

Your application guide

Please use this document to understand if your organisation is eligible to apply to the John Lewis Partnership Foundation Employability Fund, and what Trustees are looking for in an application.

How to apply

To request an application for an Employability Fund grant, please email us at trustsandfoundations@johnlewis.co.uk, indicating which fund you'd like to apply to, and we'll send you some information.

Is your project eligible?

Your project must benefit communities in which there is a John Lewis Partnership presence – for example, a John Lewis store, Waitrose store, supplier, manufacturer, distribution hub or contact centre.

Currently, the Trustees are investing in young people who live in disadvantaged communities that support the John Lewis Partnership throughout the world, helping them acquire the skills needed for meaningful employment.

Your project must be inclusive of all parts of society, non-denominational, and non-political. For example, a project run by an organisation with a particular religious ethic or way of thinking may be considered, as long as the project doesn't exclude individuals who are not of that religion or way of thinking as part of the project.

Your project must not be a course (e.g. staff training), conference, festival, expedition, overseas travel, fundraising event, reception, lecture, respite break, residential or holiday. It must not be for sponsorship, whether individual or group.

For more general guidance, the Trustees are looking for projects that:

- are sustainable and create a quantifiable legacy
- demonstrably improve social inclusion
- have a beneficial impact on the wider community
- measurably improve understanding and community cooperation

While the Trustees are happy to co-fund projects with other donors, they need to be satisfied that the funds are being used for initiatives that meet their criteria. The Trustees therefore prefer to fund a discrete project or discrete area of a larger project, rather than provide top-up for shortfall funding.

Before applying, please check your project against the following criteria. You need to be able to answer 'yes' to all questions to be eligible for John Lewis Partnership Foundation Funding.

- **Is my organisation a registered charity or a Community Interest Company, or can I demonstrate that my project is a charitable activity?**
- **Does the project fall within the list of Charitable Purposes as detailed in the Charities Act 2011?**
- **Does the project focus on an area of need within a community that supports the John Lewis Partnership business, and is it designed to benefit a group of vulnerable young people?**
- **Does the project focus on improving employability?**

You also need to be able to answer 'no' to the following questions:

- **Is my organisation a pressure group or campaigning organisation?**
- **Does the project aim to promote religion or politics of any kind? Does it exclude any part of society?**
- **Is the main objective to:**
 - purchase or renovate a building or any other capital item?
 - fund consumables, recreation, holiday or respite care?
 - fund courses or conferences?
 - provide sponsorship for an individual or group?
- **Is my organisation seeking funding for core costs or on-going activities?**
- **Does the project include any residential aspect (e.g. a scout or guide camp)?**

How will the Trustees assess my project?

- **Leverage:** can you demonstrate how your project could leverage other funding streams – public or private? This could be to share project costs or improve an individual project's impact, relative to the financial contribution.
- **Innovative and difficult projects:** is this an opportunity to fund a project that's innovative, or to target difficult issues that don't normally attract funding?
- **Chances of project success:** what's the likelihood of success based on previous projects, background studies, and the proposed work plan?
- **Impact:** Trustees will prioritise projects that deliver the maximum positive impact to the greatest number of beneficiaries.
- **Sustainability:** how sustainable is the initiative? If the project is already ongoing, such as health or education facilities, is it solely reliant on funding from the Employability Fund to succeed? Trustees will prioritise projects that clearly demonstrate plans to become self-resourcing.
- **Political and cultural sensitivities:** non-UK initiatives must demonstrate that they are culturally and politically appropriate with supporting information from international charities or local NGOs experienced in the proposed project area.
- **Project management:** can you demonstrate how your project will be managed, benchmarked, and evaluated?

Trustees will hold a meeting to decide whether or not your funding request has been successful. The results will be communicated to you as soon as possible, and within eight weeks of the meeting.