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Guidance

Applying for funding from the local skills improvement fund

Information for further education providers about the local skills improvement fund, including eligibility requirements and how to apply.

From: [Department for Education](#)

Published 24 May 2023

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Applies to England

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Overview

The local skills improvement fund (LSIF) is designed to enable further education (FE) providers across a geographic area to respond collectively to the priorities in the [local skills improvement plans \(LSIPs\)](#). The LSIPs will be submitted by the designated employer representative body for each area by 31 May 2023 and published in summer 2023.

The LSIF supports the reforms introduced in the [skills for jobs white paper](#), providing investment in the technical skills system to better support the needs of the local labour market and wider economy.

The LSIF is available across 2 financial years:

- £80 million in 2023 to 2024 (£40 million revenue and £40 million capital)
- £85 million capital in 2024 to 2025

The LSIF builds on the strategic development fund, which was piloted in 2021 to 2022 and rolled out across England in 2022 to 2023.

The LSIF will:

- provide investment in new facilities and equipment
- fund the delivery and development of new courses and curriculum
- support excellence in college leadership, governance and teaching to create a sustainable approach to addressing local skill needs, particularly at levels 3 to 5

Application stages

The application process has 2 stages:

- 1 an initial expression of interest for up to £100,000 mobilisation funding for each LSIP area to help providers begin developing their proposals
- 2 a more detailed stage 2 application for delivery funding

This publication covers the stage 1 application process.

Providers can use the draft LSIP priorities, shared with them on 31 March 2023, to develop their stage 1 expression of interest application.

Funding guidance and application forms for stage 2 will be published towards the end of June 2023. Each area will be able to apply for funding, up to a maximum amount based on the size of the working age population, current skill attainment levels and productivity level of the area.

Who can apply

A lead applicant must submit an application, on behalf of the provider collaboration for each LSIP area. The lead applicant must be one of:

- a general further education college
- an institution which has been designated as being in the further education sector, or
- the licence holder for an Institute of Technology (IoT)

Each of these provider types are also eligible to lead the individual projects identified in the stage 1 application.

The same institution will be required to lead both application stages. Providers should agree collectively who the lead will be for their area.

All lead applicants and project lead providers must already offer a broad range of post 16 technical education and training which reflects the needs in their area. They should have the capacity and capability to undertake the role they are applying for. They should be able to lead a broad range of collaboration partners from across their area, building and extending collaborative working where needed.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the lead applicant or project lead provider should not:

- have a current Ofsted grade for overall effectiveness of less than good
- have a current published notice to improve
- be in intervention status for finance or quality reasons, unless they have moved into post-intervention, monitoring, and support

Providers of post-16 technical education and training who do not meet the criteria to be lead applicants or project leads may be eligible to be delivery partners in LSIF projects and to receive funding.

How to apply

Applications for stage 1 must be prepared and submitted by the lead applicant using the:

- [application forms on the e-tendering platform Jaggaer](#)
- [funding guidance for the local skills improvement fund](#) (PDF, 517 KB, 51 pages)

Applications can only be accepted if submitted using part A and part B of the Stage 1: Expressions of interest application forms.

The closing date for applications is midday on Tuesday 20 June 2023.

There must only be one stage 1 expression of interest application per area. If multiple applications are received for an area, we will ask the relevant providers and endorsing employer representative body to resubmit a single application. This may reduce the time applicants will have to develop their stage 2 application form.

To receive mobilisation funding, applicants must meet the eligibility criteria for the stage 1 application process. Only those activities that are eligible for stage 1 funding, given in the [funding guidance for the local skills improvement fund](#) (PDF, 517 KB, 51 pages), will be reimbursed.

Lead applicants need to submit proof of expenditure to receive

payment from the mobilisation fund. Approved applications will be paid to the lead applicant in arrears.

Provider support event

We are holding a provider support event on Tuesday 6 June for prospective applicants to ask questions about the process. Details about how to join the event are given in Jaggaer.

You can [register to use Jaggaer](#). Once you're registered, search for '6955_Local Skills Improvement Fund 2023-25'.

Help with applications

For help with registration, please use the support links on the [Jaggaer](#) portal.

Any questions or clarification requests must be submitted through [Jaggaer](#).

Published 24 May 2023

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