**Including the new Winter Support criteria**

**Guidelines for Applicants**

**Introduction**

Often a small amount of money at the right time can make a huge difference. For this reason, the Small Grants Fund is focused on short-term projects of between 3 and 12 months rather than those which are larger and of longer scale. There is also within the Fund the opportunity to apply for funding to help support our communities through the winter cost of living crisis with a “Winter Support” criteria for funding.

**Who can apply?**

Only individual Church of Scotland churches and presbyteries, and groups of churches or presbyteries can apply under the first four criteria but you can work with ecumenical partners.

If you are applying for a grant under the Winter Support criteria then it is only churches and groups of churches that can apply **and any application will need the support of the Presbytery.**

**How much can we apply for?**

Grants will be up to £1,000 (max) for criteria other than “Winter Support” which is £5,000 (max). The total grant budget is £100,000 with £70,000 of this earmarked for Winter Support.

There is only one grant available per project.

**Criteria for funded projects:**

Projects will bring about change in at least one of the following areas:

* Developing mission through new worshipping communities (including online worship)
* Engaging and attracting those aged 40 and under including children, young people and families
* Addressing pressing issues in the church
* Increasing experimentation with innovation in church practices
* **Winter Support:** supporting people in the local area through the winter at this time of increased need. **It is very important that you consult the highlighted section “Answering Q12 When Applying Under Winter Support Criteria” below.**

**What can and cannot be funded?**

* Awards are to be used with a *revenue project focus.* If applying under the Winter Support criteria then the project has to deliver activity during the winter months (Dec to Feb inclusive).
* Awards cannot be used for:
	+ contribution to capital building costs
	+ covering retrospective costs
	+ making up shortfall in income
	+ Paying for heating costs of church buildings in terms of ‘normal’ running costs with no additional activities.

**How do we apply?**

We strongly recommend that you use the Word template form (available from the Church of Scotland web site under the “Connect” tab in the “Small Grants Fund” section or by emailing SGF@churchofscotland.org.uk) to plan your draft before completing the online form as there will be no option to save your application and return to complete it later.

**Answering Q12 When Applying Under Winter Support Criteria**

If you are applying under the Winter Support criteria then you need to tick the box “Winter Support” under Q12 and then provide information in the box that then appears under each of the following four areas:

1. Describe what you have done to engage with ecumenical partners (i.e. to ensure that two similar projects are not opened adjacent to each other or are planned to operate at different times)
2. Applicants will need to demonstrate how their project will support people in the local areas through the winter at this time of increased need. Project ideas include:
* Working with members of the community to prepare and serve hot food over a given period
* Providing a space where people can keep warm
* Providing a space where people can be sociable (addressing social isolation and loneliness)
* Supplying additional warm clothing and blankets
* Partnering with local organisations to provide advice on benefits and other support available
* Offering additional assistance to projects operating under their auspices and directly relating to support for communities over the winter period
* Additional activities which may be unique to your given situation and may include ways of helping people to keep warm when they return home.
1. Tell us how you have worked with people in the local community to shape what you will be offering
2. Winter Support projects will need to be open to everyone. However, priority for funding will be given to congregations which can **demonstrate that they are working with the poorest communities and groups in their local areas**. In most cases we will use the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) as a guide to ascertaining the levels of need <https://simd.scot> or you can make an argument for equivalent severity in other areas on grounds such as rural fuel poverty.

**Match funding**

There is no requirementfor proof of match funding but projects can go beyond the funding provided by sourcing match funding. (“Match funding” is funding which is used to “match” the funding provided by a grant maker and comes from other sources.)

**When can applications be made?**

Applications can be made at any time in two periods, February–June and September–November, and will be assessed on a rolling basis, in the order in which they are received via the online application form until the budget allocation is exhausted.

**How quickly will an award be made and when do we have to use the money?**

We aim to make awards within 6 weeks of the date of application and these need to be spent within 12 months thereafter. Where applications are made under the **Winter Support Criteria** we aim to process these as quickly as possible and expect that monies will be used for activities during the colder months (October to March).

**What is the Assessment Process?**

Application forms will be considered by one of a panel of assessors drawn from Church of Scotland staff. The assessment process may include a phone call with the applicant to gain further details of the project. A matrix scoring system to ensure that grants are assessed against set criteria has been developed. The Grants Manager will review these, seeking a commonality of approach.

In order to expedite applications under the Winter Support criteria these may be assessed by the Grants Manager alone.

The final award decision is made by an awards panel made up of the Grants Manager, Partnership Development Secretary and two Assembly Trustees.

**Can my congregation/presbytery apply for more than one grant at a time?**

Congregations can only hold one grant at any one time. Presbyteries can hold more than one but will need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to manage/oversee each one in their applications. If your congregation was successful in applying for a grant from the Small Grants Fund previously then you will need to have had your End of Project Review accepted before you can have an application considered. For further information contact SGF@churchofscotland.org.uk

**We already have a Small Grant; can we apply for a Winter Support grant?**

Whilst it is not usual to get an additional grant whilst holding a small grant, we are happy to consider all applications presented under the Winter Support fund.

**If the application is unsuccessful, can we reapply?**

Basic feedback on the application will be given in the notification of assessment letter and as long as the project is eligible you can amend your application and reapply at any time.

**Support for applicants**

On-line information sessions will be run from time to time with supporting information supplied on how to make an application to the Fund. We can answer questions about the form; however, we cannot review draft applications. See the How to Apply section of the Small Grants Fund pages on the Church of Scotland site for dates of these sessions.

**Reporting**

Reports from projects are to be submitted within 1 month of completion, or no more than 12 months from time of award, whichever is the sooner. This simple written report will include a description of project, the beneficiaries (or those consulted if a research project), list of any partners and their involvement, intended outcomes/goals, achieved outcomes/goals, unexpected outcomes, key learning points and what the money was spent on. Receipts must be kept for possible inspection by the Fund.

**Data Privacy**

Note that the Privacy Agreement you will be asked to agree to when completing the online application form is available on The Church of Scotland Small Grants Fund web site.

**Extract Minute**

Applications will need to be accompanied by an uploaded, signed extract minute from their relevant church court covering **all three** of the following points:

1. Supporting the application
2. Agreeing with the General Conditions of Award
3. Acknowledging that no other application can be made while this grant is current.

A sample extract minute is available from the Fund website.

If an application is being made under the Winter Support criteria than evidence will also have to be provided of support from your Presbytery.

**If you have any further questions about the Small Grants Fund/Winter Support criteria please send them to:** **SGF@churchofscotland.org.uk**