

# FUTURE CAMDEN FUND

Information pack 2025/26



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# About the Fund



The Future Camden Fund offers Match Trading grants and affordable loans to support innovative, forward thinking businesses that are building a better future for our borough and its communities.

The Future Camden Fund encourages businesses that often face funding barriers to apply. We especially want to support Black, female and other underrepresented founders or leaders, and we value lived experience.

Camden's business founders come from all walks of life, and no one should be held back in business because of their background, past or barriers to finance.

We're proud to champion diversity in entrepreneurship through the programme, while supporting growth in a range of sectors across the borough.



# Match Trading grants



Match Trading® is an innovative approach from the School for Social Entrepreneurs that incentivises growth through trading.

If you choose a Match Trading grant, we'll support you by matching your increase in trading income pound-for-pound with grant funding. We'll work with you to agree a maximum funding goal for the next year based on your projected income. You'll receive 20% of this grant upfront as a 'grant in advance' to help you get set up.

After that you'll be able to 'draw down' from your total grant on a quarterly basis over a 12-month period if you can evidence an increase in income for that quarter.

## How it works

Salma runs a flower shop in Camden and wants to expand her business by introducing a delivery service. However, the upfront cost of a website and packaging materials has put her off starting. She successfully applies for a £10,000 Match Trading grant, receiving £2,000 (20%) of that as an advance to buy her materials.

In the first three months of introducing her new delivery service, Salma makes an **extra** £1,800 compared to the baseline trading period. We match this with a £1,800 payout for that quarter.

If Salma doesn't succeed in meeting her target of £10,000, and instead she only raises £8,000 in additional income, she will still receive a grant to match the lower level of income raised.

# Affordable loans



Our affordable loans are just like a loan from a bank. They must be repaid to Camden Council, but we are offering a low interest rate and accept a higher level of risk than high street lenders.

The interest is a flat 5%, not compounding – so you have a set amount to pay back, regardless of the time you have the loan. With a high street lender, you could be paying as much as 15% compounding interest.

You can apply for a loan of £10,000 to £50,000. The repayment term is three years including a six month initial repayment holiday.

## How it works

Alex takes out a Future Camden Fund loan of £10,000 to buy new equipment and packaging for his food business. His term is 3 years, with a 5% flat interest rate.

5% interest of Alex's £10,000 loan is £500. This is the total interest for the entire duration of the loan. The total amount repayable is £10,500.

If Alex had taken out a compounding loan, like most bank loans, the 5% interest would have grown to £1,566.53 over the 3 years. The total amount repayable by the end of the term would have been £11,566.53.

# Our business support package

We've partnered with [Action for Race Equality](#) to put together a package of business support that considers and celebrates the diversity of Camden's entrepreneurs, , designed to help your business soar. All businesses who are chosen for funding will receive free access to:

- Up to eight hours of one-to-one time with a consultant
- Peer support sessions
- Networking with other businesses

You will also have the opportunity to film a marketing video with our videographer partner. They will shoot an interview-style film in your place of work to create an introductory video about your business.





# Funding criteria



## What we will fund:

- Organisations registered with Companies House or the Charity Commission
- Organisations with less than £1m turnover
- Organisations with fewer than 50 employees
- Organisations based in Camden or can show that a large amount of your work is done locally and benefits local people

## What we won't fund:

- Traditional voluntary and community sector work unless there is a trading element that we can match fund
- Business as usual, as we want to support innovation and growth
- Sole traders, as we cannot carry out the right due diligence
- Businesses that are only connected to Camden by PO box, virtual offices, storage space or hotdesking and don't have a strong presence here
- Businesses that are in administration, insolvent, have ceased trading or are subject to a striking-off notice

We're looking to support your business growth ideas; this might be to develop a new product or service, expand an existing workstream, create a new workstream, or to market your new business.

# Funding criteria

## Building an Inclusive Economy:

The Future Camden Fund is built around **eight Inclusive Economy priority areas**, and we need to see how you will create positive and measurable outcomes through your work that relate to one of these areas. While your project may align to multiple priority areas, we ask you to focus on **one main area** in your application.

### 1. Education and training for local people

We're looking for good quality training/education for people in Camden (working, studying or living) that targets skills gaps and where possible, could lead to employment opportunities or job security. These opportunities should be affordable for all.

### 2. Programmes for young people

Where possible we'd like to see prioritisation of our Youth Mission Cohort – care experienced, SEND (special education needs and disabilities), youth justice or low income – but this is not essential. Programmes should be clearly defined with positive outcomes for young people across areas like health, wellbeing, education, inclusion, safety and skills. Programmes should be affordable to all.

### 3. Digital inclusion

We're looking for projects that will help local people access digital tools, skills or devices – ideally prioritising groups most often excluded from the digital economy.

### 4. Addressing underrepresentation

We want to see projects that are working to remove barriers to underrepresented groups across leaderships teams, academia, business and industry sectors, to ensure that the diversity of Camden is mirrored in all aspects of Camden life and business.



# Funding criteria

## 5. Support for other small and/or diverse local businesses

We're looking for projects that support or champion minority owned businesses or hyper local (Camden) or local (London) organisations to grow their income and/or improve/expand their offering.

## 6. Access to Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM)

By access to STEAM, we mean projects that:

- Inspire careers in STEAM amongst young people through informed advice and role models
- Make it easier for people to participate in STEAM activities, like visiting museums, galleries, or attending art classes
- Provide STEAM skills and learning opportunities
- Diversify STEAM careers through targeted employment or learning opportunities for those typically excluded from STEAM, including women, girls and ethnic minorities.
- Establish clear pathways into STEAM higher education or learning

## 7. Citizen health and wellbeing

We're looking for quality healthcare, wellbeing or nutritional support for the local community. Ideally this would be offered for free or at a discounted price, and targeting those most in need of support.

## 8. Sustainability, net zero and ethical choices

We're looking for projects that involve people, places, buildings and/or organisations to achieve net zero by 2030. We also want to hear about project supporting nature-resilience in the borough. And we're looking for ways to make it easier for people to make ethical lifestyle choices, whether that's related to their food or travel habits, for example.

If you have any questions you can contact us for advice. Just send an email to [futurecamdenfund@camden.gov.uk](mailto:futurecamdenfund@camden.gov.uk).

# How to apply

We know that your time is precious, so we've worked with business owners to design an application process that is as quick and simple as possible.

## Expression of interest

The expression of interest only takes 5-10 minutes to fill out. We ask for your business's details, how much funding you would like, and a couple of sentences summarising your project.

## Project proposal

We will invite businesses who meet our basic criteria (being Camden based and doing social good) to submit a full project proposal via an online application form. You will also be able to upload other supporting documents like a pitch deck, business plan, impact report or a link to a video if you would like to.

## Panel decision

Our team will make a shortlist of the strongest applications and put it forward to our panel. The panel (a group of Camden senior officers and external partners) will make a final decision.

## Follow up

After the panel review, we may have a few follow up questions to get clarity on certain aspects of your application, and to help you put your best foot forward for our final decision.

Applications may be submitted on a rolling basis when the fund is open, and will be reviewed on either a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Please check our website for more specific timelines.

### Ready to apply?

Visit [camden.gov.uk/future-camden-fund](https://camden.gov.uk/future-camden-fund) to submit your expression of interest.

# Frequently asked questions

## **Who has developed this fund?**

The Future Camden Fund has been developed by Camden Council's Inclusive Economy service (known as Economic Development in other councils). We have worked with local organisations, social enterprise experts and entrepreneurs from across London to develop our funding and business support.

## **Can the Future Camden Fund be used to cover operational costs?**

This fund is designed to help businesses to grow and do good. We recognise that running a business is expensive, so we are flexible about funding - for example, you can use Match Trading to match fund all of your trading income instead of one product, and the grant you earn can be spent however you like. However, this is not a coronavirus recovery fund or a cost of living crisis fund.

## **Who decides which businesses are successful?**

The team will review applications for how well they fit with our Inclusive Economy priority areas and shortlist the projects that are most impactful and that we are most confident in. A panel of senior Council officers and employees from our partners, Black Owned London and Action for Race Equality, will make the final decision on who is funded.

## **Do I need to be a Black or female entrepreneur to apply?**

No, you don't. We want to support businesses from all backgrounds and with different experiences of the borough. We are encouraging Black and female businesses as they face additional barriers, but your project will be considered regardless of background.

## **Where is the money coming from?**

The funding used is a combination of Section 106 funding secured from the redevelopment of King's Cross and an investment that the Inclusive Economy service made several years ago. The funding used for the Future Camden Fund is all from our budget and does not affect other services such as schools and adult social care.



# Contact us

For application advice or to request this guidance in a different format, please email [futurecamdenfund@camden.gov.uk](mailto:futurecamdenfund@camden.gov.uk)

Find out more about the Fund and apply at [camden.gov.uk/future-camden-fund](https://camden.gov.uk/future-camden-fund)

