THE CLOTHWORKERS' FOUNDATION
DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

The eligibility criteria for applications to our Open Grants Programmes has expanded to include digital projects beyond hardware. Through our experience of working with not-for-profit organisations, we understand that digital infrastructure plays an integral part in their ability to work effectively and efficiently. This is particularly true after many pivoted to hybrid models of delivery during the pandemic. The findings of the Charity Digital Skills Report 2023 reflect this and 78% of the charities surveyed stated that 'digital is more of a priority to their organisation'. Furthermore, 49% reported that they 'urgently need funds for devices, software and infrastructure'.

In response to this, we will now consider funding one-off costs for some types of digital software and products. Our support aims to enable organisations to be more sustainable, to engage more people more effectively, and to support their staff and volunteers to do their work more efficiently.

In December 2023, we hosted a webinar to explain this change and provide more information about our funding in this area. You can watch the recorded webinar here.

If you are considering applying for a grant for a digital infrastructure project, it is useful to think about it in the same way that you would about a project involving buildings, equipment or vehicles (physical infrastructure). This means that an eligible project must include the development of a clearly defined element of digital infrastructure, for example, a website, CRM or piece of software. Projects that are primarily focused on processes such as auditing, planning or staff training are ineligible, as are those that are at the initial 'brainstorming' or 'discovery' phase. Put simply, we need a reasonable idea of the digital infrastructure that you want to develop and how you want to do it.

We understand that the salaries of employees and other core costs will be part of the total budget for many digital infrastructure projects. However, our funding will not cover these and you can find a list of all the ineligible costs relating to our Open Grants Programmes here. The only exception to this list is that the initial costs of training staff, volunteers and beneficiaries are eligible. However, they must be directly related to the digital infrastructure project that is the subject of your application. Please note that you are welcome to apply for projects that include some ineligible costs but keep in mind that any grant awarded could not be used to cover these costs.

You can find out more information on the eligibility criteria and application process below.

We will consider one-off costs towards (this list is not exhaustive):

- Moving your paper-based processes online so that you can make better use of digital technology. This is sometimes described as 'digitising processes' and can include technical infrastructure and devices e.g., cloud storage and tablets for data collection.
- Developing or updating the digital tools that you use to communicate, such as your website, apps or messaging platforms.
- Adding new digital features to services that you already deliver to make them easier for people to use and access.

Examples of ELIGIBLE projects and costs (this list is not exhaustive):

- Development of a new website or the upgrade of an existing one.
- Development of a new CRM/database or the upgrade of an existing one. This can include consultancy, initial training and support costs.
- Integration of a CRM/database and other digital software used.
- Making a service that you already offer accessible online, for example, via a specialised app, software or website function.

Examples of INELIGIBLE projects and costs:

- The design of a new service (e.g., something that differs to what you offer already, rather than adding digital features to an existing service.
- A project or costs relating specifically to rebranding.
- A project that is still in the initial 'brainstorming' or 'discovery' stage. We will need a clear idea of the digital infrastructure that you want to develop and how you want to do it.
- Core costs including the wages or salaries of employees.
- The cost of a software license beyond the initial set up or upgrade period, defined as up to 12 months for a first-time subscription.
- Website hosting costs beyond the initial set up or upgrade period, as defined above.

What we will need from you:

- A completed application form which will include:
  - A description of your organisation's work.
  - A description of the project and it's intended impact.
  - A fundraising plan.
- A budget showing the total project cost and where you have got the figures from e.g., a quote from a contractor.
- Your most recent annual accounts.

This new eligibility comes as part of the implementation of The Foundation's new strategy. As we continue to receive applications for funding in this area, we will learn about how best we can support organisations with digital infrastructure projects. This may require us to ask additional questions to gain an understanding of your project and how it meets our criteria – please bear with us! During this time, we will ensure that we maintain turnaround times for our Open Grants Programmes and work in line with our values to be an enabling and adaptive funder.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss making a digital application further, please email Foundation@Clothworkers.co.uk or call 0207 623 7041.

Useful sources of information / resources

- Charity Digital - Discounted Software
- Understanding Digital - The Cafe Analogy
- Shared Digital Guides

- [Choosing a Database](#)
- [NCVO Digital and Technology Guides](#)
- [Design Hops - Free Online training Course](#)
- [Good Things Foundation](#)

Other funders that cover digital costs

- [The National Lottery Community Fund](#)
- [Esmée Fairbairn Foundation](#)
- [The Henry Smith Charity](#)
- [Comic Relief](#)
- [William Grant Foundation](#)