Independent Age Grants Fund

Application guidance

1. About this guidance

Please read this guidance carefully. It should give you all the information you need to apply to the Independent Age Grants Fund. It will also help you know what we are looking for in applications; how we will make our decisions; and what you can expect from Independent Age if you get a grant.

Please read through to the end. We have no opportunity to discuss your work with you, so we have to rely on what you tell us in the form in making our decisions. We have provided guidance on each question on the application form to help you make your case as clearly and strongly as possible.

2. Important information – please read before you start

We opened the Independent Age Grant Fund in May while the UK was in the midst of lockdown. Since then, the situation has been moving fast. The key criteria and focus for the Fund haven't changed but we have had to adjust some of our requirements in the light of huge response we have seen and the changing environment for older people. **So, before you start, please check this section to see whether it affects your application or your chances of success.**

What we will fund

The costs of re-opening: As restrictions ease across different parts of the UK, face-to face services are gradually re-opening. Provided your work meets the priorities of the Fund, we are happy to help with the costs associated with re-opening to ensure a COVID-safe service but **ONLY** if your service is exclusively for older people. If you work with other age groups, please ask us to support the direct costs of your targeted work with older people.

Buying IT equipment for older people: We have received a lot of applications to help provide IT equipment (mostly tablets or laptops) to older people who meet the priorities of the Fund and do not have access to online services. We will **ONLY** consider requests for IT equipment if we can be confident that these older people will get good support in learning how to use it and that the costs and feasibility of being online have been considered. If you want to apply for funding for this kind of work, please make sure you deal with these issues in your application.

Who we will fund

Reserves over 1 year: In such a challenging financial environment, we know that many organisations are using reserves to stay afloat. But we have received such a large number of excellent applications in our first two rounds that we have had make judgements about who needs our money most. We have reluctantly decided that we cannot prioritise organisations with unrestricted reserves in excess of 1 year's expenditure based on the last set of accounts. The only exception is for very small organisations, with an annual income of £50,000 or less.

Grant as a proportion of income: We welcome applications from small organisations that meet the Fund's criteria. But we are very unlikely to offer a grant that exceeds 50% of annual income. If you are a very small organisation, please bear this in mind in deciding how much to ask for.

Extending our reach

We want our funding to reach across the UK and to a wide range of agencies working with different communities. With just over £1.5 million given in grants, there are some gaps that we hope to be able to fill in this final round of grant-making. Please check our website and follow our Twitter feed to find out the kinds of applications we are especially keen to attract. All organisations working with older people who fit the priorities of the Fund are still very welcome to apply.

If you have applied before

Please note that you can only apply once. If you have made an application to an earlier round of the Fund, you cannot re-apply.

If you need more help

We have tried to make this application process as simple and straightforward as possible, especially as everyone is under enormous pressure. Unfortunately, we won't be able to answer questions by phone. But, if anything is unclear, please email us at **GrantsFund@independentage.org**. We will reply as quickly as we can so as not to hold up your application. We will also use people's questions to develop FAQs for the Fund on our website **www.independentage.org/community/grants-fund**.

3. Dates and deadlines

The final round of the Fund opens on 17th August 2020. The closing dates and our deadlines for getting back to you with a decision are:

	Round opens for applications	Closing date for applications	When we will confirm our decision
Round 3	17 August 2020	9am on 11 September 2020	16 October 2020

We don't know how many organisations will apply for grants so please send your application before the relevant deadline if you can. This will help us make sure that we can keep to our timetable, even if we have a very large number of applications.

4. How we will use the eligibility questions

The five eligibility questions at the top of the application form are designed to check whether we can accept an application from your organisations for this Fund. If you cannot answer **YES** to all five questions, please do not apply. We will not be able to look at your application or offer you a grant.

5. Filling in the application form

Please answer all the questions and try not to go over the maximum word limits.

Section 1: Contact details and Section 2: About your organisation

The first two sections ask for contact details and basic information about your organisation and what you do. Please make sure you complete the statistical information in Section 2. If you do not work exclusively with older people, it is particularly important to give us the percentage of older people you worked with last year.

Please also note that you should **NOT** tick the boxes indicating that you work with Black and minority ethnic communities, Disabled people (including people with mental health challenges), LGBT+, Women, Men, and People from faith communities unless the work you plan to do is aimed **ONLY** at older people from these groups.

Section 3: About the work

We know that coronavirus has created challenges for all older people – in keeping safe and well, in managing the practicalities of day to day life and in coping with isolation, and the stress and loneliness that this can cause. But this Fund supports work targeted at older people who are having an even tougher time than older people in general – the people we have described in our criteria as **living in particularly complex and challenging situations or who are in danger of being out of sight and out of mind**. Unless your work is clearly targeted at one or both of these groups of older people, please do not apply for a grant as we will not be able to help you.

The first question – asks for details about how the older people you are working with fit with the priorities that we have described in the Fund's criteria. From your answer we will want to understand who you are working with and how they are more affected by the impact of coronavirus than others in the general older people's population. We ask you to tell us about the support they need and the work you plan to do in the third question, so there is no need to give us that information here. Please don't just rely on general statistics: we want to hear about your own experiences and what is happening in your community.

If you are working with **people facing complex and challenging situations**, who need extra support to stay safe, healthy and connected with others, what are you seeing and what are older people telling you about the challenges they are facing? What is it about having caring responsibilities, managing their own mental health distress, or living with disabilities or serious underlying health problems, that makes life even more difficult now? These are just examples – there may be many other reasons why the older people you work with are having an even harder time than others. You need to help us understand the reality of their day to day lives in the context of coronavirus.

If you are working with people **in danger of being out of sight and out of mind**, whose needs are not always well understood or well met by more generalist services, again we want you tell us about the extra challenges they face because of coronavirus. You may be working with, for example, Black and Minority ethnic groups, LGBT+ or members of a faith community – or providing services just for women or just for men. Or you may be working in a very deprived urban or rural area or with individuals who are living in deep poverty. Or your service may be reaching older people who are being abused in their homes, are refugees, homeless or struggling with drug and alcohol problems. Whatever groups you are supporting, we need you to build a picture for us of how and why they are finding life even more difficult than older people more generally. What *is it* about living in a very poor area or being LGBT+ that makes it harder to cope with the impact of coronavirus? Why *do* people in BAME communities or those facing abuse struggle even more?

If the people you are working with meet both of our priorities (and we know that many do), you don't need to address each priority separately in your answer. Simply explain as clearly as you can what challenges these older people are facing and how their situation has been made even more difficult because of coronavirus.

Once you've written your answer, it might be useful to check with someone who isn't familiar with your work and see if they would be able to answer the question, '*Why is this group of older people struggling with the impact of COVID more than their peers in the general older people's population?*'.

The second question – asks you about your experience of working with this group of older people and what you have achieved. We want to know that you have a good track record in this work and understand what it takes to do it well. Tell us what you think is important when working with this group of older people and if you have any data, evidence, or stories of what you've achieved, you can include it here.

The third question – asks what you want to do now to help the older people you are targeting. We are interested in hearing how you have decided what is needed and some detail about what you propose to do – although we fully understand that your plans may change over the six month grant period because the situation is so unpredictable.

The fourth question – asks about the difference you hope this will make. You do not need to set out any formal outcomes or explain how you will measure them (although you are welcome to do this if this is the way you prefer to work). We simply want to understand what changes you hope your work will make possible for the older people you are able to support.

Section 4: About your request for funding

The minimum grant from the Fund is £5,000 and the maximum is £15,000. We will be making this money as unrestricted as possible, so that you can use it flexibly to support older people who meet the Fund's criteria if their needs and circumstances change. In this section we are looking for your best estimate of how you will want to use the funds over the next six months and the total you need. Please only ask for the funds you need, so we can fund as many organisations as possible.

Section 5: Running your organisation

We want to support organisations that have managed to keep running and providing good services through this very difficult time and have plans in place that give them reasonable confidence that they will be able to continue to do this for at least the next six months – and ideally for longer.

We know, of course, that this impossible for anyone to guarantee at the moment and we don't expect anyone to have all the answers. It is more important that you have thought clearly about the risks and are taking action to manage them, wherever you can. The questions in this section give you the opportunity to tell us:

- What you have been doing to keep your services running, support your staff and volunteers and manage your organisation as best you can at this time.
- How strong your finances were before the challenge of the coronavirus.
- The financial risks you can see over the next 12 months and what you are doing to try to manage and minimise them.

Section 6: Supporting documents

Please don't forget to attach these key documents with your application:
- Your governing documents/constitution
- A copy of a recent bank statement (within the last 3 months)
- Your last set of signed annual accounts – please make sure your accounts are signed and dated and the auditor/independent examiner's report is included
- Your safeguarding policy and procedures. Please make sure that you send us your procedures as well as your policy. We take safeguarding seriously and need to see both how you describe your safeguarding responsibilities and how clearly you have thought through putting them into action
- Your bank account details on headed paper (including address, contact name, email address)

6. How will we decide who to fund?

After we have checked that you are eligible to apply, we will carefully consider all the applications we receive. We know we will not be able to support everyone who applies, and so we will base our decisions on the following:
- how strongly you have made the case for support
- the likelihood of you delivering the difference you wish to make
- the actions you have taken to help you continue your work in these challenging times.

We are also keen to make sure that our funding reaches across the UK and to a wide range of agencies working with different communities. The grants we make will reflect this commitment so please make sure you tell us which groups you are working with and what issues they experience in Sections 2 and 3 of the application form.

7. Feedback

We know how disappointing it is not to receive feedback on unsuccessful bids. But, as a new Fund operating in the current crisis, we have to give priority to assessing applications so that we can allocate grants as quickly as possible. We may be able to help you or the older people you work with in other ways, through our helpline, information resources or befriending. Please go to www.independentage.org/get-support if you want to know more.

8. Reporting and learning

We will not ask for long or complicated reports on the work we support but we will want some basic figures on the numbers of people you help and a brief description of what the grant allowed you to do. We also would like to talk to everyone who gets a grant so we can understand what has been achieved to inform any future grant making and share our collective experience more widely within our sectors and beyond.

9. Keeping in touch

By making this application you will have the option to confirm that you are happy for us to keep in touch, including circulating news and information via email on potential opportunities to apply for further funding from the Independent Age Grant Fund.

Alongside the Independent Age Grants Fund we would like to understand where else we could support you in your work in the future. By ticking the box at the end of the application form you are agreeing that Independent Age can get in touch to discuss other areas of support such as training, events, fundraising, safeguarding and social media.

Please see our Privacy Policy on our website www.independentage.org/our-privacy-and-cookies-policy.

We hope you will find this helpful, but you can come off our mailing list at any time by emailing GrantsFund@independentage.org.