

Questions from potential applicants

The following questions include those submitted by organisations who are interested in applying for London Councils ESF funding for the:
ESF Borough Employment Programme 2016-2018

They have been arranged by topic to help you to find the answer.
Questions and answers will not be added after the **28th March 2017**.
New questions will be added under [Updates](#).

[Updates](#)

Week Commencing 06/02/17:

1. **Could you please confirm that my understanding that you require 6 hours of 1:1 support complemented by group sessions/workshops/events etc. of a duration that we must define ourselves in the tender?**
6hrs+ support is to be used for 1:1 support, however it may also include some group training as we appreciate that this may sometimes be needed.
2. **Could you also confirm that it is up to the bidder to decide how long each individual stays on programme before they enter employment?**
It is down to the bidder to decide how long a participant stays on the programme for, but you would be required to show evidence of the support offered to justify the length of time on the programme.
3. **You have confirmed within the Q & A documents that bidders are required to have at least one office within the borough where the project will be delivered. Is this office requirement in addition to the outreach locations we need to have (such as a room in a Children's Centre for example)?**
Yes this will be acceptable so long as (a), the premises within the borough have room and are suitable for the programme's needs, & (b), all required children's safeguarding procedures in this case, are in place given that the participants may not have been DBS checked.
4. **Is the bid legally binding upon submission?**
A bid is not legally binding until a contract has been signed.
5. **On page 46, section 3: Submitting an Application of the prospectus you state that rent for delivery premises will form part of indirect costs and all indirect costs should remain below 15%. If payment is made for community delivery i.e. hire of rooms in specific wards can this be applied as a direct cost?"**
If the hiring of a room is for delivering a workshop for participants of the programme only, then this will fall within the direct costs. However, if the room is used for other purposes not directly linked with the programme then it must come under indirect costs.

6. **For question C6d - Risk Register table, when I try to add text in the Response column, the text box seems to be locked to around 15 words. Is that the case or should I be able to add more text? Also, the table seems to be locked and cannot be expanded with additional rows/columns - is there a different way to expand the table within the current formatting?**

The character limit on this table was restricted, however, we have now increased this limit which has also expanded the table. This will allow you to input more text if required.

7. **I am in the process of completing the form and I am experiencing a small issue with D1 - Project Budget: The text box for Total costs seems to have a formula embedded, however the formula just adds up Total staff costs and Total participant costs. Can you please modify this to also include Total other costs, or remove the formula so I can add the correct value for Total costs?**

We have checked the formula in the application form for question D1 and it has calculated a total for all 3 costs, staff, participants and other. Try testing this by pressing the tab key rather than the enter key after you input your figures.

We are unable to remove the formulas from the application form as other applicants are using the form with the formulas in.

Week Commencing 03/01/17:

1. **The link to access the application form on page 47 of the prospectus does not appear to be working. The following message is received: 'The application form that you are attempting to access is no longer available'. Could you please advise?**

The link in the prospectus has now been updated. Please also note that the 'how to apply' link on our [website](#) will also take you directly to the application form.

2. **There appears to be some problems with the form. I have filled out the introductory questions and for some reason have received email confirmation with all my answers, yet when I log back in everything is empty?**

Each time you save the application form, you will receive an email with details of your application thus far.

To re-access an application form that has already been started, you should not click on the apply button again. To return to your account and access your saved form, click on: http://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_668. This is stated on page 48 of the prospectus.

3. **Could you please confirm that Question A4 in the Application form is the same question as that in the "Your Proposed Service" section of the online portal and therefore has a 200 word limit and is unscored?**

Yes section A4 is unscored and only a brief summary of 200 words is required.

4. **On page 3 of the application form it states that answers must be completed in Arial size 12, however it automatically formats to Calibri size 11 and formatting is locked so it is not possible to edit font size or type. Please could you advise?**

Please be advised that for the purposes of this application form, you can continue to use Calibri 11 where it defaults to that font.

5. When do you expect the contract to start? The prospectus states 11/12/2016, which obviously isn't possible?

No you are right, the correct start date is no sooner than 12/05/17.

Week commencing: 13/03/17:

1. What is the new closing date for applications?

Applications to this Hounslow Digital Skills Programme will now close on **7 April 2017, 12 noon.**

Eligibility

1. Can a "for profit" organisation apply for this opportunity as a lead or sub delivery partner?

Yes

2. We would like to bid as a consortium of providers but the consortium itself does not have a constitution. Would one of the partners need to make the application on behalf of all the partners?

Yes, one partner would need to act as lead partner for the project.

3. Do we have to submit a draft partnership agreement for all partners?

No, a template agreement which you plan to use with all partners is sufficient.

4. Will the draft partnership agreement be needed for strategic partners (i.e. with organisations where funding will not be paid for an element of project delivery)?

No. Where no funding is to be paid to a partner a draft partnership agreement will not be required.

5. If partnership forms we submit, need to be signed by partners? If it is sufficient for signatures to be electronic signatures?

The Partnership agreement we need to see is only a draft, so it's doesn't need to be signed and sealed by the partners, as it no doubt may undergo some changes before delivery starts. (There is an expectation that your partners will have seen it however).

6. Do I have to work in partnership?

You are encouraged to, but it is not a requirement.

7. What level of subcontracting is allowed?

ESF rules require that only 1 level of paid subcontracting is allowed in a funded project. That is, London Councils will contract with the lead organisation, and that lead organisation can contract with another organisation.

8. Can we partner with strategic / statutory bodies?

Yes

9. Would the size of organisations (financial turnover) mean that they can't bid for larger contracts?

As a general rule, when conducting due diligence checks we look to see if the funding would represent more than 50% of turnover, as we may consider this to be a risk. However this would not necessarily stop us from contracting with you.

(By turnover, we mean annual turnover).

10. If the application is submitted by a partnership of say three organisations do you look at their collective turnover or the lead partner's turnover only?

As it is the lead partner which we would be entering into a funding agreement with (and recovering things from) the decision would be made primarily on the risk associated with entering into a funding agreement with the lead partner. We may consider the size of the partnership and turnover of the partners, it's a bit of a case-by-case consideration, dependent on the size of funding and nature of the delivery model in the partnership.

11. What period would the financial turnover cover?

The annual turnover of the lead organisation.

12. Does the funded organisation have to provide any cash match funding?

No, all funding will be provided by London Councils, the project should be able to run without being dependent on additional funds.

Project applications

1. Please could you advise on whether any draft contractual terms and conditions will be published alongside the application documents for the current ESF London Councils application opportunity?

We do not plan to publish Draft Terms and Conditions; these will be presented to selected applicant during the funding agreement negotiations.

2. How do I upload multiple annex documents (e.g. letters of employer support?).

One document should be uploaded, we suggest scanning multiple documents together as one file or zipping multiple documents together.

3. Can we state in the application that we will deliver more outputs and results than required in the prospectus specifications?

Yes you can, and if your application is successful, you will be expected to reflect the additional work when planning actual project delivery elements like advisor caseloads. We do however recommend that projects recruit more than the stated number of participants in the applications to account for participant drop-off.

4. Budget: (Application Form: Part D): 'Does "Organisation" column mean a separate budget is needed for each partner?'

You need to include the employer/organisation name for each person who will deliver each item in that table.

5. Can I apply for all of the funding value of the borough project?

You may apply for all of the funding value for the project. However please bear in mind that your application should be costed in line with your project requirements, including number of prospective participants, outputs and results to be achieved and staffing and participant needs. You should also aim to achieve value for money.

6. Is this Borough Employment funding targeted at any particular wards within the stated boroughs?

No it covers all of Hounslow.

7. Track record: Are three or up to three examples required?

Three examples are required. You should bear in mind that you may be scored on each example you provide. Therefore if you provide less than three examples, your score (if given) may be less than if you have provided three examples.

8. What is the allowable management fee?

Up to 15%.

7. Will there be any information workshops/seminars about applying for this funding?

Yes, London Councils is planning to hold a workshop in February 2017. You will be able to apply to attend the workshop, which will provide information about the application process. Please note that in the interests of fair and open competitive processes, we will not be able to assist you to write your application, but can provide general information about the application process.

8. If I submit my application after the deadline, can it be accepted?

No, we are required to adhere strictly to deadline date/time, in the interest of fairness to other applicants. If you feel that your application may be delayed due to an issue with the application materials/system, caused by London Councils, please inform us before the deadline date. We will attempt to remedy the issue/s, before the deadline date, as much/ and as soon as practicable.

9. Are the application documents available in any other format. For example, braille, audio book, in languages other than English?

Requests for application documents in any other formats should be made to London Councils, via the funding inbox, or by contacting officers within the ESF London Councils Employment and Inclusion Team.

Project delivery

1. Will an advance or start-up payment be made at the beginning of the project?

Yes, refer to the prospectus and specifications.

2. How will advances be claimed back?

Invoices claimed against delivery will be reduced i.e. a quarter of the value of the advance will be removed from the claim for four quarters. (Dependent on delivery performance and the length of contract).

3. Do you have a preferred package for what systems a project/organisation will use?

Scorers will judge projects on the viability of their systems to cope with the need of the project. However we do not have a preferred system. London Councils will provide template forms which capture all the information London Councils / ESF will require, and an excel database for the project to report this back to London Councils. Successfully funded project/s will also be provided with an 'operational/procedural' Project Handbook. The Handbook provides advice on all aspects of project compliance.

4. Can we work with 14-16 year olds?

No. 14-16 year olds should be directed to Skills Funding Agency funded provision. All participants you work with will need to be 19 years of age, or above.

5. We do not have offices in all the Boroughs required for this borough project – will this affect our Bid. What about if we have a room in the local Job Centre Plus (JCP) office?

It is acceptable for the project lead to have its head office in the Borough or even outside the Borough. When an application is scored though, in order to be considered a viable project, it should have at least one office in the Borough (that the project would be funded to deliver in). This office must be accessible to all candidates (including disabled). The usual participant is not keen to travel too far and they may also have things such as child care to take into account. Therefore an office / meeting area nearby are important.

With respect to having rooms within a JCP office, we would expect this to only be used to triage and to initially meet and recruit participants. It has been our previous experience that agreements with Local JCP offices can be subject to change and that their priority will be working with those delivering the work programme. As you will need to deliver information, advice and guidance to candidates as well as other things such as CV writing and job search, it is far more beneficial to have your own flexible space for delivery.

Outputs and results

1. Can my organisation claim for employment on leaving the project and a progression to education or training against the same participant?

No.

2. Can my organisation claim for employment on leaving the project if the participant finds employment at our organisation?

Yes assuming that the employment meets the general into work criteria for hours etc. However these results may be audited to a higher degree.

3. Do all outputs and results have to be claimed within the specified delivery period?

Yes, all outputs and results should be claimed and be reportable by the achieved by dates stated.

4. Does my application have to include all of the outputs and results, or can I choose which outputs and results to apply to deliver to participants?

Your application must be for a project which is able to deliver all outputs and results for the borough specification.

5. Is there information about the outputs and results that need to be achieved?

Yes, this is contained in the accompanying Main Borough Programme prospectus.

6. The specifications in the prospectus includes percentage figures for conversion. What does the percentage conversion mean?

The percentage conversion is included to allow you to see the following:

- The target for the percentage of participants who receive Information, Advice and Guidance, compared to the total number of participants enrolled.
- The target for the percentage of participants, enrolled on the project, who successfully gain employment, within four weeks of leaving the project.
- The target for the percentage of participants, successfully gaining employment, who successfully sustain that employment for 26 weeks (out of 32).