

Highland Council on behalf of the

Highland Employability Partnership



Community Engagement Fund 2023-24

**GUIDELINES**



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| **The Highland Employability Partnership (HEP)** |

No One Left Behind (NOLB) aims to change the employability system in Scotland to make it more adaptable, responsive, and person-centred. In Highland this will be delivered via the Highland Employability Partnership (HEP) and 3 sub-Highland Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs) in North Highland, West Highland, and the Inner Moray Firth.

The Highland Employability Partnership (HEP) was re-established in 2021. It is a multi-agency approach to ensure that partners work collaboratively to deliver employability services across the Highland Council area. Through collective leadership, the Partners aim to develop shared objectives to service design which addresses the need of both clients and employers and embraces greater integration and alignment of resources to simplify and maximise opportunities.

The aim of the HEP is to work with individuals and employers to raise as many Highland residents as possible out of poverty through sustainable and fair work; supporting those who face multiple barriers into employment and enabling progression out of poverty for those who are already in work.

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| **About the Fund** |

Utilising Scottish Government funding in support of No One Left Behind in the Highlands, HEP partners have agreed to run a Community Engagement Fund in financial year 2023/24.

We want to provide community based third-sector organisations across Highland with funds to run activities that will engage and support people locally who could benefit from extra help to secure employment or to help those already in work, to progress.

However, we know that some families are particularly vulnerable to poverty and all bids must try to help families at greatest risk, secure or progress in employment.

According to the Scottish Government’s Best Start, [Bright Futures – Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan](https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-bright-futures-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-26/pages/3/), almost 90% of all children in poverty in Scotland live within the six priority family types shown below.

* Lone parent families
* Minority ethnic families
* Families with disabled parents and / or children
* Families with 3 or more children
* Families where the youngest child is aged under 1
* Families where the mother is aged under 25

Whilst it is recognised that engagement can take time and requires sensitivity, the key aim of the fund is to generate new referrals to the Highland Council Employability Service from people in communities across the Highlands who have indicated that they would like support.

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| **Project Requirements** |

**Who can apply?**

The fund is open to third-sector organisations based and operating within the Highland Council area, to apply for funding of between £2,500 and up to £10,000.

Organisations may submit a maximum of one bid per organisation for this fund.

**Who cannot apply?**

* Individuals
* Public bodies including schools, colleges, universities and ALEOs
* Commercial organisations
* Community and third-sector organisations with their primary base out with the Highland Council area.

**Staffing**

The fund will not support the creation of new posts but can be used to support existing staff to deliver new community engagement activity that will potentially lead to employability referrals.

**Project Timeframe**

The fund will support projects which will start no later than 31st January 2024 and which will be fully completed by no later than 31st March 2024.

**Financial support**

We anticipate that the fund will be able to support about 15 projects. Applications may be made for a minimum of £2,500 and a maximum of £10,000. No match funding is required for this fund, although the proposed budget must be included in the application and must demonstrate good value for money.

All projects which contribute to wages or fees during the delivery period of the project, must pay at least the Scottish Living Wage (currently £10.90 per hour)

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| **Making an application** |

All applicants must apply via email, using the form which is available in word format below.

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When applying you must include (or provide a link to) the required supporting documents listed below:

* Constitution or Memorandum and Articles of Association
* Most recent annual accounts or if not available, the last 3 bank statements
* A bank statement to prove that the organisation has an active UK bank account at the time of application.
* Child protection and / or Safeguarding policy
* Equal opportunities policy or statement

Application forms and supporting documents can be submitted at any time through to 5pm on Tuesday 9th January 2024 to employability@highland.gov.uk

Applications which don’t use the application form and / or don’t provide the supporting documentation will not be assessed.

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| **What happens next?** |

**Stage 1 – Acknowledgment**

Once an application has been received, you will be sent an acknowledgement within 2 working days. If you haven’t received this after this timeframe, please contact employability@highland.gov.uk

**Stage 2 – Eligibility check**

Before a formal assessment is undertaken, the following checks will be made. Applications which do not fulfil these eligibility criteria will not be assessed.

* The application was submitted before 5pm on Tuesday 9th January 2024, using the application form.
* The applicant is a constituted community organisation.
* The applicant is a third-sector organisation based and operating in the Highland Council area.
* The proposed project will commence no later than 31st January 2024.
* The proposed project will be fully completed by no later than 31st March 2024.
* The total sum of money applied for is between £2,500 and £10,000.
* The project does not seek to create a new post or posts.
* Full projected income and expenditure is outlined in the application.
* Projects which contribute to wages or fees during the delivery period of the project, must pay at least the Scottish Living Wage (currently £10.90 per hour)
* All supporting documents or links to them provided with the application.
* Application signed by two persons from the organisation.

**Stage 3 – Assessment**

Once it has been established that the application is eligible, formal assessment will begin. Assessments will be undertaken by a panel of 3 representatives from 3 HEP or LEP partner organisations.

Assessments will then be presented as recommendations to the Highland Council HEP chair seeking approval, to ensure that the council’s responsibilities as lead accountable body and budget holder are fulfilled.

The assessment will be in four sections as shown below, with the detailed questions for each section laid out in the application form. Each section will be scored 0 to 4 as shown below. For applications to be approved, each section must achieve a score of a least 2 i.e. satisfactory.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| No answer | Unsatisfactory | Satisfactory | Good | Very Good |

All sections are important, but each has a weighting, indicating the importance of the information in relation to the others.

Finally, the score and the weighting for each section will be multiplied together to give a total out of 32. Applications will be ranked highest to lowest, with funding allocated in that order until funds are fully utilised.

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|  | **Score 0-4**(4 being the highest) | **Weighting**(1-3) | **Total**(Score x Weighting) |
| Section 1: The Project |  | 3 |  |
| Section 2: Supporting priority families |  | 1 |  |
| Section 3: Ability to deliver |  | 2 |  |
| Section 4: Value for money |  | 2 |  |
| **Total out of 32** |  |

 **Stage 4 - Decision**

Once the assessment has been completed, applicants will be informed of the outcome – either successful or unsuccessful.

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| **If your application is successful** |

**Payments**

If your application is successful, 80% of the award will be paid out at the start of the project and once the funding agreement has been returned.

The remaining funding will be paid out once there is clear evidence that the initial 80% has been utilised as per the agreement, the project has been completed and a final report submitted. The final payment may be reduced if there is evidence that the full sum isn’t required.

There may be some flexibility to this schedule if there is a reasonable requirement.

**Recording and Monitoring**

Engaging with and supporting people in your community who could benefit from employability support is the primary purpose of this fund. Successful applicants will be expected to ensure that people engaging with the project are formally referred to the Highland Council Employability Service so that progress can be recorded and if needed, signposting provided to other specialist services to ensure the best outcome for the individual.

The Highland Council Employability Service team will fully support you throughout this process.

**Final Report**

At the end of the project and to claim the final payment, a final report will be required describing how the project was delivered, what outcomes were achieved, how the funding was utilised, what lessons were learned (both positive and negative) and what next steps are planned.

**Publicity**

If you are successful, you will be expected to acknowledge the support of the Scottish Government and Highland Council in any publicity. You will need to show examples of this within the final report.

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| **More information** |

If you have any queries or would like more information, email to employability@highland.gov.uk

Privacy information relating to this funding scheme can be found on the Highland Council website [here.](https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1831004/employability_grant)