

IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE CAREFULLY BEFORE FILLING IN THE APPLICATION FORM.

About the fund

Braintree District Council has committed to invest £1m into a two-year programme to tackle the issues caused by the cost-of-living crisis.

The two-year programme will focus on 3 objectives:

- a) To provide food security and access to essential goods across the district, making it easier for everyone to reach, including those living in our most rural areas.
- b) To help the most vulnerable by supporting community groups and organisations to do more. These groups are already doing some incredible work and are well placed to identify and support those who need help most.
- c) To enable physical and emotional health and wellbeing for anyone, especially young people, struggling to afford vital access to leisure activities and sports clubs.

We are offering organisations and groups the opportunity to apply for funding to assist with new and existing projects in relation to the cost of living which is to be spent by March 2026. We have created two grants which have their own application forms and are detailed below:

Microgrants – up to a maximum of £1,000

- The fund opens for applications on 31/03/2025 and will remain open until the allocated balance has been spent.

Small Grants – up to a maximum of £10,000

- The fund opens for applications on 31/03/2025 and will remain open for a period of 8 weeks. Any applications after the closing date of 26/05/2025 will not be considered.

Eligible organisations and groups

Submissions should only be made by applicants that provide a service or support to people living within the Braintree District boundaries.

Applications **will** be considered from:

- ✓ Registered Charities
- ✓ Voluntary and Community Organisation
- ✓ Sports Clubs with Clubmark
- ✓ Parish and Town Councils who are actively responding to the needs of vulnerable people in Braintree District communities
- ✓ Faith Groups
- ✓ Social and Community Enterprises

Applications will **not** be considered from:

- ✗ People applying for personal needs on an individual basis
- ✗ For-profit businesses
- ✗ Informal groups

Criteria:

Your project should:

- Support the main objectives of the Cost of Living Fund
- Have a clear purpose
- Benefit Braintree district residents

What we can fund

Capital costs such as:

- ✓ Vehicle purchases
- ✓ Recreation facilities
- ✓ IT equipment
- ✓ Sports equipment
- ✓ Disabled facilities
- ✓ Promotional materials

Revenue costs such as:

- ✓ Salaries
- ✓ Rent
- ✓ Event costs - where funding is not the primary objective
- ✓ New or existing projects, although new projects are preferred
- ✓ Volunteer expenses

What we cannot fund

Capital costs such as:

- ✗ Recoverable VAT – if your organisation is VAT registered and able to reclaim VAT we cannot fund the VAT element of your project costs
- ✗ Depreciation – as this is not a real cashcost
- ✗ Bank, finance or audit charges
- ✗ Repayment of loans or interest costs
- ✗ Retrospective costs – we cannot fund any expenditure that has already been incurred or you are committed to incurring before the grant is approved
- ✗ CCTV projects
- ✗ General appeals for funds
- ✗ Endowments (to provide a source of income)
- ✗ Fundraising activities
- ✗ Statutory obligations

Revenue costs such as:

- ✗ Purchase of alcohol
- ✗ Projects that mainly benefit an individual (i.e. equipment that is not shared)
- ✗ Land or building projects where the ownership of the land or a minimum 5 year lease is not yet in place
- ✗ Projects occurring outside the Braintree District
- ✗ Projects that do not benefit Braintree District residents
- ✗ Projects that promote or support a particular political view
- ✗ Projects that directly promote a religious belief
- ✗ Projects that will be entirely reliant on continued grant support
- ✗ Contingency costs
- ✗ Ordinary activities of a statutory body

Governance Criteria

The Council is accountable for public funds and therefore needs assurance that an organisation is:

- Operating in line with the law and relevant regulations; and,
- Operating in line with its own governing documents; and,
- Effectively managing public funds and fulfils the monitoring requirements.
- Cost-of-Living Grant applicants must, where required, have their own policies in place:
 - Safeguarding Adults & Children
 - Equality & Diversity
 - Health and Safety

The project should be able to demonstrate achievement of agreed outcomes through effective monitoring and evaluation of the work.

Process

Microgrants (up to £1,000):

- Applications will be completed online via www.braintree.gov.uk/community/cost-living-grant-scheme or via the hard copy which can be sent on request. If you require a hard copy, please contact michael.graham@braintree.gov.uk
- Applications will be assessed by the Cost of Living Project Officer, Community Services Team Manager and Head of Housing & Communities. Applications will be reviewed by the panel as quickly as possible to ensure timely use of the funds.
- If successful, the applicant will be notified by email and asked to sign and return the terms and condition of the microgrant. Once signed, the microgrant will be paid by BACS.

Small Grants (up to £10,000):

- Applications will be completed online www.braintree.gov.uk/community/cost-living-grant-scheme If you require a hard copy, please contact michael.graham@braintree.gov.uk
- All applications will be collated and appraised using the scoring matrix by the Council before submission to a panel consisting of Councillors for consideration and determination. All Small Grant applications will be appraised after the 8 week closing date in June 2025 and not before.
- All applicants will be notified of the decision (via email) within 5 working days of the panel meeting.
- If successful, a Grant Agreement will be entered into between the Council and the successful applicant following which the Grant will be paid by BACS.
- Grants through the Fund should only be spent on the items/purpose detailed in the Grant Agreement. If the grant is not spent on the approved purposes or there is an underspend, the Council has the authority to reclaim part or all the grant.

Scoring Matrix

To ensure grant applications submitted to the Fund meet the required objectives, a systematic approach will be taken to assess applications. The grant application appraisal process will be made up of two parts:

- Part 1: Due Diligence
- Part 2: Criteria Scoring

Part 1: Due Diligence evaluates key governance areas that are essential to deliver strong, fair, safe, and ethical services. Applicants will be scored a 'Yes' or 'No' for each criteria. If any answer to any of the following is 'No' the application will not be considered under part 2.

Where necessary, clarifications may be sought from the applicant on information provided within the application.

Part 2: Criteria scoring will be conducted by a number of assessors allocating scores per criteria. Each assessor will individually score application forms independently without influence or prejudice from other assessors, colleagues, or any other person(s)/ organisation.

All scores then be combined and presented to the panel as marks out of 30.

Applicants can contact the Community Services Team at Braintree District Council with any queries or questions.

Email michael.graham@braintree.gov.uk

Tel 01376 552525

If you would like this document in large print, Braille, audiotapes, or translated into another language, please contact us: