



Grant Guidelines

Grant size	Up to £5,000
Geographic area	All of Scotland
Fund last opened	6 October 2025
Fund last closed	17 November 2025
Decisions last issued	By mid-March 2026
Total available	£100,000
Next opening	To be decided
Next closing	To be decided
Decisions issued	By end of March 2027

About our funding

We demonstrate why the progress of women and girls matters for everyone. Every pound goes further because we identify and fund the grassroots organisations that reach women and girls where other funders cannot, making sure vital support is accessible where it's needed most.

Our vision – we see a future where every woman and girl is empowered to contribute fully to a thriving and equitable Scotland.

We have made more than 1,000 grants to over 700 groups, with a total value of £3.5 million. All members of the community benefit from investment in women and girls aged 12 and over.

Purpose of the fund

The fund aims to develop a sustainable network of grassroots organisations across Scotland that support women and girls. We offer unrestricted grants to sustain existing work, or project-specific grants for new or continuing work aligned with our themes and priorities.

Single-sex services only. The fund supports work for the direct benefit of women and girls aged 12+ and does not fund mixed-sex groups.

Our three themes

HEAL Funding the spaces and support systems women need to heal from violence, marginalisation and injustice.

THRIVE Funding the potential of women and girls to thrive through leadership, skills-building, innovation and creativity.

RISE Supporting women to rise—together and on their own terms—out of loneliness and poverty, and into a more equal Scotland. This can include movement-building or collective work.

A proposal may meet more than one theme but claiming several themes will not strengthen an application. Stay focused and avoid diluting your request.

Who can apply

Properly constituted non-profit organisations that meet the criteria may apply, including charities, social enterprises and unincorporated organisations.

- The organisation must have an annual turnover of £500,000 or less.
- If the fund is oversubscribed, priority will be given to organisations with annual turnover of £300,000 or less.
- All applicants must also meet Foundation Scotland's common eligibility criteria. Find out more on this link: <https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/apply-for-funding/help-for-applicants/common-eligibility-criteria>

Funding priorities

Applications that most clearly meet one or more of the following priorities will be prioritised:

- Women's organisations, especially those run by and for women and girls.

- Community-based organisations running work with women and girls.
- Work supporting disadvantaged women and girls.
- Work that empowers women and makes a tangible difference to their lives.
- Support for women to escape and recover from domestic or sexual abuse.
- Work that makes maximum long-term use of limited resources and improves organisational sustainability.
- A Scotland-wide distribution of grants, as far as possible.

What 'led by and for women and girls' means

- The organisation's principal objective is to work with women and girls.
- Everyone accessing the funded services is a woman or girl.
- The Board of Trustees, or equivalent governing body, is chaired by a woman and most members are women.
- The staff or volunteer leadership team is majority women.

What you can apply for

Unrestricted funding

Organisations with a proven track record of working with women and girls may apply for an unrestricted grant of up to £5,000.

Project-specific funding

For project-specific applications, the amount requested from us must be at least 25% of the total project cost. A request for £5,000 therefore means the total project budget cannot exceed £20,000.

If requesting £5,000 for a project, no more than £1,000 (20%) may be spent on consumable items. Examples include food for a cooking project, craft supplies, travel expenses and childcare expenses.

Objectives and monitoring

Applicants must provide three SMART objectives for their work with women and girls. The objectives should relate to the investment themes and will form the basis of monitoring at the end of the grant. SMART means Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-based.

Priority will be given to organisations that can demonstrate previous achievements and plans for longer-term sustainability. Grants are paid as a single award, and monitoring and evaluation is requested 12 months after payment.

What we cannot fund

We aim to be flexible and encourage innovation, but cannot fund:

- Uniformed, political or religious organisations, unless they are delivering an otherwise eligible project that does not promote a religion or political purpose.
- Salary costs for new or existing permanent staff.
- Organisations with annual turnover above £500,000.
- Organisations that pay less than the Scottish Real Living Wage of £13.45 per hour (as of July 2026).

- Work primarily targeted at girls under the age of 12.
- Mixed-sex groups, even where the large majority of participants are female.
- Applications from individuals.
- Activities that have already taken place, repayment of loans or debts, general fundraising appeals, trips abroad, or activities that are the responsibility of statutory authorities.
- Cash, vouchers or other direct financial support for individual women or families, including help with fuel or clothing.

Foundation Scotland's common exclusions also apply. Find out more on their website at this link:

<https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/apply-for-funding/help-for-applicants/what-we-cant-fund>

When work can begin

Funding cannot be used for work that has already started. All funded activity must take place after the panel meeting and allow enough time for any terms and conditions to be completed. An existing project may still be eligible, but the grant can fund only its future delivery.

Many applicants plan to start funded work around six to eight weeks after decisions are issued.

Due to funding decisions being made in March 2027 applying for International Women's Day (IWD) in March 2027 will not make it through the initial sift, you will need to apply for IWD March 2028 to make it through the sift.

Reapplying

An organisation with a current Women's Fund for Scotland award must wait eight months from the date that grant was approved before applying again. For example, a grant approved in February 2025 could not be followed by another application before October 2025.

How decisions are made

A grant-making panel allocates funding. The panel includes Trustees, staff, volunteers and representatives from the women's voluntary and community sector. Foundation Scotland provides administrative support.

We expected many more eligible applications than we could fund. Meeting the criteria does not guarantee an award.

Frequently asked questions

Can you fund a project you have funded before?

Yes, we will consider it if it meets the current aims, criteria and guidelines. Previous funding does not guarantee another award.

Why is the turnover limit £500,000, with priority below £300,000?

Our small grants are likely to make more difference to smaller organisations. The limits also help us manage demand for a restricted funding pot.

Why don't you offer larger grants?

We are also a fundraising organisation and our grant sizes reflect the funding we have raised for this programme.

Do you offer multi-year grants?

Yes, but by invitation only. We approach organisations directly; please do not contact us to ask to be considered.

Can any of the grant directly benefit men or mixed groups?

No. Funding must directly benefit women and girls aged 12+. A group teaching IT skills to dads or male carers would not be eligible; a group teaching IT skills to girls aged 12+ could be eligible.

How long does the funding last?

The grant is paid as one award. How long it lasts depends on the planned expenditure. Monitoring and evaluation is requested 12 months after the grant is made.

Can you help individual women who are struggling financially?

No. We do not award cash or vouchers to individuals or families for any purpose.

Application and contact information

Applications for this round were submitted online. The online application form, a preview of the application questions, Foundation Scotland's common eligibility criteria, standard exclusions and decision-making information were linked from the Women's Fund for Scotland webpage.

Criteria and fund priorities

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Application process and technical support

Central Systems Support
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