

Coronavirus: guidance to funded organisations and applicants

28/03/2020

COVID-19 is having a significant impact on communities across London. Voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations are playing a vital role in responding to the needs of the most disadvantaged, and like many other funders, we are committed to doing what we can to support this work.

You can find details of the collective funder statement here:

<http://covid19funders.org.uk/>

We are also working with other London funders to provide a coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic through the London Community Response Fund:

<https://londoncommunityresponsefund.org.uk/>

Our primary concern is that your staff, volunteers and clients remain safe and well. The following guidance is intended to answer some of the most frequently asked questions we are currently receiving. At the end of this page, you will find details of how to contact us if you have other queries not covered here.

If you are from an organisation currently funded by City Bridge Trust:

- **Will we still receive grant payments?**
Yes. Although our office is closed, our systems allow for ongoing grant instalments. We recognise that many organisations have had to close their offices and suspend their operations. Where our funding covers your ongoing costs (whether to staff, utilities, rent or other), we want to ensure that you can continue to draw payment.
- **We want to ask for a variation in our grant – how should we do this?**
Many of the organisations we support are having to review their plans or are worried about their future. Please contact your Funding Manager by email to discuss any concerns or updates, or with details of any requests. Our team is working remotely, but everyone is committed to being flexible and supportive.
- **We have, or want to, suspend our operations – can we extend the term of our grant?**
Yes. Please inform your Funding Manager by email.
- **We have just been awarded funding. Can we delay the start of our project?**
Yes. The Terms and Conditions of our funding allow you to delay the start of funded work. Please contact your Funding Manager with updates as you have them.
- **Will we still need to submit a monitoring report?**
- Yes, but we have simplified our impact and learning report template so it should be straightforward to provide us with what we are currently asking

for. If you are unable to complete the form or answer all the questions, please contact your Funding Manager by email. They can discuss your situation and the information you currently have access to, so we can work out how best to support you and whether anything further is required. We will continue to read everything you submit and will learn from it to shape our work across London and to understand how we can best work with and support the organisations we fund. We will aim to respond to all mid-grant monitoring reports within 2 weeks but may take longer to respond to final reports where no further payments are due.

If you are at the end of your grant, we have extended the final report deadline to 6 months after your grant has completed.

Please note if you have already started to complete your monitoring form in the existing Investing in Londoners or Bridging Divides template you can choose to carry on using this template or use the new simplified template – whichever is easiest for you.

- **We want to furlough the staff member(s) covered by your grant – can we do this?**

Guidance on the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>. This site provides details of which organisations and employees are eligible. If you do furlough staff (and therefore suspend work currently funded by City Bridge Trust) please notify your Funding Manager by email to explaining why this needs to happen. Your Funding Manager will then discuss with you whether the project term should be extended and whether the dates when grant instalments are paid should be adjusted.

- **The staff member(s) funded by our grant from City Bridge Trust has/have been formally diagnosed with COVID-19. Can we use your funding to provide sick pay?**

Your staff will be eligible to sickness absence benefits under the terms of the contracts they hold with you. Where your City Bridge Trust grant covers the costs of a specific post-holder, you can use our funds to cover costs incurred in paying their salary if they are unwell or have to self-isolate as a result of COVID-19. We recommend that you refer to NCVO for guidance on contractual and statutory sick pay for those infected by COVID-19 or asked to self-isolate: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/coronavirus>

- **We are in financial difficulty because of the additional costs / lost income resulting from COVID-19. Can we seek additional funding?**

We are currently directing organisations to the London Community Response Fund <https://londoncommunityresponsefund.org.uk/> for additional funds, but we would also ask that you contact your Funding Manager by email to update them on any specific difficulties you are facing. Where reasonable, we will agree variations in your grant to support you during these challenging times.

- **We want to ask for continuation funding, can we do so?**

Yes. We welcome applications for continuation funding and ask that you write to citybridgetrust@cityoflondon.gov.uk if this applies to you. We will do what we can to provide you with a timely decision.

If you are from an organisation who has already applied to us for funding:

- **Are you still considering funding applications?**

Yes, we are committed to working through all applications received to date. Please do bear with us as it is likely to take us longer than usual to review and respond to your funding enquiry.

If you want to apply to us for funding:

- **We want to apply for a new grant, can we do so?**

Our priority is to those organisations who already hold a grant from us. Given the number of requests we are receiving to discuss variations in funding and the work we are doing to support the London Community Response Fund, we have temporarily closed our applications for all programmes except continuation, small grants and Stepping Stones requests. We will review this closure regularly and re-open as soon as possible.

Any other questions?

For general enquiries please write to citybridgetrust@cityoflondon.gov.uk. If you currently hold a grant from City Bridge Trust, please email your Funding Manager directly.

We will respond as quickly as possible, but please bear with us as we are receiving a high volume of enquiries.