



Learning and Skills Fund 2025

Introduction

Following a trial programme in 2024, the Combined Authority Skills Committee has approved further funding to enable third sector organisations to support Cambridgeshire residents to access learning and skills training. The objective is to reach residents facing disadvantage who may find it difficult to access learning and training without help, and to motivate and support them towards beneficial onward progress. Residents experiencing disadvantage may include people living in areas of deprivation or rural areas which are under-served by existing learning provision, or people experiencing other barriers to accessing learning. The Fund can support accredited and non-accredited learning or skills courses, as well as engagement activities which help people to move towards further learning or other progress such as volunteering or employment. Wider outcomes will be recognised including improved health and wellbeing, community connection, resilience and active citizenship.

Criteria

Who can apply?

Local voluntary and community sector organisations which meet [CCF requirements](#). Organisations which are already in receipt of funding from the Adult Education Budget are not eligible.

Who can benefit?



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Project participants must be aged 19 years or over and be living in Cambridgeshire (this includes Peterborough) with an eligible residency status.

How much can my organisation apply for?

The total funding available is around £200,000 and applicants may apply for funding between £5,000 to £25,000. We are looking for a broad selection of projects and would encourage smaller bids as well as larger. For reference we do not expect to be able to fund more than four or five projects at the higher end of the grant range, and applicants requesting larger amounts will need to demonstrate greater experience of delivering learning and engagement work.

NB for larger grants payments will be made in **two instalments**, one at the start of the project and one following submission of data return and evidence of spend around December 2025 (or time agreed with us depending on the length of the project).

Where?

Projects working in the most deprived wards across Cambridgeshire will be given priority, as well as those engaging with people who are experiencing the most disadvantage in terms of their ability to access learning and training. You will need to explain how your intended participants are disadvantaged in your application.

How long can the project last?



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Applicants will have up to eight months from September 2025 to the end of April 2026 to deliver activities with participants. The outcomes of grant applications will be shared from mid-July 2025, with some support and training likely to take place during August. After the active delivery phase of projects there will be up to three months for following up on individual participants' progression or development, and for reporting. See milestones below for details.



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Programme aims and objectives

The programme seeks to provide the initial grounding for participants to enable them to go on to take up other learning opportunities (including lifelong learning), apply for employment or a volunteer role, or make positive steps towards either of these types of progression. The programme will look at how the skills or learning gained through the project will be applied by participants in their lives afterwards. Valid project activity could range from bespoke group training courses which respond to identified local needs, to engagement activities or creative skills sessions to appeal to people facing isolation or other barriers, or 121 mentoring/onward signposting to other opportunities.

Projects are encouraged to facilitate routes for participants to undertake further learning or skills development through one or more of the [CPCA funded learning organisations](#). To that end, applicants will need to reference which of these providers they are working with already or would be able to work with by the end of the project. The CPCA will provide support to help build such relationships with adult learning providers.

This programme expects projects to deliver or facilitate learning tailored to the individual participants that relates to one or more of the following seven purposes:

- Engaging and/or building confidence
- Preparation for further learning
- Preparation for employment
- Improving access to Essential Skills (English, maths, language, digital)



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- Equipping parents and carers to support children's learning
- Improving Health and wellbeing
- Developing stronger communities

The programme **cannot support** projects which are only delivering ESOL or other adult learning courses that can already be accessed free for eligible residents, such as functional skills qualifications.

Reporting

Projects will need to return data on participant numbers and success rates on completion of the programme. Projects will be encouraged to use the [RARPA process](#) to recognise and record progress and achievement.

Guidance and support on using RARPA will be provided for successful projects.

Individual participants will also be provided with a simple survey at the end of their engagement with the project to capture any wider benefits they experienced from taking part.

Participant data to be recorded by the grantee

- No of residents participating in short engagement activities (under 2 Guided Learning Hours per person)
- No of residents participating in substantial engagement activity: informal learning, formal learning or accredited qualifications (over 2 Guided Learning Hours per person)
- Anonymised participant demographic data using a survey to be provided



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Targets expected

- 85% of learners achieve the aim/s they identify at the start of their participation (success)
- 65% or more of all participants should progress to one or more of the following (progression):
 - Other learning or skills provision, whether through CPCA adult learning providers or lifelong and creative learning
 - Volunteering, including actively taking up a role or signing up to a hub such as [Volunteer Cambs](#) or [Go VIP](#).
 - Moving on to the Connect to Work/Work Well programme.
 - Employment (or actively seeking employment) or self-employment

Wider Outcomes

Applicants will be required to report on the wider outcomes of learning for participants. These will be collected through a participant survey provided by the CPCA for return at two points in the programme. Examples of the type of wider outcomes expected are:

- Increased confidence
- Improved skills for progressing to further learning
- Improved skills for work
- Improved essential skills
- Improved ability to support a child's learning
- Improved physical health



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- Improved mental health and well being
- Improved skills to participate in community life
- Increased understanding of democratic values
- Improved Skills for Independent Living

Milestones

Applications open: 01 March 2025

Application deadline: 01 May 2025

Grant awards issued: 21 – 31 July 2025

Project set up and any training: August 2025

Project delivery window: 01 September 2025 to 30 April 2026

Data return 1 (wider outcomes) to CPCA: December 2025/January 2026

Data return 2 (wider outcomes) to CPCA: June 2026

Overall project reporting deadline including progression data: 31 July 2026



**Cambridgeshire
Community
Foundation**