



Residential tenant training
Empowerment capacity building prospectus



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Section 1

Tenant empowerment and this prospectus

Introduction

1. This prospectus invites applications by 12 July 2011 from eligible organisations for grant funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government to empower tenants living in social housing to play a more active role in their local community through residential training.

Tenant empowerment

2. Social housing plays a crucial role for around four million housing tenants in England, providing stability and security, and delivering key local services. Although some tenants play an active role at the local level, many others are unaware of the opportunities to participate. Indeed, the proportion of tenants that feel that their landlord takes account of their views is falling¹.
3. Government is committed to building a Big Society. This means giving local people more say about, and influence to shape, the services that they receive. Through various measures such as the provisions in the Localism Bill, power will be transferred to people to take more control of local decisions and exercise new rights to take over and run local services.
4. Additionally, the Housing Minister, Grant Shapps, recently announced that £8m grant funding would be available over the period 2011-12 to 2014-15 to help social tenants gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to participate at the local level². Whilst mainstream tenant participation activity remains the responsibility of landlords, this funding, which forms the Tenant Empowerment Programme, provides support where landlords do not embrace tenant participation/empowerment, through, for example:
 - information about the ways in which tenants can get involved locally
 - training and support to help tenants gain skills and inspire them to play a bigger role locally, for example on tenant panels or scrutiny boards

¹ From 31% in 1995 to 16% in 2008 'Existing Tenants Survey' 2008, TSA

² Funding will be provided through the Tenant Empowerment Programme, administered by the Tenant Services Authority.

- practice-sharing opportunities so that tenants can share ideas and learn from others about how to make a difference in their community
5. Feedback suggests that tenants greatly value the opportunity to attend intensive, residential training that really inspires change³. Away from local distractions, such in-depth training can help tenants to focus on opportunities to make a difference locally; share ideas; and explore how local barriers can be overcome. Additionally, feedback suggests that residential surroundings are important in stimulating a positive learning experience, which participants can take back to local communities to inspire and lead change locally. Landlords rarely provide such residential training and Government wishes to see this type of learning facility available to social housing tenants.
6. Social tenants who participate in such training, and other Tenant Empowerment Programme-funded activities, are committed to improving the quality of life for others in their community. Recognising their dedication, commitment, and outstanding contribution, Government is encouraging more tenants to volunteer to make a difference locally, through plans to:
- strengthen the role of local tenant panels
 - streamline tenants' Right to Manage so that it is easier for tenants to take control of housing
 - direct the Regulator to strengthen its Involvement and Empowerment Standard so that landlords support tenant panels and publish an annual report to tenants

This prospectus

7. This prospectus sets out the basis on which grant is to be given by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government ("the Secretary of State"). It describes the legal basis for the grant and how it will be provided, the amount of grant available, the organisations that may apply, how the Secretary of State will decide the applications he receives, and other terms and conditions on which grant will be provided.

³ Anecdotal evidence gathered by the Tenant Services Authority in the context of the review of the Tenant Empowerment Programme, summer 2010.

Section 2

The operation of the grant

The legal basis for the grant

8. Under section 70 of the Charities Act 2006, the Secretary of State has power to give financial assistance in the form of grants to certain charitable, benevolent or philanthropic institutions. The terms and conditions for providing this funding are described in this prospectus.

The provision of financial assistance

9. To be considered for this financial assistance, the organisation must:
 - be eligible when judged against the criteria in this prospectus
 - make an application for grant in accordance with this prospectus
 - comply with any other relevant terms and conditions set by the Secretary of State
10. The Secretary of State will decide whether or not to accept an application for financial assistance, and the level of grant to be provided. In taking this decision, he will have regard to the matters set out in this prospectus, including the eligibility of the applicant organisation, its application, and to all other relevant matters.
11. The terms and conditions on which financial assistance will be given will be agreed between the grant recipient and the Department.
12. The maximum amount of grant that is available is up to £535,000, covering the period October 2011 - October 2013, though this is subject to satisfactory performance. An extension of future years funding, potentially up to March 2015, will be considered as part of on-going monitoring of progress and review of the Tenant Empowerment Programme.
13. Government spending is authorised by Parliament by a system of annual estimates, which Parliament approves by voting on an Appropriation Act for each financial year. Entitlement to grant in each financial year is therefore subject to the Parliamentary approval of the Appropriation Act for the year in question.

Eligibility criteria

14. An organisation is eligible to apply for grant funding if:

- it is a third sector organisation that falls within the scope of the Charities Act 2006 definition of being a charitable, benevolent or philanthropic institution
- it has a proven track record of delivery in support of community empowerment activity
- the total grant received from Government (including this grant application) is less than 50 per cent of the organisation's annual income in its accounting year ended in 2008-09, as demonstrated through its audited annual accounts. This is to ensure that the organisation does not become liable for consideration as an arms length body
- it is a corporate body or has a formal constitution if not incorporated
- it has an equal opportunities policy and complies with disability discrimination legislation

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Section 3

Factors to take into account in the application

15. The purpose of the financial assistance is to give grant to an eligible organisation whose mission and goals are consistent with our aim of empowering tenants to play a bigger role in their local community. The grant will help the organisation to provide high quality residential training that provides tenants with the skills, confidence, and understanding to make a positive difference at the local level.
16. We are particularly interested in hearing how organisations could provide residential training that offers a stimulating learning experience, in a relaxed and peaceful residential environment, that inspires participants to take back learning and lead change in their local community.
17. Applicants should explain how their training would be tailored to the needs, skills, and experiences of social housing tenants, encouraging them to play a more active role locally, including, for example, through training on tenant panels. Applicants should therefore consider “class size” in the context of the content and focus of the training.
18. It is important that social tenants from across England are able to take advantage of the residential training. We would therefore like to see ideas about how applicants would publicise and market their proposed residential training programme.
19. Applicants should demonstrate that they have a track record in delivery. We would want to see applicants specifying the outputs that they would deliver from the grant, for example in terms of the number of courses, the types of courses, number of attendees, class sizes, value for money. We would also expect applications to outline the outcomes to be secured, and would like to see an indication of how these might be measured and monitored.
20. We will want to be satisfied that residential accommodation will be of a suitable standard and fit for the purpose of the training, whilst representing value for money. It must also meet equalities and disability legislation.
21. To make the most effective use of the financial assistance available, we would also need to be assured that the organisation would complement the other training and capacity support that is being funded by Tenant Empowerment Programme.

22. Finally, we would also be interested to hear about innovative ways in which grant could be provided to help tenants to take back learning to their local communities, for example helping them to spread the message with a wider group of tenants and energise local communities to build the Big Society in their neighbourhood.

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Section 4

The application process – how to apply and how your application will be handled

How to apply

23. We have sought to make the application process as simple as possible, whilst ensuring that decisions on applications will be fair, transparent, and soundly based, having regard to the information and any other relevant matters supplied by the applicant. Applications must be received on or before 12 July 2011 and must conform to the requirements set out below.

Information required

24. Applicants will need to complete the attached application form which seeks to ensure that we understand:

- your organisation and its current plans to deliver community-focused empowerment activities
- what difference receiving grant assistance would make to the scale and range of activities that your organisation undertakes
- the nature of the proposed residential training, including information about how it will stimulate learning, meet the needs of attendees, offer quality accommodation, and be widely publicised
- the proposed outputs and outcomes to be secured and how they might be measured and monitored
- innovative ideas for enabling tenants to take back learning to communities

25. In addition, we require copies of:

- your current strategy or business plan
- your organisation's annual report and accounts for the accounting years ended in 2007-08, and 2008-09; if these are not available your organisation will need to provide a statement, agreed with its auditor, explaining the situation

- your organisation's structure and governance arrangements
26. Applicants may also provide such other information as they consider appropriate. At any time during the selection process, further information may be requested to clarify material previously submitted. This must be provided in accordance with any timetable included in the Secretary of State's request.

How your application will be handled

27. Once your application is received, you will receive an email confirming receipt within five working days. All applications will be subject to a three stage internal assessment process, which is designed to be fair and transparent:
- Stage 1 will check all applications for completeness. If any elements are missing, applicants will be given 48 hours to provide the necessary information. If this is not received within the deadline the application will be rejected.
 - Stage 2 will assess compliance with the eligibility criteria for the grant as set out in Section 2.
 - Stage 3 will assess the relative quality of the application from eligible organisations, having regard to the organisation's proposals for delivery, recognising its impact on empowerment and value for money.
28. The Secretary of State will make the selection, on the basis of the available information and having regard to all relevant matters, with the aim of giving grant to the organisation which, in his opinion, would provide the most effective and efficient provision of training, having regard to the available funding.
29. We envisage notifying applicants of the result of the selection by the end of August 2011.
30. We will meet with the successful applicant to discuss their plans for course content and topics, which will need to be agreed prior to the commencement of the grant. We will want to be assured that courses do not duplicate training provided by landlords as part of their regulatory capacity building responsibilities.
31. The arrangements for monitoring and reporting progress, including delivery of outcomes arising from grant funding, will also be agreed with the Department. It is our intention to review progress at quarterly intervals.

32. For the successful applicant, it is our intention that grants will be paid on a six monthly basis until October 2013, subject to the organisation's satisfactory performance, as judged through the agreed monitoring arrangements. If performance is not considered satisfactory, remedial action may be required by a specified date. Should such remedial action not be taken, and effective use of public funding is considered to be risk, it would be open to the Secretary of State to suspend or terminate the provision of the financial assistance, after giving three months notice.

33. Completed application forms should be sent by 12 July 2011 to:
residentialtenanttraining@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Or by post to:
Lesley Storer
Tenant Empowerment
Department for Communities and Local Government
Zone 1/G9, Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

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Residential tenant training: empowerment capacity building: the application form

Name, address and contact details of applicant:

Background about the applicant (max 500 words)

Including mission statement/ goals; track-record of delivery; organisational structure/ governance).

Current plans to deliver community-focused empowerment activities:

Amount of grant sought:

October 2011 – March 2012	April 2012 – March 2013	April 2013 – October 2013	Total

What difference would receiving grant assistance would make to the scale and range of activities that your organisation undertakes?

Nature of the application

Information about training and accommodation, including the proposed training courses and how these will be tailored to the needs of attendees, offering a stimulating learning experience, and providing quality accommodation:

Proposed outputs to be delivered:

Proposed outcomes to be secured and how these might be measured and monitored:

Proposed arrangements for publicising residential training:

Ideas for enabling tenants to take back learning to communities:

Other relevant information (max 300 words)

Completed forms to be submitted by 12 July 2011 to
residentialtenanttraining@communities.gsi.gov.uk

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