The Smiles Fund

by Walkers and Comic Relief

Frequently Asked Questions

August 2021

These frequently asked questions apply to The Smiles Fund, which is open for applications until 11am BST on Wednesday 15th September 2021.

Please also refer back to the key reading section for the Smiles Fund via the [funding opportunities](https://www.comicrelief.com/funding/funding-opportunities) page.

Eligibility

**What is the minimum annual income organisations need in order to apply for this funding?**

The minimum annual income is £75,000. Please note we have lowered the minimum income threshold for this programme from our general guidance of £250,000, but the maximum turnover remains £10 million. You can find out more about how much we will agree to fund [here](https://www.comicrelief.com/funding/application-process/#money).

**My organisation is in the process of becoming legally constituted, can we still apply?**

Comic Relief uses the last set of annual accounts submitted to the relevant authority as a basis for whether an organisation is eligible or not. So unfortunately, if you have no annual accounts, you are ineligible to apply.

**Can Local Authorities apply to be either the lead applicant or as a partner?**

Unfortunately, no. Comic Relief does not fund the delivery of services that are normally the responsibility of governments. You can find out more about this by visiting our eligibility criteria page [here](https://www.comicrelief.com/funding/eligibility-criteria/). This would also mean you would be unable to be officially considered as a partner under this funding call (a ‘partner’ in this context means an entity you would be working closely with to deliver the project and they would usually also be responsible for managing part of the budget).

**My organisation currently receives Comic Relief funding, can we still apply?**

Yes, if your organisation still meets eligibility criteria for this fund, we would welcome an application from you.

**Which countries does this funding apply to?**

The funding is for organisations working in the United Kingdom only.

**Can we send more than one proposal?**

To give as many organisations as fair a chance as possible, you can only submit one proposal to The Smiles Fund (though you can be named as a partner on any number of applications). Please be aware that we will never read more than one proposal per organisation.

**What is the difference between annual and management accounts?**

By annual accounts, we mean your organisation’s accounts for the most recent financial year, that have been subject to an audit or reviewed by an independent examiner. By management accounts, we mean your latest income and expenditure report showing your organisation’s current financial position (as annual accounts can often be out of date at the point of submitting a proposal). They are usually tracked against your planned budget for the current financial year. The management accounts should not be more than 3 months out of date.

**Could an application be made including more than one partner?**

Yes, if you believe this would provide the best ingredients for success. In the partnership section of the application form, we ask you to outline roles and responsibilities of each partner.

**We want to submit a partnership bid but the partner is not constituted, can we still apply?**

Comic Relief defines a ‘partner’ in this context as another entity you would be working closely with to deliver the project and they would usually also be responsible for managing part of the budget. If your partner is not constituted, they could still work in partnership with you but would be unable to manage the overall budget. Constituted organisations are legally required to have adequate financial systems in place to manage finances whereas for organisations that are not constituted, there is no standardised system to follow. There are other ways to work together such as applying as the lead organisation and contracting the organisation you wish to partner with as a consultant to support the delivery of your work. Whilst they would not technically be defined as a ‘partner’ for Comic Relief, you would still be working in partnership to deliver the work.

Proposals

**How do you define ‘the arts’ for this funding call?**

We haven’t adopted a singular definition of the arts for this call, but we include visual arts, photography, design and craft, creative writing, performing arts, theatre, dance, music, and singing, and digital or electronic arts, film-making and animation. For the purpose of this fund we are not including horticulture or cooking. The most important thing is that your proposal is clearly using this type of activity to have an *intentional* (rather than incidental) positive effect on outcomes for people’s mental wellbeing. Proposals for arts-based activities which make no reference to how your organisation understands the links between the arts and mental wellbeing are unlikely to be successful.

**When you say, ‘arts and comedy’, do proposals have to incorporate both the arts AND comedy or can we use the arts OR comedy?**

Your proposal doesn’t have to incorporate both the arts AND comedy, and provided you are clearly using the arts OR comedy to *intentionally* affect and learn about positive outcomes for mental wellbeing then please consider applying. By separating comedy from the arts, we want to ensure that projects using comedy know they are eligible to apply. Please note that the funding call prioritisation criteria includes that priority will be given to ensure we fund a balance of comedy based and arts-based projects, so we will be looking for a mixture of approaches across the final cohort.

**What do you mean by ‘early intervention’?**

The aim of this fund is to deliver and build learning around how arts and comedy- based activities can support people at an early stage, before long-term and acute symptoms of a mental illness occur. We recognise that there is also a need for services for people who are already experiencing prolonged and acute symptoms, but this fund is designed to build capacity for supporting people when signs and symptoms of poor mental wellbeing are emerging.

**What do you mean by ‘community-based’?**

We know that demand for mental health and wellbeing support is already high, and that it is challenging for people to find services to meet their needs in a timely way. One of the aims of this fund is to build or expand services which people can access in a community based rather than clinical setting. We therefore expect organisations with established relationships with the people they are trying to reach to apply to this fund. Please consider applying in partnership with other organisations in your network if you each bring specific expertise to a holistic community offer.

**Why can’t we apply for work with young people/children/adolescents when they are also at risk of experiencing poor mental wellbeing?**

We know that lots of people struggle with poor mental wellbeing, including children and adolescents, however this fund is designed to reach adults only, who we know are also affected.

Funding

**How much funding can we apply for?**

We will fund investments from £100,000- £300,000.

**If we ask for the maximum amount, will this be looked upon unfavourably?**

We recommend that you apply for the level of funding based on the need within the communities you are working in and your organisation’s ability to manage and distribute funds within the specified time frame. If you apply for the maximum amount, this would not be looked upon unfavourably. Comic Relief has guidelines around the maximum amount organisations can apply for. Please read more about this [here](https://www.comicrelief.com/funding/application-process/#money).

**What is the deadline for applications to this fund?**

11am BST on Wednesday 15th September. If you are experiencing a technical difficulty that is preventing you from submitting before the deadline please get in touch with us as soon as possible by emailing [fundinginfo@comicrelief.com](mailto:fundinginfo@comicrelief.com).

**If we are successful, when will the funding start?**

Funding decisions will be made by January 2022 and applicants will be notified no later than 7 days after the meeting. We expect projects to start building momentum in early 2022.

**How long will the funding last?**

Funding is available for a minimum of 18 months to a maximum of 30 months. If projects start by spring 2022, they should be planned to finish by summer 2024.

**Do you fund capital costs?**

Comic Relief will not support capital costs over 25% of the total funding request, and capital costs will need to have a strong link to the changes you are aiming to achieve.