

Veterans Community Centres

Guidance for applicants



ARMED FORCES
COVENANT
FUND TRUST

What will this programme support?

A capital grant programme for the renovation or refurbishment of community centres used by veterans and their communities

Capital Grants for either up to £30,000 (Band A) or exceptionally up to £150,000 (Band B) will be available to applicants applying to this Programme in 2019.

'A community centre should aim to provide a clean, warm, safe and well-maintained facility that meets equality of access and health & safety standards. It should include a main hall, a meeting room, a kitchen, toilets, storage space, sufficient equipment, recycling facilities and appropriate car parking facilities.'

Does my project meet the funding criteria?

YOU MUST MEET ALL THE FOLLOWING TO BE ABLE TO APPLY



BE A CHARITY OR CIC THAT SUPPORTS THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY



HAVE AN EXISTING COMMUNITY CENTRE USED BY VETERANS



NEED FUNDING TO IMPROVE THE CENTRE



OWN YOUR BUILDING OR HAVE A LONG LEASE



BE A CHARITY OR CIC THAT SUPPORTS THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

Only charities and CICs can receive a grant through this programme. But we need to be able to see in your governing document that you exist to specifically support veterans and people from the Armed Forces Community. There is an exception where veterans may need to access a community centre on a military base.



NEED FUNDING TO IMPROVE THE CENTRE

We can only make grants for refurbishments, repairs or other works that are needed to improve the centre for the veterans who use it.



HAVE AN EXISTING COMMUNITY CENTRE USED BY VETERANS

A community centre should aim to provide a clean, warm, safe and well-maintained facility that meets equality of access and health & safety standards. It should include a main hall, a meeting room, a kitchen, toilets, storage space, sufficient equipment, recycling facilities and appropriate car parking facilities.



HAVE SECURITY OF TENURE

It needs to be your centre, where you either own the freehold, or have a lease of 5 years or longer.



Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust: Veterans' Community Centres

About this programme

Ex-services personnel (and former merchant navy personnel) access a wide range of activities and supports through a myriad different organisations, venues and locations across the UK. This programme is specifically aimed at improving the fabric of premises regularly used by veterans and their communities, where the venue needs renovating or repairs, including adaptations, to encourage continued use and a significantly improved experience for veterans.

Applications can only be submitted by Armed Forces organisations that are **registered charities or community interest companies**, and which exist to support the Armed Forces community. Venues themselves must be either **owned** or subject of a **lease for at least 5 years** by those Armed Forces organisations.

Exceptionally, we may consider applications submitted by the base commander of a currently operating service base, provided that veterans are already allowed access to a community space on the base and there is no MOD obligation to fund the renovations or refurbishment. If you think this applies to you, please contact our grants team for further information at community.centres@armedforcesfunding.org.uk

Applicants are expected to demonstrate a track record of working with veterans, as well as a real understanding of the issues facing them. We will ask for evidence of real engagement and existing veteran use of the space, which requires refurbishment.

A strong application will provide examples of what the applicant has already been doing with veterans in the community centre, to demonstrate need and community integration activities, as well as evidencing how the capital works will enhance their experiences at the venue.

Please Note: This is not a general fund for organisations to support their core activities or refurbishment needs, simply by adding members of the Armed Forces community to their beneficiary group before applying.

In the November 2018 Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer awarded the sum of £3 million to the Ministry of Defence in order

“to support the repair and refurbishment of community centres run by Armed Forces organisations which continue to provide a focus for veterans and support improvements to health and social outcomes”.

The Ministry of Defence has asked the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to run this programme on its behalf.

The programme seeks to award grants - during 2019 only - that meet this aim.



The key criteria

We'll assess whether your project fits with what the Veterans' Community Centre programme is all about. The main criteria are:

- ⇒ Regular use of the space by veterans
- ⇒ How well the project addresses the priority of refurbishing spaces to improve veterans use of the spaces?
- ⇒ Evidence of need for repair/refurbishment?
- ⇒ How well-developed are the capital project plans?
- ⇒ Whether the applicant organisation has capacity to manage the planned work?
- ⇒ To what extent the works represent value for money?

Please also note that:

- We cannot fund capital works or a service that is or should be provided by others (for example, by government departments or local authorities).
- Projects must not generate a profit, top-up an existing Grant-in-Aid or raise funds for the charitable sector.

Who can apply?

The application must be from either:

- a registered Armed Forces charity
- an Armed Forces-focused Community Interest Company

All applicants must be registered charities or CICs, which already support the Armed Forces community.

Who cannot apply?

- Individuals
- Local authorities, parish councils and other statutory agencies
- **Non-veteran-used community centres**
- Unincorporated organisations *not* registered as charities.

Take time to talk to the veterans who use your centre to find out what they would like from any refurbishment work.

A strong application will be able to clearly show that local veterans have had a good involvement in the plans.



What can you apply for?

Community centre venues used by veterans are now required to meet a wide range of legal requirements. Funding for renovation and refurbishment is, therefore, a prime concern, especially for older venues that are difficult to bring into line with modern legislation. A community centre should aim to provide a clean, warm, safe and well-maintained facility that meets equality of access and health & safety standards. It should include a main hall, a meeting room, a kitchen, toilets, storage space, sufficient equipment, recycling facilities and appropriate car parking facilities.

There are two bands of grants that can be applied for

If you would like to apply under Band B; you must have a discussion first with the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. You will receive a unique reference number that you must use on your Band B application. You do not have to have a discussion if you are applying under Band A, for grants of up to £30,000

Band A

The programme will award **up to and including £30,000** for the total cost of the project, including VAT, to be disbursed through three separate rounds during 2019/20.

In this band, we will not consider applications where other funds are being raised, nor will we consider contributing to larger projects or schemes. **Band A** applicants must be the freehold owners, or leaseholders of the building, which cannot be ended by the landlord for at least five years from the date of any award made.

Band B

Exceptionally, applicants can apply for **between £30,000 and £150,000 inclusive** – for the full cost of a project, or towards refurbishment costs, where the total will exceed this.

Band B applicants must be the freehold owners or in possession of a registered or registerable and assignable lease of at least ten years, without a break clause, from the date of any award made.

Only one round of these larger awards will be made – to be awarded in February 2020 and from limited funds. Therefore applicants can only apply following a mandatory conversation with one of our grants team. We will want to discuss your preparations and understand your organisation and community centre. If your project meets all our criteria and is “shovel-ready,” we will give you a unique reference number, which will allow you to apply for a Band B grant. This is to ensure that limited funds do make a difference to the improved social lives and better health of veterans, with attention given to the areas of greatest need and equitable reach across the UK.

PLEASE NOTE: You will NOT be able to apply for a Band B grant if you have not had a mandatory discussion with us and if we have NOT provided you with a unique reference number to use on your application. Being provided with a reference number and the opportunity to apply, is no indication of your likelihood of receiving a grant.

Both **Band A** and **B** grants are purely for capital expenditure, including any fees/professional advice required to undertake the works (plus VAT).

Multiple applications

Organisations may only apply once per venue, in each round. Therefore, eligible organisations with multiple community centres can apply for more than one grant, but only if each project and location are different.

In **Band A**, you may resubmit an application if it was previously declined.

Your project budget

It is crucial that you calculate your costs correctly and remember that in **Band A**, you will be applying for **total project costs** of up to £30,000 (including VAT) from us.

In **Band B**, if your planned costs will exceed the amount applied-for, we will need to understand during the mandatory discussion, how you intend to make-up this shortfall. Any 'match-funding' should be confirmed prior to submitting your application.

Please enter your budget rounded up to the nearest pound – do not use pence.

How we work with others

The Trust is pleased to be working with TRBL, RAFA and RNRMC on this funding programme. The purpose of this involvement is ensure that members can get support from these organisations and to enable the Trustees of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to receive wider contextual information to complement decision making.



What can you apply for?

Items of expenditure you can apply for in either band, include:

- **General repairs** – e.g. replacing flooring, windows, mending roofs, drainage, damp proofing, pointing, cladding
- **Plumbing upgrades**, including new boilers.
- **Electrical work**, such as rewiring, to meet safety standards.
- New **fixtures and fittings** to enable extended or new activities – e.g. kitchens (including essential white goods), storage, recreational equipment.
- **Updated technology** – e.g. WiFi connectivity or a sound system
- Building work and equipment, which enhances a **user's access requirements** – e.g. toilets, car park, access to public transport, disabled ramps, hearing loops or push-button door entry.
- Cosmetic/aesthetic improvements, such as general decorating - but **ONLY** where you can show us how this will make a significant difference to **veterans' use of the space**, or in cases where redecorating is **required as a result of damage caused**, necessarily, as part of your refurbishment.
- **Fees to architects, surveyors, engineers and local authorities**, for planning permissions and adherence to building controls.
- **Project management fees** - related to the capital works only, not to the organisation's activities.

What we won't pay for:

- Furniture
- Activity costs
- Salaries
- Travel and subsistence
- Consultation, marketing and promotion
- Changes or upgrades which are purely aesthetic
- Any retrospective costs (except in the case of Band B, where we may consider surveyors fees and planning costs already incurred as part of the application).
- Acquisition of land or buildings

This list is not exhaustive as we feel it is more useful to focus on what you are trying to achieve and how you go about it. If your project strongly addresses the priority of improving health and social outcomes for veterans and their communities, in the spirit of the *Veterans' Community Centres* programme and meets the criteria set out in this guidance, your costs should be eligible.

It is likely that the total amount of funding requested will exceed the funds available. Trustees may prioritise applications in locations where need might be highest, and to ensure the benefits of this programme are felt across the UK. The Trustees will also consider 'balancing criteria' including societal and geographical factors, when determining value for money of a project and which ones to award a grant.



Developing Your Plans

Before you begin:

It is generally understood that a form of permission is required for building work or alterations to properties. However, it is not always clear how planning and building regulations approval regimes differ. You may also have responsibilities under construction health & safety regulations. If you are unsure whether your capital works require planning permission, it may be helpful for you to visit:

<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/>.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/village-halls.htm>

Building regulations must be complied with and it remains your responsibility to adhere to all other legal obligations in the lead up to, during and once the work is complete.

It is expected that you will receive three separate quotes for work in **Band A** and **Band B**, having undertaken an open tendering process for the capital work.

All applicants will need to verify this has been done, as part of the application. We retain the right to inspect these documents at any time.

Band B applicants will be required to provide a summary description (max. six pages of the tendering process (including an OJEU procurement process if relevant) and the quotations for work received, with an explanation of how the successful contractor was chosen. We (and the National Audit Office) may request an original hard copy of all procurement documents and any certifications, at any time.

All renovations will meet all other legislative requirements, and in the case of leased venues, you will need to confirm to us that the landlord's permission has been granted.

Knowing your veterans and your community:

We understand that you will know about the needs of veterans, locally to you. Please do remember to tell us about them – how and why do veterans use the space that you want to refurbish? Importantly, we'd like to know they've been asked about the proposed changes and given quality feedback on what would significantly improve their day-to-day experience of using your centre.

The work you plan should improve the health and social outcomes of veterans in your area appropriate to their needs. Do describe these needs in your application.

You may find the following links a useful source of data, to help you explain local socio-economic issues. You are not required to refer to it, as it is just a guide.

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/deprivation/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2017-nimdm2017>

<http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/idmap.html>

<https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>

<https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/welsh-index-multiple-deprivation/?lang=en>

Do you have a question that we've not covered in the guidance?

Email us at community.centres@armedforcesfunding.org.uk

How to apply



All applicants must complete the online form. On our website, you will find an offline version of the application questions. You may find it useful to draft your answers offline, prior to completing the online form. Please check you are using the correct form – either **Band A** or **Band B**.

Each answer is word restricted to between 100 – 300 words. You will find a link to the application portal at www.covenantfund.org.uk

No postal or email submissions will be considered.



You can save your form and return to it – so you do not have to complete it in one go. **Remember to save your application** from time-to-time, whilst working on it, online.

Like all web-based forms, the system will ‘time-out’ after a period and you may lose your work. Our form will provide you with a ‘time-out’ notification window after 40 mins. Selecting *continue* in this window **will not** save your work. You **MUST** select *save* at the bottom of the application page before the form ‘times-out,’ or your work will be lost.

We strongly advise you to save an offline version of your written answers

Don’t forget to click ‘submit’ when you have made your final changes. Unless you do this, we will not receive your form. You will receive an email notification to advise you that this has been submitted, successfully.

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

If you have any questions about completing the application form, then please contact us at: community.centres@armedforcesfunding.org.uk

We want to continually improve our materials and processes, so the application and these guidance notes may be updated from time-to-time.

If you are applying under Band B

Applicants seeking a **Band B** award **must discuss their proposal with us before applying**.



Email

community.centres@armedforcesfunding.org.uk to request a mandatory discussion.

We will talk through your plans and, if invited, a unique reference number will be provided, which should be quoted in your application. These discussions aim to determine whether your capital project is likely to be ‘shovel-ready’ by the time we receive your full application. By ‘shovel ready,’ we mean capital projects to refurbish veteran-used community centres that are at a stage where the renovations/repairs can realistically begin within one month of receiving an award. This means already having obtained planning permission, at least three quotes for the works, and any other funding required.

Any mandatory discussion must take place **before 4pm of Friday 27th September 2019**. **If we agree that you can apply for a Band B grant then you will have to submit the unique reference number we will provide during the conversation on your application form. Otherwise your application will NOT be considered.**

Band B applicants should have received all necessary permissions (e.g. planning permission) and contractor quotes, prior to applying.

You will be required to show certain documents, when applying, which evidence readiness to undertake the works.

Applicants must only attach contractors’ quotes and a budget summary, as part of the online application (max. six pages per document).

We may also ask to see confirmation of your planning permission and proof that any other required funds are in place. This will give us confidence that your project is ‘shovel-ready.’ We will tell you if we would like to see these additional documents.

When to apply

You are welcome to submit your **Band A** application at any time from 14th January 2019 until 9am on 4th November 2019. During this period, however, three cut-off dates will determine when your application will be considered.

Deadlines:
Round 1: Submission by 9am 11th March for decision before end May 2019
Round 2: Submission by 9am 3rd June for decision before end August 2019
Round 3: Submission by 9am 4th November for decision before end February 2020

Band B applications open for pre-application phone calls from 21st January until 27th September 2019.

Email community.centres@armedforcesfunding.org.uk to arrange your call.

Applicants who are given a unique reference number must then complete and submit their online forms by 9am hours on 4th November 2019. These applications will be considered by the Trustees in February 2020.

We will endeavour to meet these timings, but the schedule may require unexpected changes, in the event of a high volume of applications being received.

Please also note that from time-to-time we may have to take the application form off-line briefly to make small amendments. This should only be for a couple of hours at a time so please check-in again later.

After you submit your application

You will get an automated email to confirm that your application has been submitted.

We will check your application to ensure that you have provided all the information we have requested and if you and your project are eligible for the Veterans' Community Centres programme. We may contact you during our assessment if there are things we are unclear about – but do not assume any contact or lack of contact as 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 audited accounts from the past two years.

We will assess your application against the key criteria. This is on page 4 of this guidance.

Final decisions will be made by the Trustees of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust 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, and the need to ensure the right mix of capital refurbishments across the UK.

Funds are limited. Therefore, Trustees 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 they may also take the decision to part-fund proposals (this may involve awarding less money than was applied for).

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

If you are offered a grant

If we plan to fund your project, you'll need to accept our Capital Grant Offer and the Terms & Conditions of the grant within **4 weeks** of receiving the offer letter or risk the offer lapsing. Our offer will ask you for the relevant documents you need to provide, and once we have all the necessary documents back, we will be able to pay you. If there are any discrepancies/queries within these documents this will delay your payment, so please read the accompanying information we provide thoroughly.

The Terms & Conditions are available to view on our website at www.covenantfund.org.uk

Payments

Awards of under £10,000 will generally be paid in full and upfront, unless any concerns arise, which we will discuss with you.

Awards between £10,000 and £30,000 will generally be paid 95% in advance. The final 5% will be released upon receipt of an acceptable final report and evidence of completion (this requirement may vary depending on your project).

The **Band B** payment schedule will be tailored in discussion with you, to ensure milestones are achievable and your proposals are as risk-free and realistic as possible, with a final amount released on receipt of an acceptable report and evidence of completion

Post Award Grant Management

Once you receive your payment you will be required to **report back within six months**, to confirm whether you are on target, and if not, what new timetable is proposed. If there is slow progress, or your project has stalled, you will be asked to send three photos, to help us visualise your venue, its condition and any works, which have commenced. We understand you may encounter unanticipated challenges. That is why we want to know you have everything in place, to the best of your ability and by following best practise, prior to your initial application.

With capital projects, it is inevitable that there will be delays, unexpected problems, including budgeting problems. Applicants will be asked to inform us if delays are to be longer than **three months** - and they will need permission to extend. Changes to projects will also require variation requests if they represent more than **15%** of total spend.

End of Grant reporting will include evidence of the project, including photos of the work, press cuttings of any coverage (e.g. opening events) and a short-written report to confirm how the venue is now being used.

Do let us know of any great press and media coverage you get. We would like to share the good news about your work.

Our terms and conditions of grant can be accessed on our website.

If you are offered 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.

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

If you are unsuccessful

If we are not able to fund your project, we will write to you to tell you this. At the same time, we will send you a copy of the assessment report that our Trustees considered. From this you should be able to see whether, perhaps, your application was ineligible, or did not sufficiently meet the criteria, or whether, on assessment, elements of your application were deemed less strong than competing applications. It may be that although your application was satisfactory, there were others being considered that were assessed worthier of funding, on this occasion. Unfortunately, the programme is unlikely to have enough resources to support all the applications it receives.

Band A applicants who are declined in Rounds 1 or 2 may wish to reapply and have that opportunity. However, we advise that your organisation considers the feedback provided, prior to doing so.

Band B applicants will be unable to reapply as these awards are being decided in a single round in February 2020

If you have any questions relating to this programme and cannot find the answer in these guidance notes, please email:

community.centres@armedforcesfunding.org.uk



About us

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust manages the grant programmes funded by the Covenant Fund.

We also run wider funding programmes that support the Armed Forces Community.

You can find out more about our work at www.covenantfund.org.uk



**ARMED FORCES
COVENANT
FUND TRUST**

Contact us

enquiries@covenantfund.org.uk

www.covenantfund.org.uk

Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust

Chairman: Helen Helliwell; Chief Executive: Melloney Poole

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust Limited (CRN 11185188) acting as the trustee of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund (CC 1177627)

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