

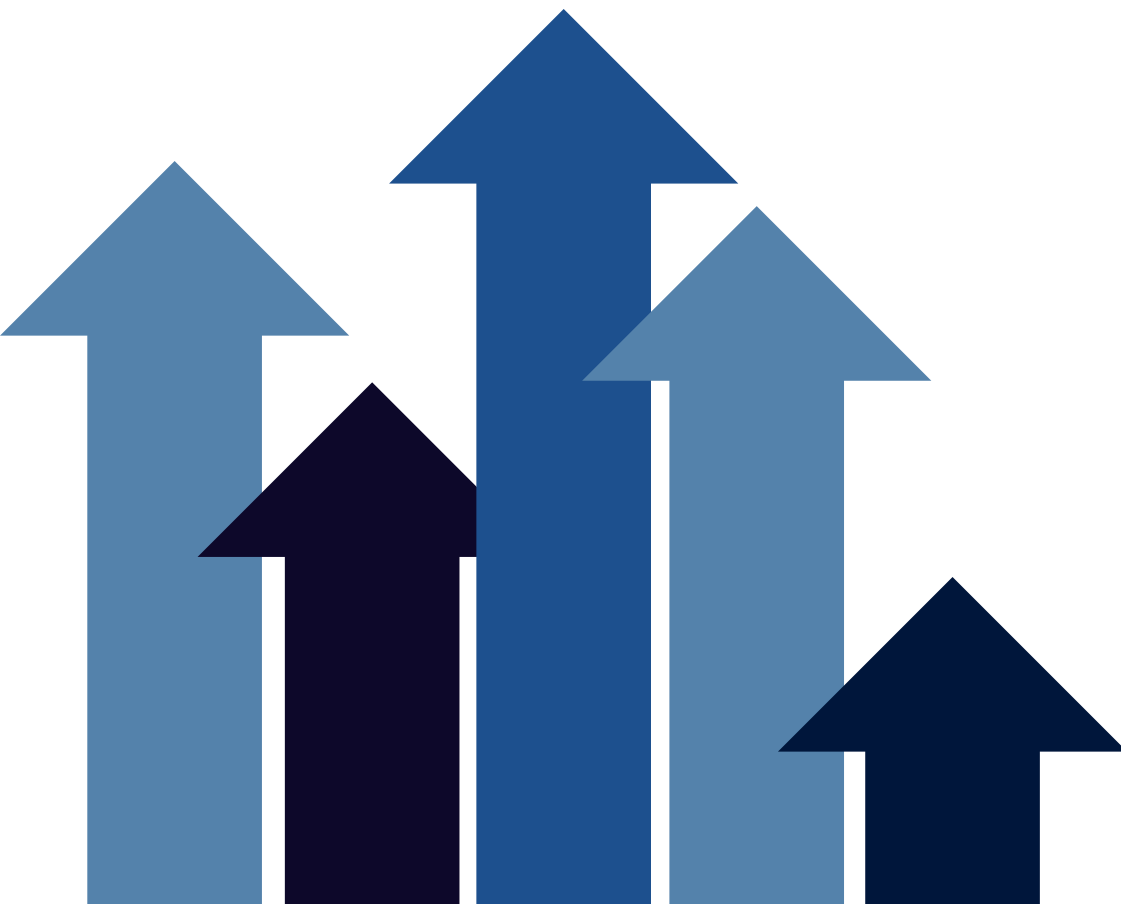


Office for  
Veterans' Affairs

THE ARMED FORCES  
COVENANT FUND TRUST  
*Funded by HM Government*

# Veterans' Career Development Fund

## Programme Guidance



# Veterans' Career Development Fund

## PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

**Under this programme, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust will award grants of up to £70,000 towards projects of up to two years in length that will enable Veterans and their families to enter stable long-term employment, by enabling them to pursue training and qualifications.**

This programme will contribute to the Government's Veterans' Strategy Action Plan ambition which identifies that "Stable long-term employment opportunities after Service are the foundation of positive life outcomes for Veterans, and we know that Veterans all over the country are leaving Service equipped with skills and expertise that benefit not only themselves but our economy too."

Under this programme the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust will award grants on behalf of the Office for Veterans' Affairs towards projects that contribute to the ambition of this mission statement.

It will do this by supporting experienced organisations which can create and promote opportunities for Veterans and their families looking to enter employment, and those already in employment who have the aspiration to progress in their careers, to acquire, or work towards acquiring, supplementary qualifications, technical training and skills.

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## Why are we running this programme?

This programme is intended to contribute to the UK Government and Office for Veterans' Affairs' ambition to improve Veterans' employment outcomes in the UK, by enabling access to and providing learning which will result in the achievement of qualifications, technical training and skills development.

The projects funded under the Veterans' Career Development Fund will help to overcome these barriers by providing the routes to qualifications and training to Veterans and their families who are looking to secure new, or advance within existing, employment.

**This programme supports the Employment, education and skills section of the Veterans' Strategy Action plan, supporting Veterans to enter appropriate employment and can continue to enhance their careers throughout their working lives.**

Veterans' employment is performing well by volume, with 87% of those who engage with available support, reported as being in employment within 6 months of leaving active Service according to the latest Career Transition Partner (CTP) Report 2021-22.

However, there continues to be reports of 'underutilisation' of Veterans in the broader workforce.

This is defined by those who are in employment, but the specific position or type of employment does not make full use of the skills, strengths, behaviours and experiences that the individual Veteran has to offer.

In addition, there is continuing qualitative feedback on certain demographics within the Veteran population who experience inequality in their experience of engaging with existing support and access to available positions within valuable pathways.

We want to support projects that improve the chances for Veterans and their families in the UK to secure and progress within their employment, by providing opportunities for qualifications, training and skills development.

If you are awarded a grant under the Veterans' Career Development Fund, you will be expected to work with other grant holder(s) who have been awarded funding under the Office for Veterans' Affairs Veterans Employment Enhancement Fund, which includes working with wider employment pathways funded by the Office for Veterans' Affairs.

This could include receiving referrals from the employment pathways to your provision of training and qualifications. It could also include referring graduates of your provision to the employment pathways, enabling those who have gained training and qualifications to enter employment.

## What type of project are we looking for?

We are looking for projects that can be clear about the support that their project will offer, how many Veterans and their families will benefit and the outcomes that your project will deliver.

Your project should enable Veterans and their families to access and achieve recognised qualifications that will support them to find employment that matches their skills and interests. This may include helping a cohort of Veterans to acquire a qualification, help them in achieving credits towards a significant qualification or assist them on a pathway towards a qualification which, with your organisation's help, they can realistically pursue. There is more information on the types of eligible qualifications this could include later in this guidance.

# Veterans Career Development Fund

## Successful projects.....



### Support veterans who face challenges in the wider labour market

This can include groups beyond the mainstream veterans' population such as women veterans, those of Ethnic Minority background, LGBT+ veterans, or those with health or support needs. It could also include veterans families in some circumstances



### Enable veterans to obtain formal qualifications

Under this programme, we will only support projects that offer recognised qualifications that support veterans with their chosen career path. This can include credits to a larger qualification. A good project is however, more than offering training. It puts the veteran at the centre of the project; helping that veteran to meet their aspirations, and supporting them along the way



### Collaborate with others

Work with other projects that we are funding through this programme to connect veterans with wider employment support

We can't fund projects that duplicate existing work; including the work of the Career Transition Partnership



### Measure impact

Show us that you understand how your project will lead to long term benefits for the people who take part in it.

Tell us how you will use data to know if your project has been successful



The best projects will focus on meeting the needs of Veterans who are facing particular barriers. This might be because they have left the Armed Forces with limited qualifications, are not engaged in education, or are from a community that can face additional barriers in accessing employment such as Veterans with health challenges (including mental health challenges), disabilities or Veterans from minority ethnic communities.

Your project must not duplicate provision from any current government provided or funded provision of a similar nature. This means that your project must be complimentary in nature without directly duplicating any existing provision.



## Aspirational

Good projects are aspirational and innovative – offering individuals the chance to obtain, or work towards obtaining qualifications.

A good project will develop new ways of reaching Veterans and their families, including those of specific life experiences and backgrounds. It should seek to inspire, support and engage participants. This could include activities such as mentoring, training opportunities, shadowing and work placements alongside obtaining or progress towards qualifications. This will encourage them through their work and social journey, giving them the confidence, they need as well as the opportunity to get or work towards qualifications.

A good project would be able to clearly show how it is Veteran focused in delivery, enabling Veterans and their families to access or work towards fulfilling employment and a solid career path.

We will consider project proposals that have higher costs per head in delivery, and therefore may reach lower numbers of Veteran beneficiaries overall, if you can show us that meeting the needs and aspirations of the particular Veterans you will be working with and supporting carries additional requirements.



## Inclusive

We would particularly welcome projects which seek to engage with groups beyond the mainstream Veteran population such as women Veterans, those of Ethnic Minority background, LGBT Veterans, those with health or support needs, early Service leavers and those aged 50+ looking to re-enter the workforce. This should also include opportunities where possible for Veterans' families including partners, spouses, children (aged 16-24) and the bereaved.

This should also include consideration of whether your project will be delivered in a particular location in the UK or will be taking place in a specific nation or region to make your provision accessible to those out with population centres.

A strong application will be able to show us similar work that you have done before, and how you will engage with these or other identified groups within the overall Veteran population.

An especially strong application will be able to show us similar work that you have done, and how you will work with those who have experienced inequality or who have complex needs. It should demonstrate how your existing experience will inform your approach to delivery and implementation of your project.



## Collaborative

A strong application will also be able to show how you will work effectively and collaboratively with existing partners in the UK Veterans' employment space such as, employers, industry bodies, third sector groups and other relevant authorities and organisations.

In addition, where activity is focused on or covers specific nations or regions within the UK, an application which takes account of and seeks to align in so far as practicable and possible with Devolved Administration and Local Authority economic considerations is particularly welcome.

If another organisation will be receiving part of any grant we award, you will need to have a partnership agreement in place. There is more information on partnership agreements later in this document.

You need to tell us in your application how you will address each of these points.

You should also tell us about the Key Performance indicators that you will use throughout the life of your project, and you will need to include your proposed **Theory of Change** in a separate document. There is more information on your Theory of Change document later in this guidance.

#### **Your application will need to show that:**

- **Your project is needed and targeted:** You should be able to clearly explain how the need for this project has been identified and how you will target the people who have the greatest need for support.
- **It was developed with Veterans and their families:** Show us how the idea for your project has been shaped by the people it will benefit.
- **It does not duplicate and is complementary to existing provision:** Please show us how your project fills a gap in support. You will need to consider whether funding is already available for the training via ELCAS or Adult Education Budget/Government upskilling funds. Also ensuring that the project complements, rather than duplicates the work of existing government provision such as the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provision.
- **It will support longer-term change:** This means there should be a wider impact to your work, which will endure beyond the life of your grant. Your project should show that it offers a positive benefit to Veterans and their families.

We also need to be able to see that you have the skills and experience necessary to be able to carry out your project. You can work together with other organisations as part of your project. There is more information on working with others later in this guidance. It is important that the projects we award funding to complement one another, rather than duplicate provision. You'll be asked in your application form how you will ensure this.

The key information you must tell us about in your application is:

- What qualification opportunity you will be offering and how many Veterans and family members will benefit from either obtaining or working towards.
- How you will ensure that this meets the needs of Veterans and their families
- Why this is different to what you are doing currently, and why do you need a grant.
- Where in the UK your project will be delivered, and who it will be open to
- Why your project is good value for money.
- How you will work with other stakeholders in the UK Veterans' employment space such as, employers, third sector groups and other relevant authorities and organisations.
- What your plans are for future sustainability and the legacy of this project.
- If your project is in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, your application should show how it will contribute to and has taken account of the aims of that Devolved Administration's employment and Veterans' specific initiatives.

### **Example:**

A large business with a Forces friendly ethos that employs Veterans and Reservists across the UK are partnering with a training charity in a region where they are finding it difficult to attract sufficiently skilled Veterans as employees. Recognising that investing in them leads to better productivity, motivation and staff retention, the business will deliver accredited training leading to an NVQ for Veterans who have the potential to join their workforce. Noting the guidelines, the charity, as lead applicant, applied for £70,000 to support Veterans to participate in 7, 10-week courses, which the business will deliver onsite. The Business will provide the training alongside its usual in-house services, at no cost and the funding will be used for the Charity to pay for a skilled worker to find and place the right Veterans into the courses and help them with all the other aspects of support that they may need to prepare them for, and to get the best from this opportunity.

### **Who will benefit?**

This programme is intended to benefit Veterans and members of their families of employment age, including those with complex needs and who have experienced inequality.

You need to tell us in your application about the employment barriers that the Veterans and members of their families you will work with are experiencing, and how your support is accessible, meeting any specific needs the Veterans have. Your project should be able to support Veterans to obtain qualifications - either within the period of the project's support, or, in the future, because of the help you have given them.

### **When can a family member of a Veteran be included as a project beneficiary?**

In some circumstances we may fund projects that offer direct support for family members of Veterans. We define family members for the purposes of this grant fund as partners, spouses, children (aged 16-24) and the bereaved. We will only do this where you can give a clear and compelling case as to how the family members you are working with have faced impact on their careers due to a family member's Service. This may include significant changes in schooling arrangements or significant impact on family life due to serious injury, serious mental health conditions or bereavement. We will consider projects that support partners of Veterans, where you can clearly show that those partners face additional barriers to careers because of their partner's Service.

### **What do we mean by a recognised qualification?**

By recognised qualification, we mean a qualification that is recognised by Ofqual in England and Northern Ireland, or the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework in Scotland or Qualifications Wales in Wales. These may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Level 1 e.g., GCSE (Grades 3, 2, 1 or D, E, F, G)
- Level 1 NVQ (National Vocational Qualification)
- Level 2 e.g., GCSE (Grades 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 or A\*, A, B, C)
- Level 2 NVQ Level 3 e.g. A level, T level, international Baccalaureate diploma
- Level 4 e.g., CertHE (Certificate of Higher Education), HNC (Higher National Certificate)
- Level 5 e.g., DipHE (Diploma of Higher Education), HND (Higher National Diploma)

- Level 6 e.g., Ordinary Degree, Degree with Honours - such as BA (Bachelor of the Arts), BSc (Bachelor of Science)
- City and Guilds
- Apprenticeships

Your project must be offering access to a qualification, or perhaps credits towards a qualification, that helps Veterans and their families enter or advance in their chosen careers. Projects may be funded where it is known in advance that obtaining the qualification may not be possible during the funding period, because of the needs of the beneficiary group. If this is the case, the applicant should detail how they will be able to demonstrate the progress of the participants and evidence that they are on the path towards obtaining the qualification.

The qualification on offer must have clearly defined employability outcomes with links to a potential career.

You must be able to tell us why you need funding to carry out this project and why this funding is not available through another source.

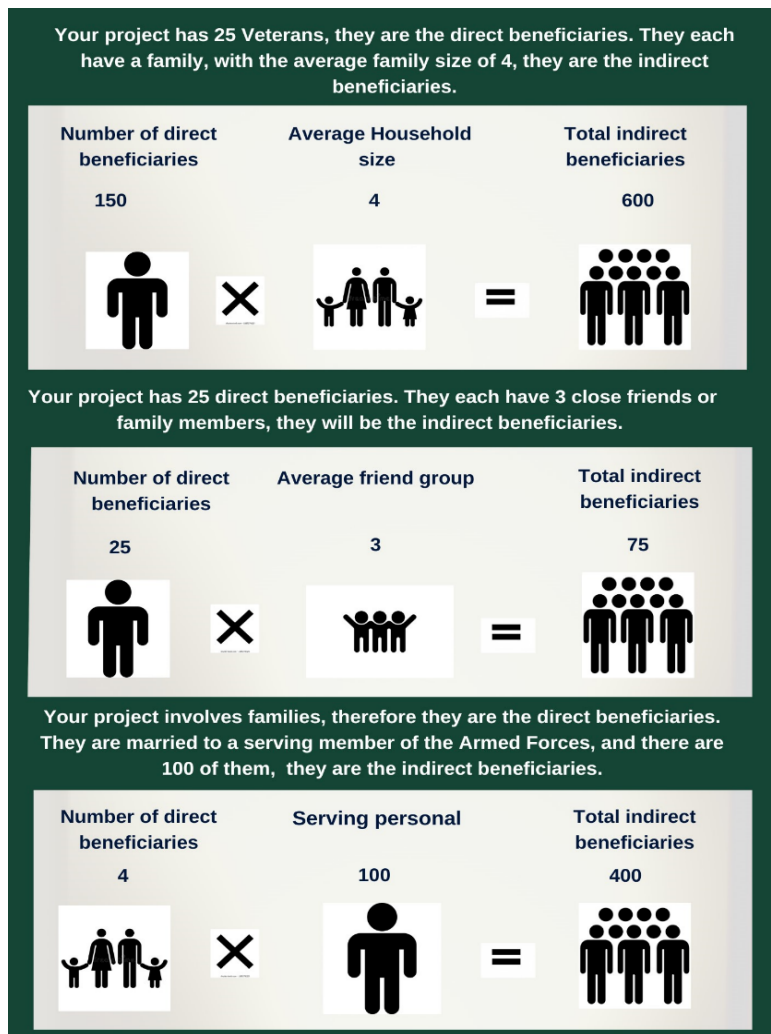
We will not fund projects that act solely as bursaries. By this we mean that we will only fund projects that enable Veterans and their families to access career-appropriate qualifications, skills and training courses while offering them the additional support that they may need, recognising barriers that they may have to the wider labour market. We also expect all projects that we fund under this programme to work together to contribute to wider career development pathways for Veterans and their families. We will not fund projects that propose awarding and distributing bursaries or grants directly to individuals to pay either course fees or living costs during periods of study.

## **What do we mean by beneficiaries and how might they be calculated?**

- The project beneficiaries are those who will benefit from the project. They are the people whose circumstances are changed by implementing the idea. They can be affected directly or indirectly by the project.
- Direct beneficiaries refer to the individuals, groups, or organisations, which benefit directly from a project or activity.
- Indirect beneficiaries refer to other individuals, groups or organisations who are not the direct target of projects and activities but may be indirectly affected and benefited by the activities undertaken by direct beneficiaries.



The diagram shows an example of how direct and indirect beneficiaries could be calculated:



## Showing the changes your grant will make

We want to fund projects with sustainable benefits. This means that we are interested in what will happen in the long term after your project has ended. There are different ways in which sustainable benefits can be achieved.

We are looking for projects that can deliver sustainable changes. This means that we want to know what evidence you have to support the approach that you seek to take and, crucially, ***how Veterans and members of their family have helped to shape this.***

We also want to know what changes will take place because of your work. This means that we would like to know what will be different as a result in two to three years when your project ends and why you think your work will achieve these improvements.

Some projects might have a clear plan to be able to finance future work through social investment, social business models or commissioning once they have been able to run an effective pilot to see if a new approach does work.



## Approach

### **Why is your project the best way to support people from Armed Forces communities with these needs?**

What exactly is the activity or service that you will be delivering?

How have you involved the people who would benefit in planning and shaping your project?

How do you know that people will take part?

How do you know that this does not duplicate other help that's available for these individuals?



## Change

### **What will the project achieve?**

What will be different by the end of the project?

What does this change look like?

What's the wider legacy, in terms of tangible improvements that the people benefiting from the project have gained, or ongoing collaborations that have been developed?

Some projects may focus on the legacy value for the people who take part in their projects, looking to address complex issues or engage in effective preventive work targeted at those who might be at risk of crisis. At the end of the funded project people who have taken part in these projects would be in a far stronger position to develop their employability and employment opportunities position than they were at the beginning of the project. For these projects, it's important to have clear plans on how you will measure the impact of your work. All projects that are awarded funding can use the Trust's Impact Hub, which gathers impact data directly from people who use your projects. You can find out more about the Impact Hub [here](#).

Other projects might seek to build a long-term legacy through better collaboration between organisations to improve how Veterans and their families access support now and in the future. For projects like these, we would expect to see evidence of changes in practice and collaboration that extend beyond the life of the grant.

Some projects might look at the evidence they have developed about the needs of a specific group of Veterans, or their family members, that might not be well understood, or who don't access services that are available. We would not expect to fund projects that focus solely on research, but we would be keen to understand the longer-term implications for your work if it could help to ensure that Veterans and their family members in future could have access to better support that meets their needs.

The awarded grant should deliver the following measurable outcomes:

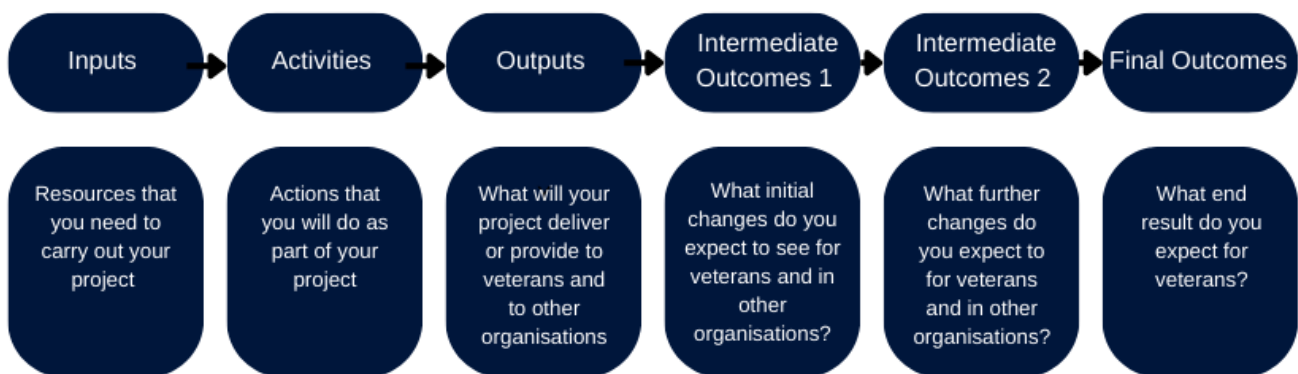
- *Support outside of existing Career Transition Partnership provision that supports them into training and employment through obtaining recognised qualifications, and opportunities for advancement and progression within existing employment.*

As part of your application, you should submit your **Theory of Change** showing how you will meet this outcome.

A Theory of Change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why the desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It is focused on mapping out or filling in what has been described as the missing middle between what a policy or change initiative does – its activities or interventions – and how these lead to desired goals being achieved.

It does this by:

- Identifying the desired end goals, or final outcomes, and
- Then working back from these to identify all the actions and intermediate outcomes that must occur for these final outcomes to occur.



Your application will need to be able to show how you will measure the impact of your project.

This could be through:

- Using the Trust’s Impact Hub to measure improvements using validated tools.
- Following up with your project beneficiaries after you have finished delivering your project to see if there has been an improvement to their employment status, including whether they are now able to access roles that are in line with their skill sets, reducing ‘underemployment’.
- Including resources for external evaluation within your project budget.

If we award you a grant, we will expect you to use the Impact Hub unless there is a good reason why this is not an option for your project. You would need to agree your alternative impact data collection approach with us and share anonymised data from this with us as part of the delivery of your grant.

This project should consider sustainability from the outset, considering and demonstrating where established recruitment pipelines with specific employers will be embedded over the course, and sustaining after the duration of the project. We will ask you about sustainability in the application form.

## Types of sustainability: how will your work sustain beyond the life of your grant?

### Ongoing improvements for project beneficiaries

Some projects may focus on the legacy value for the people who take part in their projects; looking to address complex issues or engage in effective preventive work targeted at those who might be at risk of crisis. At the end of the grant, people who have taken part in these projects would be in a far stronger position than they were at the beginning of the project; and more able to live the life that they want to have.

### Accessing funding for ongoing delivery

Some projects might be carrying out a pilot project or might be planning to keep running their project or service in future; raising funding from donations, grants or local commissioning

### Ongoing partnership and collaboration

Some projects might seek to build a long term legacy through better collaboration between organisations to improve how people from Armed Forces communities access support now and in the future. For projects like these, we would expect to see evidence of changes in practice and collaboration that extend beyond the life of the grant.

### Improved knowledge and evidence

Some projects might look at the evidence they have developed about the needs of a specific group of people within the wider Armed Forces community, who have needs that might not be well understood, or who don't access services that are available. This evidence base might help to ensure that Armed Forces communities in future could have access to better support that meets their needs.

## How much funding can you apply for?

You can apply for up to **£70,000**. This can be for a period of up to two years in length.

Where an organisation is bidding for multiple schemes, each scheme should be separately costed, but combined as a single application not exceeding £70,000.

We will only award one grant per organisation. You can include more than one area of delivery within your application.

An example of this might be delivering targeted training to enable Veterans and their families to access roles within three emerging high growth sectors. You may be running different

strands of activity that are aligned with particular skills that are needed in each sector. Your whole project should be £70,000 or less.

If your project includes multiple types of activity or strands, then your project budget should clearly show the costs associated with each area of activity.

## Ethics

Our work supports the Armed Forces Covenant through funding projects that deliver real change to Armed Forces communities. The projects we support need to be carried out to the highest possible ethical standards.

We therefore need to know that you have the skills and experience to work with the groups of people that your project focuses on, can ensure that they are kept safe and that you take an ethical approach to your work.

Our ethical values are Respect, Competence, and Integrity.

We have a Code of Conduct and free online training to explain our approach to ethics. We will ask you to confirm in your application form that you will run your project in line with our Code of Conduct. If your organisation has its own Code of Ethical Conduct, then you will need to explore whether your Code is compatible with ours and tell us about this.

You can access our ethics resources [here](#).

## Assessment criteria

Each application will be considered and assessed against these criteria, where projects which best meet and contribute to achieving these aims will have the best chance of successfully being awarded funding.

Difference made - Impact	
What are we looking for?	Projects that will contribute to the aims of the Office for Veterans' Affairs of supporting Veterans and their families looking to enter employment as well as those already within employment and looking to progress their careers but require new or supplementary training or qualifications to do so.
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How the qualifications, training and skills development offered by your project will improve the chances of Veterans and their families securing or progressing within existing employment</li> <li>● What your proposed project will do and how many Veterans this will help.</li> <li>● How you will support Veterans of minority groups beyond the mainstream Veterans' community, such as: women Veterans, those of Ethnic Minority backgrounds, LGBT Veterans, those with health or support needs, early Service leavers and those aged 50+ looking to re-enter the workforce.</li> <li>● What needs the Veterans have, and how you will meet these needs?</li> <li>● What difference your project will make?</li> <li>● How your project will be <b>aspirational</b>, <b>inclusive</b> and <b>collaborative</b></li> <li>● What the long-term benefits will be</li> <li>● How you will work with key stakeholders in the UK Veterans' employment space to make sure that your work is complementary to theirs</li> <li>● How the enhanced capability of those engaging your project will help to enhance and contribute toward economic growth of key economic sectors in the UK.</li> </ul>

<b>Delivery of your project</b>	
What are we looking for?	Your proposed project is feasible, your organisation has the skills and experience to run your project and the approach you have proposed is likely to contribute to the impact and aims that your project seeks to achieve.
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ability to manage your project, including clear evidence of appropriate milestones and outcomes.</li> <li>● A clear structure for project governance including how you will manage relationships with project partners.</li> <li>● Evidence of effective governance within your organisation as a whole, and how you will ensure that this project is well run and well managed.</li> <li>● Demonstration of inclusive, safe principles, practices and space in which the project will be taking place.</li> <li>● Assurance of your project being delivered in line with the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust's ethical values.</li> <li>● Demonstration of good value for money</li> <li>● No duplication, but instead enhancement or complementary to existing provision</li> <li>● Forward vision to ensure a long-term legacy of your work that will continue to have benefits for those engaged with the provision after the end of the grant.</li> <li>● Any similar work that you have done on the qualification, training or skills development you will be providing.</li> <li>● Any experience you have in supporting those who have experienced inequality or who have complex needs.</li> </ul>

## Which organisations are eligible to apply?

To be eligible for this funding, you must be one of, or partnered with, one of the following:

- a UK University or College
- a registered Charity
- a Community Interest Company (CIC).

To be eligible under this programme, the applicant **must demonstrate the involvement of an experienced provider of accredited and industry relevant qualifications**. This organisation could be the main applicant or could be a partner within the project.

The following additional eligibility requirements also apply:

### Charities:

- The organisation must have been registered in the UK (with one or more of the charity commissions for England and Wales, or Scotland or Northern Ireland for at least three years at the time of application and able to provide published accounts for all three years if requested.
- The organisation must have a minimum of three unrelated trustees at the time of applying, and, if successful, throughout the life of the grant, and this must be always verifiable on the relevant charity regulator's website.

## **CICs:**

- The organisation must have been registered in the UK for at least three years at the time of application and able to provide published accounts for all three years if requested.
- The organisation must have a minimum of three unrelated directors at the time of applying, and, if successful, throughout the life of the grant, and this must be always verifiable on the Companies House website.
- The organisation will need to attach a copy of their most recent, full, accounts (that must include an income and expenditure statement as well as balance sheet – not just abbreviated accounts as submitted to Companies House) with the application form.
- CICs will be subject to additional governance checks and may not be considered for funding if their Articles of Association do not have nominated beneficiary organisation/s in their Asset Lock clause. If this section in the articles is blank or 'to be confirmed' the application may not be regarded as eligible.

## **The following restrictions may apply**

- Applications may be declined from current Trust grant holders if the reporting requirements for existing grants from the Trust are not up to date.

## **Working with other organisations**

You can work with other organisations as part of your project. If any of the organisations that you will be working with will receive part of your grant, then you need to read our guidance below on delivery partners.

A delivery partner is an organisation which is either:

- receiving part of the grant OR
- their involvement in the project, through providing resources or some other means, is critical to the delivery of the project.

## **Role of the lead organisation**

The organisation that submits the application is the lead organisation. It will have legal responsibility for all funding we award and will be financially accountable for any funds that may be distributed by the lead organisation to delivery partners.

## **Delivery partnership agreements**

If we award you funding and you plan to work with one or more delivery partners, it will be a term and condition of your grant offer that you have a formal signed partnership agreement with them. If you're successful, the draft delivery partnership agreement must be deemed to be compliant (with our terms and conditions) by us and finalised prior to any funding being released. We may request changes to the draft agreement before it's finalised. You can find guidance on what a delivery partnership agreement should include on our website.

## Preparing your project budget

### What can funds be spent on?

We can pay for most of the things you'll need for your project or activity, whether it is people's time, costs of delivering work online or buying/hiring equipment.

We understand that currently the real value of your income may have dropped due to inflationary pressures of running your organisation. You may have also found the rising cost of living has increased demand on your services. The Trust will consider applications that include a reasonable contribution to overhead/core costs. We would expect to see this reflected within your budget breakdown.

It is highly unlikely that we will fund projects with budgets that are dominated by capital costs. We would not expect to fund the costs of purchasing a vehicle, but we would pay for mileage costs on vehicles used by your staff and volunteers.

Your project might include the following costs.

- ✓ Staff time for this fixed-term project. This could be direct project work or for admin or to manage volunteers that may be involved in your project.
- ✓ Sessional staff or freelancers that you may need to run your project and activity.
- ✓ Reasonable travel costs including fares or mileage for project staff, volunteers or beneficiaries to enable participation in the project.
- ✓ Purchasing items that can enable activities to take place. This may include art materials; sports/games/outdoor equipment; supplies for breakfast or social hubs.
- ✓ Purchasing items that will help you to deliver your project, such as additional telephones or laptops.
- ✓ Reasonable costs for storing and transporting items, including wear and tear on private vehicles.
- ✓ Reasonable overheads, which reflect the cost to your organisation of delivering this project, taking account of recent cost increases.
- ✓ Appropriate clinical supervision for workers who are supporting vulnerable individuals.

### What can't funds be spent on?

There are several things **we can't pay for**, either because they're not in the spirit of the Fund, or because of relevant legislation or tax rules.

- ✗ Where funding is not benefiting people from the Armed Forces community.
- ✗ Projects that do not clearly meet the aims of the programme.
- ✗ Where money only benefits one person. By this we mean where your whole project would only benefit one person.
- ✗ Making grants or donations of money or items of value to individuals or families.
- ✗ Repeat or regular projects that require a source of uncommitted funding.
- ✗ Endowments (to provide a source of income).
- ✗ Topping up existing grants and aid from a government department.
- ✗ Investments.



- × Fundraising costs, including organising fundraising events and activities.
- × Paying for ongoing costs of existing partnership activity.
- × Projects, activities or services that the state has a legal obligation to provide.
- × Retrospective funding for projects that have already started or taken place.
- × Excessive overheads, management or professional fees or contingency costs.
- × Capital costs.

This is not an exhaustive list as we feel it's more useful to focus on what you're trying to achieve and how you're going about this, than to issue long lists of eligible and ineligible costs.

Any grant that we award under this programme would be in line with our charitable objectives.

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust is a public body. We are required under the Subsidy Control Act 2022's transparency requirements to publish details concerning individual awards which may be subsidies.

Since the UK left the European Union on 1 January 2021, the UK government has enacted domestic legislation to replace EU law: the Subsidy Control Act 2022 ('the Act').

The Act aims to control the provision of subsidies – it prevents unfair competition or effects on trade and investment. This might happen if an organisation receives funding from state resources (which includes our funding, as our funds are public money) while another organisation can only use their own private funding.

You should familiarise yourself with the requirements of the new subsidy control regime when considering applying to us.

The Act will be fully in force from 4 January 2023. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has issued draft guidance on the operation of the Act. This guidance helps public authorities, such as the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, to award subsidies in a way which minimises any negative effects on competition and investment, as well as promoting the effective and efficient use of public money. These subsidies are permitted provided they satisfy the criteria set out in the Act.

Subsides above a certain financial threshold (currently £100,000) must be published on both our own website, and on a database held by BEIS.

This funding must be compliant under the Subsidy Control Act 2022. As such grantees will have their applicant and grant details published on the publicly available Subsidy Database, managed by the Department for Business and Trade. You will be expected to co-operate with our subsidy control assessment process.

You will be expected to comply with the principles of the subsidy control regime and to satisfy any future requirements. Agreements that have been entered into will be reviewed accordingly. We reserve the right to impose further requirements and additional conditions in relation to this matter.

### **What financial information should you include in your application?**

The application form will ask you to give details of your project budget, so that we can understand the costs for which you are asking for funding towards. Whilst you can show this in categories (rather than, for example, listing every item of the IT equipment you require) we will need to have sufficient information to assure us that you have fully considered how much the work will cost and told us how you know this.

This budget does not need to be split evenly across the two years. You may, for example, have significant set up costs in year one.

You should think carefully about value for money and show in your application why you believe your costs to be reasonable.

If we award you a grant, you will need to send us a full budget, and project milestones before we can pay the first instalment of your grant.

## Timetable

Your application should be received by **5pm on 8 January 2024**. We cannot accept any late applications. You will receive a decision before the end of March 2024.

We highly recommend you plan to submit your application before the deadline to avoid the risk of missing the cut-off because of technological or other unexpected problems.

## How to apply – the application form

You need to apply using our online application form which you can access through this link.

If you don't yet have an account for our online application portal, then you will need to create one. (You will need this anyway if you are successful in receiving a grant, so that you can submit reports and receive grant payments). On our system, you can save a draft application form to complete later or send a draft copy to colleagues. You can also access copies of the application that you've submitted at any time.

We strongly recommend that you complete your application in a Word document, save it locally as you work on it and when it is complete you then cut and paste the answers into the online form. You will find a Word document with a list of the project related questions on our website. Please don't use any formatting, such as tables or numbered lists, in your Word document, as the online form may not accept this formatting and you might have trouble submitting the form.

When you are entering data onto the online form, we suggest you save your form every 10-15 minutes whilst you are completing it, to avoid the risk of it 'timing out'.

You will be emailed when you both save and when you submit the application, please be aware of this when completing the application. We can only consider applications that have been fully submitted. Please check the "Submitted Applications" tab on your grant portal, to ensure the application has been fully submitted.

It's important that we can contact your organisation, particularly, of course, if you receive a grant. You will need to provide two contacts from your organisation on the application. At least one of these should have an email address that belongs to your organisation. At least one contact must hold the relevant authority (CEO/ CO or equivalent) to authorise any grant

contract and bank account to be used should you be successful. The main contact must have an email address that belongs to your organisation. If this is not provided, your application may be considered ineligible.

Please think carefully about who these should be, as they will need to be able to sign acceptance of the grant and use of the bank account on the Offer Letter/ Terms and Conditions if your application is successful. If either contact changes, do let us know as soon as you can.

Do check that you have fully answered all the questions because, if not, we might not be able to consider your application.

You will need to attach the additional Theory of Change/Impact document as described above.

If you are a CIC, please do ensure that you also upload a copy of your most recent accounts and your governing document. Your application will not be complete without this.

You do not need to send any additional information once the application has been submitted. Any additional information received will not be considered unless specifically asked for by our assessors.

Do not send your application by email or post to the Covenant Fund Trust – only applications submitted via the online form can be considered.

You must also make sure that the Trustees/Directors/ senior staff within your organisation know that you are submitting this grant application.

## **After you submit your application form**

You will get an automated email to confirm that your application has been submitted. This email will come from an address called [mailuk@grantapplication.com](mailto:mailuk@grantapplication.com). You may wish to add this email to a safe senders list on your email system to ensure that it can come through to you.

**If you have not received this email, then your application was not submitted successfully. Please log back into the portal to submit it.**

We will check your application to ensure that you've provided all the information we have requested. During our assessment we very occasionally contact applicants to ask for clarification, or specific questions about the organisation. This will only be if there are answers in your application form which are unclear or left blank. We will only contact you at this stage if we believe this will make a material difference to the decision about your application. If we ask you to do this, you'll need to send us this information within five working days. Please do not assume any contact or lack of contact is an indication of your likelihood of being successful or declined.

We will review the information you provide in your application and, where relevant, data and information from the Charity Commission, Companies House or other regulators' websites relating to your constitution and recent audited accounts. We may also look at other publicly available sources such as your organisation's website and social media activity.

After submitting your application, you must advise the Trust of any significant changes in your organisation, its governance or finances which might impact on our consideration of your application. We will assess your application against the key criteria of the programme.

## Checks we may carry out on your organisation

We may carry out several checks on the information you provide us with and about your organisation. This is to make sure that the information is correct and there are no significant risks we can identify when awarding grants.

These may include checks:

- on whether financial information on your application form matches that held by your regulatory body (Companies House, Charity Commission etc.)
- that we can see that you have a minimum of three unrelated Directors or Trustees listed on your regulator's website.
- that your governing documents (such as constitutions and memorandum and articles of association) are up to date, correct and properly signed
- on your accounts that are accessible through regulatory bodies
- on any identified concerns about a person named as a contact or who has a position within your organisation
- that the signatories are valid and well informed about the project
- on your annual report and on your website/social media activity that your organisation is undertaking the activities as described in your application.
- to ensure you are up to date on all reporting with any active grants you hold with the Trust.
- if your organisation is a branch of a larger organisation (such as charities with regional branches or offices), as part of our due diligence checks we may be sharing key details of the application with your head office to confirm eligibility to apply for this funding.
- if you are awarded a grant, that your organisational name and address on your bank statement are consistent with the details you've provided in any completed form or the information that's held elsewhere in the public domain.
- if you are awarded a grant, that your bank statement shows that your account is being managed in line with your own financial procedures and our programme requirements.

## Decisions and what happens next

Final decisions will be made by the Board of Trustees, who will review the applications, using balancing criteria in addition to the key criteria. The balancing criteria include the relative strength and value for money of the project when viewed as part of a national portfolio of projects.

Funds are limited. Therefore, the Board will use their discretion to choose which projects to fund, ensuring a good spread of funded projects and to differentiate between projects that are considered fundable.

Please note that to minimise the risk to public funds the Trust may prioritise funding those applicants which have good track records on reporting to regulators, demonstrate transparent and appropriate governance arrangements and have comprehensive published accounts. For organisations which previously had grants from us, we expect all reporting on these grants to be up-to-date and may consider this when considering new applications.

Trustees may also take the decision to part-fund proposals. This may mean you are awarded less money than was applied for. If this is the case, we will talk to you about what elements of the project were supported and why and discuss this with you.

After the Trustees have met, we will send an email to you using the primary contact email address you provided in your application. This will tell you whether you have been awarded a grant.

Our programmes are often oversubscribed and, unfortunately, we often have to turn good applications down due to lack of available funding. If you have been unsuccessful, we will email you to tell you.

## **What happens next if we award you a grant?**

If we plan to fund your project, you'll need to accept our grant offer and the terms & conditions of the grant within four weeks of receiving the Offer Letter or risk the offer lapsing.

Our terms and conditions of grant can be accessed on our website. If we offer you a grant, you will need to confirm that you will follow these terms and conditions of grant before we can release any of your grant to you.

We will email you in the first instance to advise you that you have been successful. This email will give you full instructions of what you need to do next to receive your official offer letter, how to accept the grant and what documents you need to provide.

If we offer you a grant, we may invite you to come to a briefing session for new grant holders and we'll send you the dates for these. The briefing will be held online and explains the next stages of your grant. Alternatively, we may request a virtual meeting with you to provide you with further information and answer any questions you may have.

Your formal Offer Letter and Terms and Conditions will be sent to you after the briefing or meeting. We won't be able to pay your grant until these documents have been signed.

Once we have all the necessary documents back, we will pay the first instalment of your grant. If there are any discrepancies/queries within these documents, this will delay your payment, so please read the accompanying information we provide, thoroughly. Grants will be paid in instalments, and the number and size of these will depend on the size and duration of the grant. A small proportion of the total amount awarded will be retained pending a satisfactory End of Grant report.

If you receive a grant, you will need to keep good records of how the funds were spent and how many people you helped and how. As part of the Terms and Conditions of funding we will ask you to update us on the progress of the project, this will include detailing how the funding has been spent.

The Trust has a Privacy Policy which explains what data we collect from our grant applicants, and how we use this.

Please read this in advance of applying: <https://covenantfund.org.uk/privacy-policy/>

If you have any questions relating to this programme, please look at the programme information that we have on our website.

Following this, if you still have queries and cannot find the answer in these guidance notes, please email [info@covenantfund.org.uk](mailto:info@covenantfund.org.uk)

## Programme evaluation

If we award you a grant, you will need to provide us with monitoring and evaluation information. You will also need to work with the external evaluators for this programme.

The evaluation will help to inform and provide insight to future and continued enhancement of employment outcomes for Veterans and other groups identified as benefitting from additional support in the UK.

The evaluators will conduct a comprehensive evaluation which:

- will explore the needs and aspirations of the Veterans or their families that are accessing the provision you have on offer, in relation to identified demographic and level of support needs
- will explore how learning providers can best collaborate with government, employers, third sector groups and other relevant organisations, to achieve the best outcomes for Veterans
- will explore the effectiveness of these grants in the following areas
  - no. of Veterans supported to obtain, or be on the way to obtaining qualifications and skills
  - no. of Veterans supported into employment
  - no. of Veterans supported to progress and advance within existing employment.

Participating in the programme evaluation will be a formal requirement under our Terms and Conditions of the grant.