



Northern Ireland Community Relations Council Core Funding Programme Application Guidance for 2026-2027 Scheme

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**The deadline for submitting your online application is 4 PM
Wednesday 12 November 2025.**

Please note applications cannot be submitted after this time.

**It is important to read the Core Funding FAQs document together
with the application guidance notes.**

Part one: About the Core Funding Programme

“Making the extraordinary ordinary: Integrating good community relationships into everyday life”

The Northern Ireland Community Relations Council's (NICRC) Core Funding Programme contributes towards the salary and running costs for organisations that are considered of strategic importance in promoting community relations work in Northern Ireland.

The Community Relations Council supports projects that are designed for good relations purposes. In addition, we also support projects that have other social benefits as their core purpose (such as dealing with poverty, education, sport, housing, climate change) but they deliver good relations outcomes at the same time. Because they deliver more than one outcome, these multi-benefit projects can often be very good value for public money. It can also often be the case that these projects have an opportunity to grow good relations in a more engaged, integrated, and practical form of community life.

The Community Relations Council is a development organisation and for this reason we are not interested in turning down grant applications but prefer to work with the applicant to develop their project to have sufficient good relations content to be fundable. We therefore encourage applicants, particularly those that are new to us, to discuss their project ideas before they make a grant application.

Multi-benefit projects often involve more than one funder, which means that they require careful delineation of who is paying for what. When the Community Relations Council funds such projects we are primarily interested in the good relations outcomes of the work, and this paper sets out our approach.

The Community Relations Council supports work that has a clear aim of tackling sectarianism and racism. Whilst the requirements of individual grants schemes may differ, all supported programmes must demonstrate how they will make a contribution to improving good relations.

Whilst we would encourage a diversity of approaches there are key principles that all successful proposals should adhere to.

Key Principles

1. The work must be intentional.

Regardless of the grant scheme, a programme must have a clear good relations purpose from the outset. A programme which brings different communities together for a common activity will have very limited value unless it has deliberate and planned activities which directly address sectarianism.

2. It must address an identified good relations need.

All applications must be able to clearly demonstrate the good relations need they want to address and how they have identified this need.

3. It should evidence what are the targets/outcomes it will use to measure impact.

Having identified the need, projects must be able to identify the programme outcomes by which they will measure the change they want to see for participants i.e. they have a more positive understanding and regard for members of different communities.

Projects must be able to identify:

- i. The outcomes/change you want to happen and
- ii. Detail how projects will measure if the changes have taken place.

4. Its unique contribution to good relations.

Programmes should demonstrate how they have considered other good relations programmes taking place in their areas and how their proposal will compliment or enhance this work.

5. It must be cost effective.

It is important that applicants demonstrate clearly how their proposal has been costed and represents value for money. This should not just relate to the numbers participating as a result of the project but should also detail the added value the outcomes have on other aspects such as safer communities and better use of resources.

6. Financial Competence.

Applicants must demonstrate that they have sufficient financial systems and controls in place to be able to manage an award from the scheme they are applying to.

Welcome Statements 2026-2027

NICRC has produced Welcome Statements relating to the geographic reach and thematic impact of the types of supported work it would like to see for the 2026-27 period.

Whilst we would welcome applications which meet some or all of the Welcome Statements the scheme will support proposals that are working in other geographic and thematic areas. All applicants however must clearly demonstrate how they have identified the good relations need they are seeking to address and give clear indicators of the thematic and geographic reach of their proposal.

Geographic Impact

The Council would welcome applications which will deliver good relations programmes in the following areas:

- Ards and North Down
- Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon
- Belfast (East)
- Fermanagh & Omagh
- Lisburn and Castlereagh
- Mid & East Antrim
- Newry, Mourne & Down

The Council would also welcome applications which will deliver good relations programmes in rural and/or border communities.

Thematic Impact

The Council would also welcome applications that support the following areas of activity:

- Work which supports and develops the next generation of good relations practitioners as this relates to emerging challenges such as: sustainability; the environment; poverty; the changing nature of communities; and good relations from a global perspective.
- Work which aims to engage communities on emerging issues of concern identified by applicant groups as requiring priority intervention. The need for such work will need to be clearly evidenced by applicant groups.

A review of the current Core Funding portfolio provides examples of how a range of different methodologies are employed to engage and connect participants in good relations activities as part of their everyday lives. [View examples of work currently supported](#).

Opening/Closing Dates

The Core Funding Programme will open to new applications on **Wednesday 01 October 2025** for funding awards beginning on **01 April 2026**. The deadline for applications is **Wednesday 12 November 2025 at 4 PM**.

It is recommended that you do not submit your application until you are certain that you have completed every question and attached everything that is required. However, should you submit your application and subsequently realise that you have omitted key information, you may withdraw your application and submit a new bid provided this occurs **prior to the deadline**. **This must be completed before the submission deadline as no changes can be made to your application once the deadline has passed.**

Please note the on-line grants system will not accept application forms after the deadline.

Available Support

- The Core Funding Programme provides support to regional and local organisations that builds and supports good community relationships: It is a funding programme that complements funding from central and local government;
- It provides funding that responds to need and demonstrates positive impact;
- It provides a framework of support that enables access to smaller and larger awards;
- It offers guidance to funded organisations; and
- It provides coordination and sharing of learning between funded projects.

The Core Funding Programme has an annual budget of approximately **£1.2m and supports around 30 organisations each year**. The amount awarded per organisation normally ranges between £20,000 and £80,000 per annum with an average award of £42,000. Based on the 25/26 funding round and ongoing budget commitments to organisations we expect £600k for new applications. Given that the Programme is often oversubscribed it will be important that applications can demonstrate community relations work that is both high quality and intentional. Whilst we would encourage applications to the scheme it can be the case that demand will exceed the available resource, please be aware that even well designed and valuable proposals may be unsuccessful.

Organisations seeking funding from the Core Funding Programme must demonstrate:

- A commitment to the underpinning principles of the NICRC, i.e. equity and equality; human rights; respect for diversity; interdependence and non-violence.
- A capacity to enhance and sustain work of high quality in pursuit of these principles and a track record of engagement in community relations work.
- A capacity to engage significant and diverse elements of Northern Ireland society in the improvement of community relations to include changes in institutions and communities.
- A capacity to work together with other organisations and agencies in the promotion of community relations principles and practice.
- An intention to address a strategic need or gap in existing community relations provision.

Eligibility

NICRC will carefully consider an organisation's capacity to manage public monies and deliver on its agreed contractual obligations. In deciding which proposals to fund, applications are initially assessed for eligibility. This will either rule an application to be eligible or ineligible for further consideration. This eligibility check considers:

- Whether you are legally able to operate in Northern Ireland.
- If your organisation is financially viable (latest copies of audited and management accounts will be scrutinised).
- That there is clear demonstration that robust financial and reporting systems are in place.
- The evidence that a Community Relations policy is in operation. We will accept a Community Relations Policy, a Good Relations Policy or an Equality Policy as evidence of this and one of these documents must be uploaded as part of the application process.
- Whether all parts of the application form have been fully completed and all the required documentation correctly uploaded (as required in the Additional Information and Declaration section of the application).
- That work described in the application work plan section adequately meets the specific remit of this funding Programme.
- That proposed beneficiaries are all Northern Ireland based.

Organisations that fail the eligibility check will not be assessed for funding and the application will be rejected. Only eligible applications will be assessed and the Board of NICRC will make funding decisions in March 2026.

What we fund

Salary costs

Salary costs that only apply to those posts that are directly described in the work plan and should primarily deliver community relations related activity. You must highlight where these posts will deliver on the work to achieve the outcomes identified in the work plan.

This Programme will only provide up to a maximum of 90% of salary costs. Please note that you are required to indicate arrangements for match funding the salary budget lines applied for.

We provide salary contributions for staff employed by your organisation only; this means that we are unable to pay costs towards sessional staff, facilitators or consultants.

Associated organisational running costs

The following budget headings are considered as being items essential to the running of organisations. These are the only permitted expenditure headings for which you can apply:

- Mileage associated with the salaried post requested (up to a maximum of 0.45p per mile)
- Rent
- Heat and Light
- Telephone/Internet (landline costs only)
- Insurance
- Audit

Please note the total running costs cannot exceed 25% of the total grant requested.

The Assessment

When we assess your application, we will consider the following:

- Assessment officers will apply a score based on the following criteria:

Methodology/ outcomes	Weighting 60% of score
Value for money	Weighting 20% of score
Organisational experience/ track record	Weighting 10% of score
Governance/ financial arrangements	Weighting 10% of score

- The extent to which your application contributes towards the delivery of one or more of the Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) priorities and associated outcomes.
- The extent to which your application contributes to the Strategic Priorities/ Welcome Statements identified by NICRC for 2026-2027; these are outlined on page 2 of this document.
- Your work plan should have strong and clearly stated outcomes that are of a strategic nature.
- Clear evidence of need must be demonstrated, including consideration of additionality and the avoidance of duplication of work already being delivered.
- A 12-month work plan for 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027. We expect this work plan to have a clear timetable of activity, to detail partners, beneficiary numbers, intended outcomes and geographical locations of activity along with an awareness of the risks associated with completing this type of work.
- If you are an organisation NOT currently in support of NICRC Core Funding, part of the assessment process may involve contacting your other funders to seek assurances around contractual compliance, organisational governance and/ or financial controls.

What we do not fund

As a guide, but not exclusive to, the following will not be supported:

- Work which falls within the remit and responsibility of other funders including but not exclusive to:
 - i) work with minority ethnic or minority faith communities (TEO Minority Ethnic Development Fund); or
 - ii) work with victims and survivors (Victims and Survivors Service).
- Proposals submitted by individuals.
- Work outside of Northern Ireland.
- The scheme will not support the running of campaigns to support political activities, or to lobby for or against particular pieces of legislation.
- Capital costs.

- Purchase of equipment.
- 100% of costs (availability of match funding must be demonstrated).
- Project delivery costs. (Support may be available from the NICRC Community Relations and Cultural Diversity Grant Scheme. Please see the NICRC website for more details at www.nicrc.org.uk)

All applications which receive support from the Community Relations Council must subscribe to its Vision, Values & Beliefs which are outlined below.

OUR VISION

A diverse, shared and interconnected society.

OUR VALUES AND BELIEFS

Human dignity is the fundamental basis for good community relations. In that context, the Community Relations Council is guided by the following values and beliefs:

- **Interconnectedness:** CRC recognises the importance of living well together and the interdependence of personal and community experiences of all those living and working in Northern Ireland. We believe in inclusive and open dialogue. The CRC exists to promote good relations based on trust, respect, inclusion and interconnectedness.
- **Diversity:** We believe that our diversity of identities and cultures in Northern Ireland enriches life and is to be celebrated.
- **Equity and Equality:** CRC is committed to fair treatment for all, through open access to resources, structures and decision-making processes at all levels of society, as an essential basis for good community relations.
- **Respect and dignity:** CRC is committed to human rights, inter-cultural respect, freedom of expression and movement (whether expressed through religious, ethnic or political background) and supports the peaceful expression of variety and difference. CRC therefore recognises non-violence as an essential condition for the growth of trust, dialogue and conflict transformation.
- **The common good:** CRC believes that community relationships built on trust and living well together contributes to sustainable development, the general well-being of our society and the common good.
- **Openness, Transparency and Accountability:** To maintain trust and confidence in our work as a provider of public services CRC embraces these values in all its work.

Applicant groups must have knowledge and understanding of the policy environment in which NICRC operates and subsequently in which it delivers its funding programmes.

The Northern Ireland Executive's Outcomes Delivery Plan

The Northern Ireland Executive's Outcomes Delivery Plan is accessible at:
<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/outcomes-delivery-plan-december-2019>

It has an outcome focus which aims to devise a framework that will ensure that actions taken by government and its partners will bring about a real difference to society.

Specifically, the following outcomes contained within the Outcomes Delivery Plan correlate with the work of NICRC and the community-based organisations that we support:

- **Outcome 7** We have a safe community where we respect the law, and each other.
- **Outcome 9** We are a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity.
- **Outcome 10** We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest.

Together: Building a United Community Strategy

This Programme complements funding provided by The Executive Office and aims to contribute towards the delivery of the Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) priorities and associated outcomes. Applicants need to demonstrate how their proposed plan of work will contribute towards these priorities and associated outcomes.

The Strategy (accessible at: [Together: Building a United Community - \(TBUC\) | The Executive Office](#)) outlines how Government, community and individuals will work together to build a united community and achieve change against the following key priorities:

1. Our Children and Young People.

Aim: To continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and to build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations.

Strategic Outcomes:

1.1 Improving attitudes between young people from different backgrounds

1.2 Young people engaging in bringing the community together

2. Our Shared Community.

Aim: To create a community where division does not restrict the life opportunities of individuals and where all areas are open and accessible to everyone.

Strategic Outcomes:

2.1 Increased use of shared space and services

2.2 Shared space is accessible to all

3. Our Safe Community.

Aim: To create a community where everyone feels safe in moving around and where life choices are not inhibited by fears around safety.

Strategic Outcomes:

3.1 Reduce the prevalence of hate crime and intimidation

3.2 A community where places and spaces are safe for all

4. Our Cultural Expression.

Aim: To create a community, which promotes mutual respect and understanding, is strengthened by its diversity, and where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced.

Strategic Outcomes:

4.1 Increased sense of community belonging

4.2 Cultural diversity is celebrated

Core Funding Programme & T:BUC Strategy

Whilst the Core Funding Programme is aligned to the T:BUC policy there are important areas to note in relation to how the scheme works to fulfil the strategic outcomes.

Cultural Diversity Work

The Core Funding Programme is focused on work between the two main traditions and will support cultural diversity work that addresses sectarianism. There are other funding programmes aimed at addressing issues of race and ethnicity such as the Minority Ethnic Development Fund (MEDF) that is administered through The Executive Office (TEO). The NICRC Community Relations and Cultural Diversity Grant Scheme can offer project funding towards work that addresses race and ethnicity. Please see NICRC website for more details: www.nicrc.org.uk.

NICRC Core Funding Programme Themes and Descriptors

NICRC has a strategic interest in monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding activities and uses this information to map progress and support the building and development of good community relations. NICRC has developed a thematic framework that provides a descriptive outline of the activities it has supported under its Core Funding Programme.

The following information provides a general overview of the main themes of work supported by the Core Funding Programme. Applicant groups will need to give consideration to these themes and refer to the detailed information provided to assist with completion of the work plan section of this application form.

1. Children and Young People

Development of work which aims to develop relationships between young people and those engaged with young people including parents, guardians, teachers, trainers, youth workers and others.

2. Shared Spaces (Interfaces & Contested Spaces both Urban and Rural)

Development of shared spaces and venues. This refers to work that seeks to tackle issues related to interfaces and contested & non-shared spaces in both URBAN and RURAL settings. This includes work to develop new shared spaces and maintain relationships at existing shared spaces.

3. Faith-Supported Work

Work that seeks to develop closer working relationships on reconciliation issues between churches (hierarchies & congregations) and between churches and communities on a cross-community basis.

4. Cultural Expression

Work on cultural expression which supports social cohesion – includes work on issues of commemoration, flags, parading, bonfires, emblems, language and work with cultural institutions. This must be preparatory activity to enable engagement on a cross-community basis.

5. Community Safety and Sectarianism

Work to support community safety activity (both inside and outside of PCSP structures) and responses to sectarianism.

6. Addressing the Legacy of the Past

Work to encourage learning and critical exploration of historical events and traditions that impact negatively on social cohesion. This work must demonstrate clear reconciliation outcomes.

7. CR Preparatory Work - PUL Communities

Engagement work with PUL communities leading to community relations work and work with statutory bodies.

8. CR Preparatory Work – CNR Communities

Engagement work with CNR communities leading to community relations work and work with statutory bodies.

Part three: The application form and work plan

Page 1 of 10: Your organisation

1. Contact and organisation name

Enter your contact details and the full legal name of your organisation. This needs to correlate with the governing document supplied as part of this application and your current legal status as a body. The contact person will be registered with NICRC for all correspondence relating to the application. Please ensure that all contact details including email address are correct. Should any of the contact details change, please notify CRC to allow necessary amendments to be made.

2. Organisation type

This describes the legal status of your organisation. If your organisation type is not listed, please tick 'other'. The Programme is open to formally constituted community groups and voluntary organisations. Examples of which include Association, Trust, Company Limited by Guarantee or Community Interest Company. Provide the Charity and/or Company Number if applicable.

3. Describe your main purpose and regular CR activities

Please tell us about your day-to-day business and in particular, provide examples of regular community relations interventions. Keep this information concise and relevant to this Funding Programme.

4. Short description

Please provide a **short** description of your organisation and its key community relations activities. If your application is successful, this description will be used for inclusion in any publicity and in the funding contract.

Pages 2 - 7 of 10: Your plan of work

General points about the work plan

- **This is a 12-month work plan.** It must include all work areas that your organisation would complete in **one year (1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027)** with specific, time bound activity outlined. If you are seeking funding for a 2-year period, you should only describe the work to be undertaken in Year 1.
- The work plan is a very important part of the application form. You must be able to describe the main activities you will deliver including the targeted number of

participants. These activities should demonstrate the changes you want to make (your outcomes) and how you propose to measure these changes.

- You need to refer to Appendices 1 and 2 of this document when completing each work area of the work plan. These can also be downloaded from Page 2 on the application form.
- You are expected to group distinct interventions in a strategic, focussed way using the T:BUC headings and the Core Funding Programme Themes. The application system will allow you to have **up to six** distinct Work Areas that make up your annual work plan, but you are not required to complete all six. You should concentrate your programme of activity around a particular theme of work and then undertake it across a number of geographical locations. This will help illustrate the strategic nature of the work you are seeking to undertake.
- Show evidence of need for your work – where possible describe the process of evidence gathering that has led to the development of your intervention. How do you know there is a need for the work to happen, and how will you know if your intervention will successfully address the issue?
- The activity and outputs listed in your plan need to clearly link with the outcomes you select from the drop-down options.
- Applications that provide a detailed plan for each work area will score higher than plans that are unclear, lack detail or do not appear achievable.

The work plan: step by step

This advice relates to each distinct Work Area you intend to undertake (up to a maximum of six). You can navigate between Work Areas from the Summary page at the start of the application form.

- Work Area project title: provide a title for this work area.
- Funders: please tell us which (if any) other funders are supporting programme or other costs to assist in the delivery of this specific Work Area.
- District Council Area: please select the relevant Council area(s) that your programme of work will have an impact on.
- Please choose which T:BUC Priority Area this work falls under: Please select one of the four listed priority areas, a drop-down list will appear.

- NICRC Core Funding Programme Theme, Primary and Secondary: Please refer to Appendix 1 that sets out the 8 CRC Core Funding Programme Themes together with descriptions of the work under each theme. The themes relevant to your chosen T: BUC Priority Area will appear as a drop-down list on the application form. We recognise that sometimes work can fall into one or a number of the listed thematic areas, for example work on 'shared spaces' could also relate to 'community safety and sectarianism'. Please consider which theme you think is most relevant and select this in the primary. You are given an option to choose a secondary theme for your work if you feel this is relevant.
- What do you plan to do? Please provide a short description on what you plan to do and describe how you intend to do this work (method).
- Why does this work need to take place? This is your needs analysis. Please state why you wish to undertake this particular piece of work or intervention – what is it responding to? Refer to any needs assessment carried out. Why is the planned work needed in the area and amongst intended participants and what is the gap in provision that your programme of work will fill? Please refer to the CRC 4 Strategic Priorities / Welcome Statements where relevant.
- Relevant supporting documentation: you can upload a **maximum of two** documents here, but you are not required to. This could be an extract from a research piece that helps to evidence the need for your intervention, or a relevant news link, citations etc.
- Question on how the Work Area aligns with public policy: you should demonstrate how your intervention has a strategic focus or purpose. It would be useful to highlight its complementarity to government strategy and show awareness of wider policy and contextual community relations issues. For example, your work may be a direct response to something that your local Council's good relations audit or action plan has highlighted; there may be a community relations issue that needs to be addressed locally; or you may be involved in government led working groups or responding to policy consultations that have good relations focus.
- Issues that may impede progress: outline any issues you think may impede progress in your area of work and what steps you will take to respond to them. This demonstrates if you have undertaken any risk assessment as part of the planning process for your work.

What work will you be doing?

Direct Engagement Work

- Who will you be working with and where? (OUTPUTS)
Please state who you will be engaging with in your programme of work. Please state what groups/organisations you will be working with, where this is to take place (including the postcode) and how many beneficiaries you will be working with. You will need to provide information on community background and gender of the beneficiaries you intend to work with. Please see the example information provided in the table on the work plan template. Please check that the total Female/ Male number is equal to the total PUL/CNR/Other identities number.
- What do you want to achieve? (OUTCOMES)
Please refer to Appendix 2 that lists the 12 CRC Core Outcomes.
While it is important that you provide information on outputs about what you want to do, it is just as important that you outline why you are doing this work, what is it that you want to achieve (outcomes)?
You can select up to 2 outcomes in order to highlight what you aim to achieve in the completion of this Work Area. These are the strategic, developmental objectives you want to achieve in your body of work.

The Outcomes drop-down list will only give you options that are relevant to the T:BUC theme you have chosen for this Work Area. This is also the reason why you may notice the numbering does not flow as expected!

For each of the outcomes you choose, you will need to provide a statement outlining how you will monitor progress. The information you include in this section should make reference to the following related outputs where applicable:
 - Number of participants engaged in programmes
 - Number of participants completing accredited and non-accredited programmes
 - Desirable joint actions agreed between organisations including statutory/public bodies
 - Number and nature of resources developed including dissemination strategy
 - Other (please detail specifics where possible e.g. who, what, where, when, why etc.)
- How well did you do it?
Please select a feedback survey question from the drop-down menu provided that would help you demonstrate the impact of your programme of work for participants.

You will need to repeat these steps for each Work Area you are completing.

Page 8 of 10: Organisational Management and Development

This is a continuation of the work plan, and it allows for the recording of tasks that are routinely part of the organisational business. This Core Funding Programme considers organisational development and supporting infrastructure as an integral part of its function, so you are being asked to record this work. For example, this may include any administrative or finance tasks that staff would be able to complete with core funding support. You can add additional rows as necessary.

Under the Proposed Activity category, please select an item from the drop-down list that describes work that a core funding award would enable to happen. Alongside this, please provide the job title connected to this work so that we can link this directly to the salary costs requested in the budget section.

Managing a core funding award

It is necessary to provide a copy of your organisational chart that clearly shows where each staff member fits into this structure. This document must be uploaded at the 'Additional information and Declaration' part of the application form (page 10). You also need to outline how your organisation would manage grant support and demonstrate capacity to deliver the outcomes described in your work plan.

This programme monitors activity and progress through a series of development meetings with funded workers and by using a six-monthly progress reporting method. You should document the procedures used by your organisation to satisfy the reporting requirements of this Core Funding Programme.

Page 9 of 10: Budget

Breakdown of salary costs

Provide a breakdown of the total cost of employment. We need to know what the total annual salary is for the post you are seeking support for. This is so that we can check the percentage contribution of any award; the NICRC will not pay for any more than 90% of one salary.

The table allows you to insert costs relating to six staff posts. In the column Job Title, we require you to insert the correct job title so that we can identify which post will be delivering on the Work Area activities previously described and make a value for money assessment.

Grant requested

This is where you list the full details of the costs you are applying for. You will need to input the job titles again and the total salary amounts requested from NICRC for

each post. To change the job title in the table, click on the pen icon and edit the job title. The table will calculate the total salary request.

All new staff posts must be publicly advertised so please allow consideration of the costs associated with this and the time required for recruitment that may affect the timescales of work delivery.

Breakdown of running costs

Only eligible items are listed. You will not be able to change the monetary value of your bid when the assessment is in process, therefore please ensure that you check these figures for accuracy.

Please note the total running costs cannot exceed 25% of the total grant requested.

New or existing positions?

It's important that we know if the salary positions you are seeking grant aid for is a new or existing post. If it is a new post within your organisation, then there will be recruitment considerations that we need to know about (cost and time). If you are seeking funding for a post that currently exists, please tell us which funder (if any) is currently supporting this post.

How many years are you applying for?

You can apply for a maximum of 2 years, but always consider the work plan and budget information questions as relating to Year 1 only (1st April 26 to 31st March 27)

Please note that NICRC will determine the length of contract awarded for all successful applicants so you may not receive funding for the number of years requested.

Match funding evidence

It is very important that you provide a complete financial picture for the running of your organisation over the lifetime of the core funding award you are seeking. NICRC cannot 100% fund organisations and you will have to be able to accurately document the arrangements that your organisation has in place to match fund a core funding award from the NICRC, including resources to deliver the programmes outlined in your work plan. This includes funding from other sources (both secured and what has been applied for). Organisations that are not able to provide assurances about match funding will be considered a high risk at assessment stage.

Confirmation of up-to-date HMRC payments

It is vitally important that your organisation can demonstrate proper financial management and financial stability. A key indicator is that there are no outstanding debts greater than one month to HMRC beyond that of the normal payment schedule. Groups may have entered into a repayment agreement with HMRC in

relation to accrued debt and it is important that details of this is provided to evidence that the debt is being managed properly.

Confirmation of up-to-date Work Place Pension payments

This is another key indicator that your organisation is demonstrating proper financial management and financial stability. If the answer is no, please provide further detail on how this is being managed.

Page 10 of 10: Additional information and declaration

You must tick the boxes provided to confirm that you accept and understand the following stipulations:

- This application has been submitted with the knowledge and authorisation of the organisation's Management Committee/Board. If this application is successful, two representatives of your organisation's Management Committee/Board are required to sign an Agreement Form before any funds are paid.
- You understand that the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council is an arms-length body of the government of Northern Ireland and as such, has legal obligations to share information with other government bodies and agencies for the prevention and detection of fraud and for information purposes.
- In order for your application to be submitted you must upload the following documents:
 - Governing Document (Constitution or Articles of Association)
 - Organisational Strategic Plan
 - Most Recent Audited Accounts
 - Management Accounts
 - Organisational Chart
 - List of current Board/Committee Members
 - One of the following documents: Community Relations Policy, Good Relations Policy or Equality Policy

It is advisable to have all the documents ready for upload at the beginning of the application process.

What is the difference between Audited Accounts and Management Accounts?

Audited Accounts - are the yearly accounts that have been completed for each financial year by an accountant and are presented at the AGM of the

Management Committee or Board and then provided to Charities Commission NI and/or Companies House.

Management Accounts – will often be a one-page summary of your most recent financial position that summarises income, expenditure, assets, liabilities and your groups reserves. We expect this to be a document your organisation routinely prepares for the Board and/or treasurer for internal management purposes. The management accounts are used to give CRC an indication of your current financial position and do not need to be externally verified.

What is the difference between a Strategic Plan and Operational or Action Plan?

A **strategic plan** sets the long-term vision, mission, and high-level goals for an organisation, answering "where are we going?", "what" and "why", focusing on the big picture, while an **operational or action plan** details the short-term, day-to-day tasks, actions, timelines, resources, and key performance indicators (KPIs) to achieve those strategic goals, answering "how do we get there?", "who" and "when". **Strategic plans** have a wider scope and longer timeframe (e.g. 3-5 years), whereas **operational or action plans** are more specific, actionable, and typically cover a shorter duration (e.g. 1 year or less).

It is your responsibility to ensure that the correct documents are uploaded; any document that is incorrectly uploaded will render your application ineligible.

Failure to provide any or all these documents will render the application automatically ineligible, and it will not be assessed for funding.

Part four: Application process

Making an application

You need to access the Core Funding Programme application form through the online Portal on here: www.nicrc.org.uk

You must register your details, go to Funding and select either Application Portal or Core Funding Scheme.

You must complete and submit a Section 75 Monitoring Questionnaire in order to proceed to the application form. When you submit this Questionnaire, you will automatically receive an email acknowledgement with a link to the application form.

Complete all sections of the Application Form and upload all necessary documents as instructed. Please note that you can save the application form as you go along, it does not have to be completed in one sitting.

It is recommended that you do not submit your application until you are certain that you have completed every question and attached everything that is required. However, should you submit your application and subsequently realise that you have omitted key information, you may withdraw your application and submit a new bid provided this occurs prior to the deadline. **This must be completed before the submission deadline as no changes can be made to your application once the deadline has passed.**

Once your application form is successfully submitted, you will receive an email acknowledgement of the registered application and a unique reference number.

The decision-making process runs from November 2025 – March 2026. During this time, you will only hear from us if we have a point of clarification or if an assessment officer considers it necessary to meet.

You will only be informed of a final decision after the NICRC Board has met, on completion of any other points of clarity that they may require and only in writing.

Information and support

During October 2025, NICRC will be hosting several information events. The purpose is to give applicants the chance to speak to CRC staff about their bid and to

ask any questions prior to submitting a bid. Details as to the dates and times of the information events will be posted on the CRC website, www.nicrc.org.uk

If your proposal involves work that has clear community relations aims and outcomes then we welcome applications. We understand the amount of time involved in the completion of bids to the scheme so we would recommend that you speak to a member of the team for further guidance and attend one of the information events.

Receiving a grant

If you are awarded a grant, you will be informed in writing via the email address listed as a primary contact. This will be a short notification letter outlining the decision to fund, amount of funding awarded, and length of contract awarded.

A detailed Letter of Offer and Contract will be issued to your organisation that will fully outline all obligations of grant aid and you will need to be satisfied that your organisation will be able to comply fully with these.

Two representatives of your organisation's Management Committee/ Board, one of whom must be the Chairperson, are required to sign an Agreement Form before any funds are paid.

We are required to be open and transparent about all the information you provide as part of your application and this information may be made available to other agencies.

Uploading the required documents

In order for the system to allow you to submit an application all of the listed documents are required. You are advised to have all these documents readily accessible before beginning the application form.

These documents are integral to the assessment process and therefore failure to supply them with your application will mean your application for support will be immediately rejected.

The system allows you to upload one document under each heading. You are responsible for ensuring that the required documents are uploaded correctly. NICRC will not accept any application where the documentation is not correctly provided as part of the application submission. Please note:

We will not accept information supplied to us after the application deadline.

Documents submitted in error will render your application ineligible for consideration. This applies, for example but not exclusively to, scenarios such as:

- A document being submitted in error,
- Management accounts being uploaded twice rather than 1 x management accounts and 1 x audited accounts,
- If the uploaded document is in a format that cannot be opened/recognised.

Appendix 1

NICRC Core Funding Programme Themes

Themes	Descriptor
1. Children and Young People	Development of work which aims to develop relationships between young people and those engaged with young people including parents, guardians, teachers, trainers, youth workers and others.
2. Shared Spaces (Interfaces & Contested Spaces both Urban and Rural)	Development of shared spaces and venues. This refers to work that seeks to tackle issues related to interfaces and contested & non-shared spaces in both URBAN and RURAL settings. This includes work to develop new shared spaces and maintain relationships at existing shared spaces.
3. Faith-Supported Work	Work which seeks to develop closer working relationships on reconciliation issues between churches (hierarchies & congregations) and between churches and communities on a cross-community basis.
4. Cultural Expression	Work on cultural expression which supports social cohesion – includes work on issues of commemoration, flags, parading, bonfires, emblems, language and work with cultural institutions. This must be preparatory activity to enable engagement on a cross-community basis.
5. Community Safety and Sectarianism	Work to support community safety activity (both inside and outside of PCSP structures) and responses to sectarianism.
6. Addressing the Legacy of the Past	Work to encourage learning and critical exploration of historical events and traditions that impact negatively on social cohesion. This work must demonstrate clear reconciliation outcomes.
7. CR Preparatory Work - PUL Communities	Engagement work with PUL communities leading to community relations work and work with statutory bodies.
8. CR Preparatory Work - CNR Communities	Engagement work with CNR communities leading to community relations work and work with statutory bodies.

Appendix 2

NICRC Core Funding Programme Outcomes

CRC Core Outcomes

- 1. Increase engagement of young people with those from different community/cultural backgrounds.**
- 2. Develop longer-term relationship building between young people from different community backgrounds and those working with young people.**
- 3. Develop responses (long and short term) at interfaces and contested spaces.**
- 4. Increase use of shared spaces (churches, schools, workplaces) to address CR issues and issues of common concern.**
- 5. Increase in people using an existing shared space they would not traditionally visit.**
- 6. Develop new cross-community spaces.**
- 7. Develop responses to issues of sectarianism, intimidation and paramilitarism.**
- 8. Increase direct engagement of those communities and institutions who are involved in cultural expression activity (flags, bonfires, parades/marching bands) - for the purposes of developing relationships & resolving issues/disputes.**
- 9. Increase awareness of own culture and those of others (language, cultural identity & expression) - for the purpose of developing relationships.**
- 10. Development of relationships and understanding about past and current events, with those from different community backgrounds.**
- 11. Enabling women to have a greater influence on decisions made in their community/Northern Ireland.**
- 12. Increase engagement with statutory bodies on CR issues.**