Writing your UK Democracy Fund grant application

Updated: October 2026

democracyfund@jrsst-ct.org.uk

This guidance applies to writing both small (£10,000 and under) and large grant applications.

Do not start work on a full application until you have had your outline proposal approved as suitable to progress to the full application stage.

Read more about the UK Democracy Fund's application process here.

A full application to the UK Democracy Fund has three parts:

1. Written application
2. Budget
3. Application form (completed via our online grants portal)

1. Written application

Please only begin your written application once you have been given the go ahead to proceed to the full application stage.

Written applications for large grants (over £10,000) must be a maximum of five pages of A4 using a readable font size.

Written applications for small grants (£10,000 or less) should be around three pages of A4 but must be no more than five pages of A4.

Please use the questions set out on the next page as headings to structure the body of your application.

You may wish to use our application template to help.

- **What are your planned outcomes?** Please state between one and three main outcomes. Outcomes are the short- to medium-term changes you plan to deliver. If you receive funding, these are the outcomes that will be used to measure the success of your work. For more information on outcomes please consult our guidance on outputs and outcomes.

- **What is the purpose of your application?** Tell us briefly what you are seeking funding for and what you plan to change through this work. What would funding from the UK Democracy Fund enable you to do, over what timescale, at what cost, and to what end?

- **Why?** Tell us why this is work is necessary and important. You could outline what the problem or issue is that your work seeks to address, explain who you hope will benefit from the work, or discuss the longer-term impacts you hope the planned outcomes might lead to.

- **Why now?** Tell us why the work is relevant and what the opportunities are to deliver change in the short- to medium- term.

- **Who are you?** Tell us briefly about your organisation. It is important not to presume that we know about you or your organisation, even if you have applied before. Please provide information on your mission, location (e.g. where you are based and, if relevant, where you work), overall financial position (e.g. annual income), capacity (e.g. number of staff and/or volunteers), leadership and governance arrangements.

- **Why are you well placed to do this work?** Tell us about the people who will be leading this work, and the role each person will play. Tell us about any experience, skills or relationships you have and how this will help you to deliver the planned outcomes.

- **How?** Please tell us how you will deliver your outcomes. As a specialist funder, we are interested in understanding your approach and rationale in detail. Please include information on your activities and outputs and explain how they will help you deliver the planned outcomes. If you are applying for funding for research, tell us what your research questions and methodology are. If you are applying for funding for advocacy, tell us who you plan to influence, how and why.

2. Budget

Please provide a breakdown of the budget for your campaign using our budget template. This will be uploaded separately on our online application portal, so you do not need to combine this with your written application document.

Ask for the amount required, but be realistic.

Direct costs: The UK Democracy Fund will pay all the direct costs of a project. These should be broken down as follows on the template:

- Staffing costs (include employer costs, e.g. national insurance and pension contributions). This section should be used for salaried employees.
- Day rate posts. This section should only be used for freelancers, consultants and contractors. It should not be used for salaried employees.
- Direct support costs attributable to your project, such as report print/production, venue hire for events, travel costs and project expenses

Overheads/Indirect costs: These are costs that are not directly attributable to a project but support the organisation's overall ability to deliver the project, for example, office facilities/rent and administrative support. The proportion claimed should be linked to how much of your organisation's work this project accounts for. The budget template will calculate this for you.

Contingencies: You should not include any unallocated or contingency amounts in your budget; instead ensure all amounts are clearly allocated to a specific budget line.

Inflation: Applicants applying for grants with a period of more than 12 months should ensure they consider the potential impact of inflation on their budget allocations, and build it in to their calculations where necessary. Applicants are encouraged to use the monthly Office of National Statistics CPIH publications to assist with this.

Income from other funding sources: In developing your budget, identify any existing income sources which will contribute to the costs. There is a separate column in the budget template for you to include these amounts.

If you have no other source of funds, you may enter zero or leave this column on the template blank.

Where you have, or anticipate, income towards the costs please identify in the notes column whether this is:

- Income secured: funding already available towards the costs of your project.
- Income anticipated: pending funding applications or anticipated income from other known funding streams.

The budget template will calculate the total amount to be requested from the UK Democracy Fund automatically. This should match the 'ask' in your written application.

On our website we provide two worked examples to help you build your budget:

- Example with no funding from other sources
- Example where a UK Democracy Fund grant will be supplemented by other funding

3. Application form

Later in the process you will be asked to complete an application form on our online grants portal.

A full list of the questions included on the application form can be found here.

Next steps

Please share a draft of your written application and budget with the Grants Manager ahead of the final application deadline. This provides the Grants Manager with an opportunity to provide you with further comments and feedback.

Once your application is finalised, please send the final version to the Grants Manager who will check it over one last time and provide you with instructions on how to submit it via our online grants portal. Please do not submit your application via the online grants portal until you have been given the go ahead by the Grants Manager.

Please note that if your application is successful, we will require you to have an organisational bank account into which we will deposit the grant funding. You may need to consider a hosting arrangement for your project should you not have access to an organisational bank account. We can provide advice if required. Be aware that setting up an organisational bank account can be a lengthy process and that waiting until after your grant application is successful to set up an account may result in delays to your funding being released.