

STARTING AT 12 noon

Communities Building Economic Change: Pre-application webinar

Tuesday 15th September 2026

Image: The OK Foundation



Plan for this session

- **Welcome and Introductions**
- **Standing with Londoners**
- **About Communities Building Economic Change**
 - What we will fund
 - Application process
 - Q&A
- **Further info and resources**



Rebecca Roberts, Associate Director

Economic Justice Team:

- **Lily Davies**, Programmes and Partnerships Lead (Maternity Cover)
- **Abi Sommers**, Programmes and Partnerships Lead
- **Hannan Ali**, Programme and Partnerships Manager
- **Matt Robinson**, Programme and Partnerships Manager

Standing with Londoners



Our four visions for a fairer London around which we will shape and develop our future funding programmes



Climate and
Environmental Justice



Access to Justice



Racial Justice



Economic Justice

Meeting Needs

by funding frontline work that provides
holistic support, using community insights to
drive change for marginalised communities



Connecting communities

by strengthening support systems,
cooperation, and resilience through
leadership development, infrastructure,
and network-building



Catalysing Change

by supporting initiatives that aim to bring
about social change



Could social investment help you build economic change?

Alongside grants, we also provide social investment—money that organisations borrow and pay back over time, usually as a loan. It can be useful where an organisation needs money upfront to help create longer-term change.

For Economic Justice organisations, this could include:

- **Community ownership** – for example, enabling a community to buy or improve a building, land or another space that is important locally
- **Community-owned or co-operative businesses** – helping organisations develop businesses where communities have greater ownership, influence or benefit
- **Growing activities that generate income** – where spending money now could help an organisation earn income in future
- **Covering costs before confirmed income arrives** – for example, where an organisation has a contract to deliver a service but needs to pay staff and other costs before it receives that money
- **Combining different types of funding** – where a larger project might need both grant funding and a loan to make it possible



If you have plans like these, talk to us and our Social Investment team can explore it with you. You don't need to work out whether social investment is right for you yourself.

[City Bridge Foundation | Social Investment Fund for London](#)



Communities Building Economic Change 2026/27

The first funding round of our new
Economic Justice Programme



What we mean by Economic (In)Justice

- Many in London are **struggling financially**.
- **Incomes are not covering essentials** – rising costs combine with insecure and inaccessible work.
- **Inequality is rising and wealth is concentrated** in fewer hands
- **Economic injustice disproportionately affects communities who experience discrimination, disadvantage and exclusion** due to factors such as racism, disability, gender, class, migration status, age and health.
- **Communities most affected are furthest from power** and decision-making.
- It is not about individual ‘failures’ – **there are common root causes** to many economic issues.
- These are **structural causes** – how economic systems operate, and the ideas and beliefs that sustain them.

Economic Justice: Vision for the Future



Three dimensions for a Just Economy:

- **Prosperity for all within Ecological limits:**

All Londoners can access the basics for a dignified life.

- **Economic systems that centre dignity:**

New ways of measuring prosperity focus on wellbeing and care.

- **Equitable distribution of economic power and resources:**

Communities have meaningful influence over the economic decisions that shape their lives.

Key Criteria

- **London benefit**
- Small to medium sized: annual income **£50,000 to £1.5 million**
- Deeply **rooted in communities** experiencing high levels of economic injustice
- **Providing frontline services** and support
- **Understanding** that **economic systems** creates the issues their communities face
- **Use insight from frontline delivery to shape systemic work** towards longer-term change in **one or more of the funding priorities**.
 - Building shared understanding of the economy (and what needs to change)
 - Securing the basics everyone needs
 - Giving communities more power
- Track record of **at least two years' experience in longer-term change work**

Communities Building Economic Change

- **Community** is a group who have come together through shared identities, experiences or places.
- **Communities most affected by economic injustice** may include racially minoritised people; disabled people; women; refugees and migrants; LGBTQIA+ communities; low-income and working-class communities.
- **Community-Rooted Organisations are** shaped and driven by the communities and people they serve and represent
 - Meaningful representation across decision-making structures and leadership roles
 - Lived experience informing work and priorities
 - Ongoing practices of accountability.
- **Intersectionality** key consideration in representation.



Grants available

- Total funds available: **up to £6 million**. We expect to award **approximately 20-25 grants**.
- We're offering **core and flexible grants over five years** to small- to medium-sized, community-rooted organisations with an **annual income of £50,000 to £1.5 million**.

£150,000 over five years	£30,000 per year
£200,000 over five years	£40,000 per year
£300,000 over five years	£60,000 per year
£450,000 over five years	£90,000 per year

Eligibility

To apply for Communities Building Economic Change, organisations **must meet all THREE** of the eligibility criteria listed below:

- **Funding priorities** – have a track record of working towards longer-term systemic change in one or more of this round's three priorities
- **Fund eligibility** – be a small- to medium-sized community-rooted organisation delivering frontline services
- **General eligibility** – align with our City Bridge Foundation criteria of being an eligible organisation type, delivering charitable work that benefits Londoners, and meeting our governance and safeguarding requirements



Priority 1: Building shared understanding of the economy (and what needs to change)

- Work which aims to create space for people experiencing economic injustice **to understand why and how problems** such as poverty, inadequate social security provision and rising living costs arise – and that brings people together in **solidarity to change the deeper structures** behind these problems
- This could include **community education, workshops, organising, or work demonstrating that alternative economic approaches can be viable.**

Example:

- A community-rooted organisation in a diverse area with a strong food culture. They convene local residents, small businesses and other groups to build a community-owned and -run cafe and a low-cost food pantry, challenging a model in which large supermarkets dominate the local area and extract wealth.

Priority 2: Securing the basics everyone needs

- Work which aims to **build the foundations for protecting, restoring, and improving access to the essentials everyone needs to live well** – including housing, healthcare, food, energy, care, an adequate and reliable income, and access to decent work (for those able to work).
- This goes beyond service delivery and **could include organising, campaigning, advocacy, or communications work to achieve change**. We recognise that many groups do both, and that deep knowledge gained through frontline provision often helps organisations understand the challenges their communities face and what needs to change.

Example:

- A Deaf and Disabled People's Organisation (DDPO) who run a range of services and social activities. In recent years, they've been campaigning against cuts to disability welfare benefits and changes to PIP assessments after witnessing the harm caused to members.

Priority 3: Giving communities more power

- Work aiming to **help communities gain greater control over the decisions, land, buildings, businesses and services that shape their lives.**
- This could include helping communities **build, share or retain power, ownership, and influence**, such as participatory budgeting, community assemblies, resident-led planning, and other forms of democratic participation to shape economic policies and practices.
- It could include supporting communities to move towards **buying, building or holding assets together**, such as community land trusts, co-operatives, mutuals, credit unions. Grants cannot be used for capital purchases.

Example:

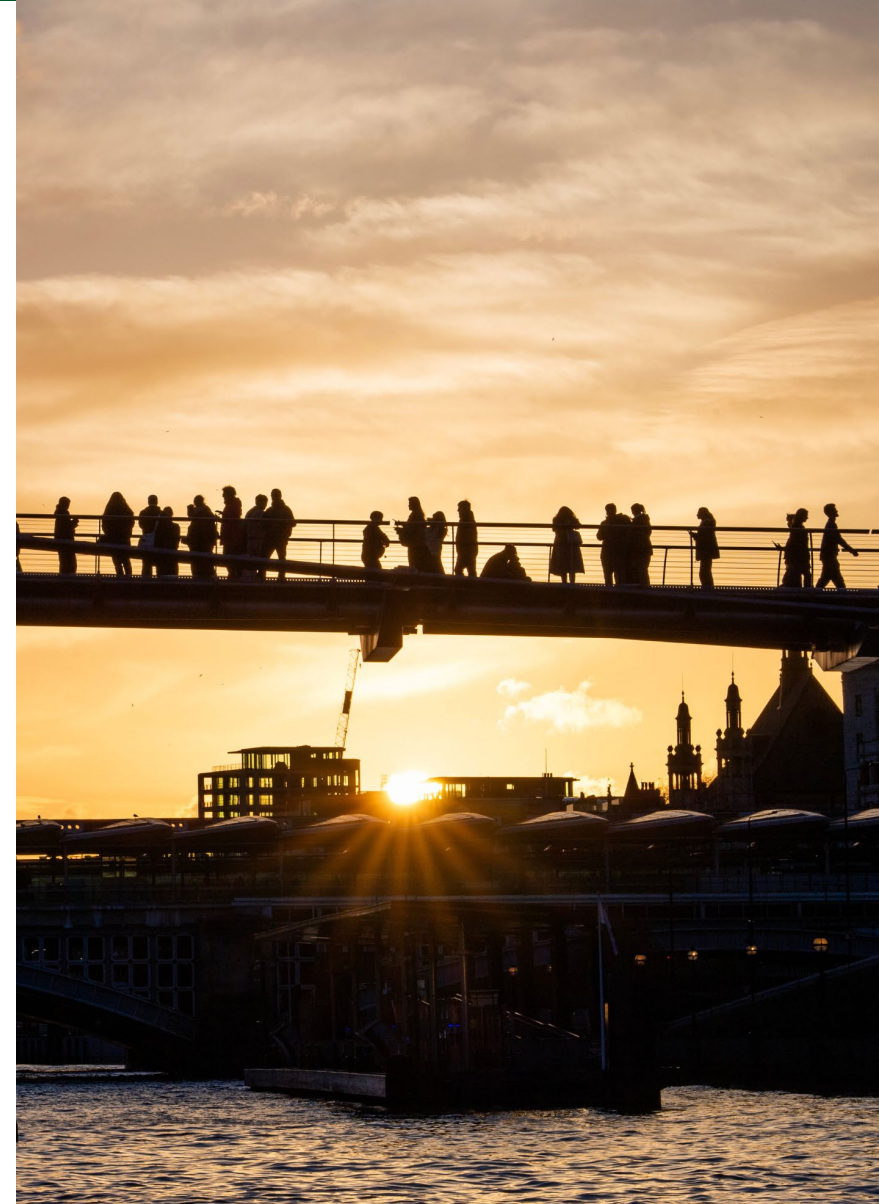
- A group of young South Asian mothers from a low-income community have set up a Community Interest Company (CIC) to provide affordable, inclusive childcare for their families and others, and are now organising to secure a long-term lease for their venue to ensure its continuation.

Organisations must meet **ALL** of the fund eligibility criteria:

- Have an **annual income between £50,000 and £1.5 million.**
- Be **deeply rooted** in communities experiencing high levels of economic injustice
- Provide **practical frontline services or meeting needs support** for their communities
- Work towards achieving longer-term change, underpinned by an understanding that **economic systems creates the issues and needs their communities face**
- Already **use frontline insights** from their meeting needs work to **inform work in one or more of our three funding priorities**
- Be able to demonstrate a **track record of at least two years' experience** in systemic work in one or more of our three funding priorities.
- **Current CBF grantees and partnership applications** are eligible
- Be interested and willing to **participate in connecting and learning work**

This programme may not be a good fit if....

- Your organisation is **not deeply-rooted in communities experiencing economic injustice**
 - Communities are consulted or engaged only
 - Your community does not have significant experience of economic injustice
- You **focus only on providing services or meeting immediate needs**, without using insights from this work to inform systemic change
- Your work is not shaped by the **understanding that the challenges your community experiences are caused economic systems**
 - Your work focuses solely on addressing immediate symptoms and does not consider wider systems, structures, policies or power dynamics
- Your work towards achieving longer-term systemic change **does not align with one or more of our three funding priorities**
- You wish to begin this work in the future but are not already doing it or **cannot demonstrate a track record of at least two years**
- You would **rather not take part in connecting and learning** activity



- At least **one year of audited or independently examined accounts**
- Up to date **safeguarding policy**
- **Minimum three directors or trustees**
- Deliver charitable work that **benefits Londoners**
- **Pay at least the London Living Wage** (£14.80 per hour from April 2026)
- Where formal advice services are provided, hold the appropriate accreditation
- Your organisation **must be one of the following** types:
 - A charity established and registered in the UK
 - A registered charitable incorporated organisation (CIO)
 - A charitable company
 - A registered charitable Industrial and Provident Society (IPS)
 - A charitable community benefit society (BenCom)
 - A Community Interest Company (CIC) – limited by guarantee
 - A Constituted Voluntary Organisation (CVO) – with a fiscal host as the named applicant

Who cannot apply and what we cannot fund

Who cannot apply	What we cannot fund
• Charities established or registered outside the UK • Community Interest Companies (CIC) limited by shares • Hospitals or primary healthcare providers • Individuals • Local Councils for Voluntary Services (CVS) • Political parties • Private organisations limited by guarantee • Profit-making organisations (except social enterprises) • Schools or PTAs • Statutory bodies, such as local authorities	• Capital costs, e.g. land or building purchase or standalone retrofit projects that focus primarily on physical improvements to buildings • Non-charitable activities • Retrospective costs • Vehicles • Work that does not benefit people living in Greater London • Activity such as policy development or campaigning that would deepen economic injustice rather than move towards prosperity for all • Organisations who focus solely on organising, leadership or ‘empowering’ activity only, without being intentional about how their activity aims to achieve a more just economy for all • Organisations who do not hold the view that the challenges their communities face are caused by economic systems, or do not operate with the wider system in mind • Initiatives, such as community energy or housing that are neither owned by nor informed by the communities they are intended to benefit

Application process overview



1. Attend/watch this **webinar**
2. Check the **full eligibility criteria** on our website
3. If you have further questions, request and book a **15-minute pre-application telephone call via our website*** (bookings open at 12pm on 22nd September)
4. **Apply online*** via the Application Portal (22nd September – 3rd November)
5. Stage 1: Application & Shortlisting (September – January 2027)
6. Stage 2: Assessment Visit (January – March 2027)
7. **Final decisions by end of March 2027**

*** If you need to submit your application in a different format, require accessibility adjustments or are otherwise experiencing difficulties accessing our online form, please contact funding@citybridgefoundation.org.uk for assistance**

Application & decision timeline

Timeline	Dates
Programme opens:	14 September 2026
Live webinar date:	15 September 2026
Applications open (and pre-application calls open for booking):	12 noon, 22 September 2026
Pre-application calls available:	25 September to 29 October 2026
Application deadline:	12 noon, 3 November 2026
Applicants notified of Stage 1 decision (after review of all applications):	11 January 2027
Final decisions following Stage 2 assessment (including if unsuccessful):	16 March 2027

Please note that these timeframes may vary.

Thank you for
listening
Any questions?

- We will update the FAQs webpage after this session and continue to do so over the coming weeks as we receive further questions through pre-application calls
- Please book a pre-application phone call to ask up to three specific questions