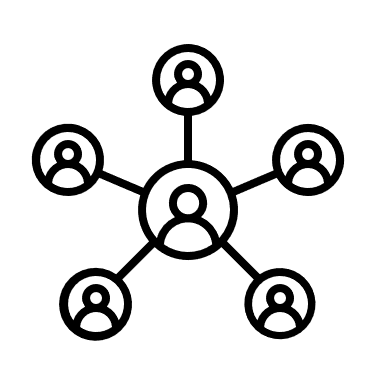


Highland Council on behalf of the

Highland Employability Partnership



Community Engagement Fund 2024-25

**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 is 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, 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 2024/25.

The aim of the fund is to support Highland based community/ third-sector organisations to run activity in their local community that will engage and support people who could benefit from extra help to secure employment or to help low-income working families to potentially grow their household income. Participants should have left school and be between the ages of 16 and 67 years old.

We know that some families are particularly vulnerable to poverty and a particular priority of this fund is to engage with 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, a key aim of the fund is to generate new referrals to the Highland Employability Service. **An expectation of all successful applications is that anyone taking part in activities supported by this fund who can and wants to work are referred to the Highland Employability Service for further support.**

Examples of previous applications include:

**Example A:** Community Café to run a programme supporting people to volunteer in a work like environment, building confidence, gaining skills and improving their chance of employment by the end of the program though gaining certificates and skills.

**Example B:** Work closely with people, giving them environmental sustainability experiences, whilst developing transferable skills and confidence to help them find work and other positive future destinations such as in the renewables, green recovery, engineering and leisure sectors.

**Example C:** Drop-in sessions for young people who have left school but not in education, training or employment. Support to young people using engagement activities to help build confidence, understand what type of job they might want to do in the future and work with them to see how they might progress into that job. Work with the Council’s Employability Service to support the young person achieve their work aims.

**Example D:** A community toddler group where some of the mums and dads have said they are ready to start to think about returning in to work, however lack confidence and skills. Funding to set up a volunteering programme to build confidence and start to work on an Employability Award. Invite to the Council’s Employability Service and Welfare benefits Service to speak to the mums and dads about that support they can offer.

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| **Project Requirements** |

**Who can apply?**

The fund is open to community/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 2025 and which will be fully completed by no later than 31st March 2025.

**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 Real Living Wage (currently £12.00 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 until 5pm Thursday 31st October 2024 (subject to availability of funds) to [employ.ability@highland.gov.uk](mailto:employ.ability@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 [employ.ability@highland.gov.uk](mailto:employ.ability@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 Thursday 31st October 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 2025.
* The proposed project will be fully completed by no later than 31st March 2025.
* 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 £12.00 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 made up from different Highland Employability Partnership or Local Employability Partnership representatives.

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.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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** |

**Grant Offer**

If your application is successful, you will receive a grant offer which will include standard and any project specific conditions. If you accept these, you will be required to sign and return the grant offer. We will then arrange either a face to face or an on-line ‘pre-start’ meeting to ensure that there is clarity regarding the claims process and to answer any further questions you may have.

**Final Report**

All successful projects must submit a final report along with evidence of expenditure, using the template that will be supplied with the letter of offer. This template is included as appendix 1 below for information.

**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.

Any remaining funding will be paid out once a final report has been submitted along with clear evidence that the initial 80% has been utilised as per the agreement and the project has been completed. 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.

Payment of Grant will be made against the eligible headings as listed in the approved application. Final payment will be made on evidence of full eligible expenditure incurred and must be supported by a fully transparent audit trail traceable through timesheets/invoices/payslips/payroll printouts, BACs lists (where applicable) and bank statements.

**Referring clients**

Successful applicants are expected to ensure that anyone taking part in activities supported by this fund who can and wants to work are referred to the Highland Employability Service for further support.

If required, The Highland Employability Service team will fully support you throughout this process.

**Publicity**

If you are successful, you will be expected to acknowledge the support of the Scottish Government and Highland Employability Partnership 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 [employ.ability@highland.gov.uk](mailto:employ.ability@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)