations and groups
- Convene and advocate on behalf of the sector and the communities they serve
- Facilitate networks to enable collaboration, learning and strategic coordination
- Connect local organisations to funders and corporate giving

This layer of sector support has been particularly affected by cuts to civil society funding. Civil society support organisations focussing on equalities play a vital role that goes beyond the scope of wider sector support provision. These groups have emerged as a response to gaps in support offered by mainstream services and work with people who

often experience multiple barriers and an intersection of inequalities (for example, based on race, gender, class). Specialist equalities support organisations are therefore a key element of enabling strong grassroots and local groups to support people with protected characteristics and seldom-heard groups.

Civil society support organisations also play a vital role in delivering services commissioned by the Mayor in his role as the Police and Crime Commissioner for London to support victims of crime and work with offenders to reduce reoffending. All of the services commissioned by the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) are delivered by VCSE organisations.

## Project Description

The Civil Society Roots pilot grant programme aims to strengthen specialist civil society sector support organisations in London.

There are three Strands to this programme:

- 1) grant support for Specialist Sector Support Organisations
- 2) design lab for participants to access expert advice and peer support
- 3) research to better understand the value of the specialist infrastructure sector

The pilot programme will be targeted at 'cold spots' for specialist sector support we have identified within London. For the purposes of this project we define cold spots as thematic specialist sector support areas that are hard to reach with existing support provision and funding.

We have carried out analysis of current availability of infrastructure, funder data and key issues affecting London's communities. Based on our analysis we have identified the following themes, which we would specifically like to fund support for:

- BAME led
- LGBTQ+ led
- Women's sector
- CJS supporting organisations working to address victimisation and reoffending

There is no clear-cut definition of which organisations fall within each respective theme, and we recognise that there is a huge amount of diversity within each of these sectors. For the purposes of this grant, we invite applicants to put forward their understanding of the sector and its needs in the proposal.

**One of the grant themes has been left open** and will be awarded to a specialist equalities regional infrastructure organisation that can make a case for support for their area of need. We welcome proposals from the sector that clearly outline a need within London supporting equalities organisations, for example an intersectional approach that focuses on organisations working at the nexus of two protected characteristics

In this pilot project we will be offering up to five grants, one per thematic area, to support the provision of specialist regional civil society infrastructure in London. We are focussing this pilot stage on thematic areas that are cold spots within London's equalities infrastructure.

The grants will be used to develop the organisation's offer of support for their respective sectors and strengthen London's civil society. We are interested in supporting organisations to develop a programme of work based on their understanding of need, and in partnership with frontline organisations. Applicants are encouraged to think of innovative methods of delivery that might build collaboration with a range of networks or collectives to strengthen the offer of support for civil society.

**Objectives of the grant:**

- Development of support offer (capacity building, networks and voice) for civil society organisations that fall within the respective themes outlined above.
- Insight into the strengths, needs and issues within civil society.
- Increase the support for community organisations that are working to:
  - achieve the Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives<sup>1</sup>; or,
  - address the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan priorities

**Outcomes:**

- Improved availability of specialist sector support in London for
  - equalities priority areas, or
  - addressing victimisation and reoffending
- Improved understanding of the scope and impact of specialist sector support in London.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mayors-equality-diversity-inclusion-strategy.pdf>

## Support

In addition to the grant funding, a package of support will be offered to grantees in the form of a design lab. This will comprise of access to expert advice through training, peer support and consultancy that responds to the specific and individual needs your organisation faces. The design lab will also support grantees to reflect on and capture learning from their programmes. All grantees will be expected to engage in this programme.

The GLA will also commission research to better evidence the importance of specialist civil society support, and map the wider system operating at a regional level. This research will be used to engage with funders and the sector more widely on our collective role in supporting a thriving civil society.

### Timetable

Milestone	Deadline (Provisional)
Closing date for proposals	22nd January 2020
Interview	10th and 11th February 2020
Appoint	Week commencing 17th February 2020
Inception meeting	25th February 2020
GLA funding commences	2nd March 2020
GLA funding ends	March 2022

### Funding and payment

Organisations can apply for a maximum of £100,000 over a 2-year period.



## Your Proposal

### Essential Criteria

To be eligible to apply you must meet the following:

- Be a not for profit organisation, such as a voluntary and community organisation, registered charity or charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), company limited by guarantee or Community Interest Companies (CIC) with two or more directors.
- Be user led, with community representation on your trustee and/or staff team.
- Be providing support to community organisations in London, within the thematic area are you applying for.

If you are interested in applying for this grant, please submit a proposal (maximum 6 pages) and your due diligence documentation to [civilsociety@london.gov.uk](mailto:civilsociety@london.gov.uk) by 17:00 on the **20<sup>th</sup> of January** including the following information:

<p><b>Rationale and evidence for proposal (30%)</b></p>	<p><b>Evidence of need:</b> Clearly defined beneficiary group in the thematic areas.</p> <p>Tell us about the support needs of civil society in your sector.</p> <p><b>Programme design:</b> Please provide an overarching outline of how you will make use of this grant to strengthen civil society in London, with reference to the sector you will be focussing on.</p> <p>Details of project management systems to ensure the project objectives and outcomes are delivered on time and to budget.</p> <p><b>Sustainability:</b> How do you think developing this programme can improve the sustainability of your organisation?</p> <p>Are there any other networks or partners you would aim to make stronger connections with through this grant?</p>
<p><b>Learning and impact (20%)</b></p>	<p>How you will track, measure and evaluate the difference you have made.</p> <p>How you will use learning to adapt your approach during the project.</p>

	<p>Your proposal will need to demonstrate how your work will connect with London's diverse communities, and how the activities will be accessible and inclusive.</p> <p>How you will share what you have learnt.</p> <p>List any delivery risks for the project and any mitigating actions you will take to address them.</p>
<b>Experience and expertise (30%)</b>	<p>Relevant past work delivering sector support to civil society organisations.</p> <p>Please demonstrate how you are a user led organisation.</p> <p>What networks or partnerships are you currently engaged in?</p> <p>Evidence of successful engagement with London's Civil Society, including micro organisations or un-constituted groups.</p>
<b>Budget (20%)</b>	<p>A project budget table with full details of all the costs involved, with an itemised annual breakdown.</p> <p>As this is a learning programme, we will expect funded organisations to make time to engage with the design lab and other funded projects. This might be up to 6 meetings a year. You may include the cost for this in the budget.</p> <p>Any other funding that will be used towards this collaboration, where it's from and if it has been secured.</p>

Each of the above areas will be assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

<b>0 – No response</b>	
<b>1 – Unsatisfactory</b>	Criteria not met and unacceptable
<b>2 – Poor</b>	No real evidence
<b>3 – Satisfactory</b>	Not met exactly but acceptably
<b>4 – Good</b>	Most aspects of criteria are met

Your due diligence documents must include:

- Copy of organisation's most recent **signed** set of Financial Statements/Accounts.
- A statement of organisations cash flow for the current year
- Evidence of public liability and employer's liability insurance
- Submission of Budgeted allocation of funding (how you intend spending the grant)
- Submission of organisations Financial Regulations

If you would like to speak to us about your proposal, please contact [civilsociety@london.gov.uk](mailto:civilsociety@london.gov.uk)

Please note that we will be sharing your application form with our partnership organisations City Bridge Trust, Mayor's Office for Policy and Crime and other partner funders for the purposes of our funding agreement.

### **Other formats and languages**

For a large print, Braille, disc, sign language video or audio-tape version of this document, please contact us at the address below:

Greater London Authority  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
More London  
London SE1 2AA

Telephone **020 7983 4000**  
**[www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)**

You will need to supply your name, your postal address and state the format and title of the publication you require.

If you would like a summary of this document in your language, please phone the number or contact us at the address above.