



## Muslim Institute

### Community Empowerment Fund

#### Grant Criteria – 2026 onwards

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The Muslim Institute has allocated £100,000 to its Community Empowerment Fund, to be distributed over 3–5 years. We fund educational, research and capacity-building work in three areas: community wellbeing, young people, and civil liberties.

### About the Fund

The Muslim Institute is an independent charity and fellowship society, established in 1973, that supports the growth of knowledge, debate, and community empowerment. The Community Empowerment Fund was created in 2023 to resource grassroots work that aligns with our mission. Past grants have supported young people's residential programmes in Oldham and West London.

Grants of £5,000–£20,000 are available. We favour projects that are practical, achievable, and rooted in the communities they serve.

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### Who can apply

You may apply if you are:

- A UK-registered charity, constituted voluntary or community organisation, or social enterprise
- An unregistered community group with a track record of delivery and a responsible lead individual
- An individual applicant working in partnership with an established organisation

We particularly welcome applications from female-led organisations and groups serving refugees, economically deprived areas, and other marginalised communities.

You must be based in the United Kingdom. We do not fund international projects.

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### The three funding streams

All applications must fall within one of the three streams below. A project may address more than one stream but should identify a primary stream in the application. The streams will be opened for applications one at a time, starting with Stream 1. Dates will be announced on the Muslim Institute website.

**Stream 1****Community Wellbeing****£30–35k  
total**

We fund work that advances understanding of mental health in Muslim communities and wider society, with a focus on education and stigma reduction.

| <b>We will fund</b>                                                                                         | <b>We will not fund</b>                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Mental health education and awareness programmes                                                          | X Direct clinical or therapeutic services (e.g. counselling, psychology sessions) |
| ✓ Stigma-reduction initiatives in mosques, women's projects or community associations                       | X Medical treatments or prescriptions                                             |
| ✓ Training for community leaders and volunteers on faith-literate approaches to mental health and wellbeing | X General health provision not focused on mental health education                 |
| ✓ Research into mental health experiences in Muslim communities                                             |                                                                                   |

**Stream 2 Young People****£35–40k  
total**

We fund work that advances the educational, intellectual, and civic development of young Muslims, particularly those from economically hard-pressed areas and marginalised demographics such as refugees.

| <b>We will fund</b>                                              | <b>We will not fund</b>                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Educational programmes and learning resources                  | X General youth clubs or recreational activities without an educational focus      |
| ✓ Leadership development and mentoring schemes                   | X Projects serving young people outside Muslim communities without broader benefit |
| ✓ Civic engagement and community participation projects          | X Party-political campaigning or voter mobilisation                                |
| ✓ Platforms and events that amplify youth voices                 |                                                                                    |
| ✓ Residential and retreats with a structured educational purpose |                                                                                    |

### Stream 3 Civil Liberties

£25–30k  
total

We fund work that helps UK Muslim communities understand, assert, and defend their civil liberties, human rights, and equality under the law, through education and informed public discussion.

| We will fund                                                                | We will not fund                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Know-your-rights education and community workshops                        | X Party-political campaigning of any kind                       |
| ✓ Forums and events on civil liberties, human rights, and international law | X Electoral or voter registration activities                    |
| ✓ Educational resources on counter-terrorism law, policing, or surveillance | X Legal representation or casework for individuals              |
| ✓ Support for community engagement with legal and civil society partners    | X Activities that are not independent and balanced in character |

### What grants can cover

Grants may cover direct project costs, including:

- Staff or freelance costs directly related to the funded project
- Venue hire, travel, and accommodation for project activities
- Materials, printing, and resources
- Evaluation and reporting costs

Up to 15% of the grant may be used towards overheads (e.g. a contribution to organisational running costs), provided this is clearly itemised in the budget.

We do not fund: retrospective costs; endowments or reserves; party-political activity; direct clinical or legal services; or work that has already received full funding from another source.

### How we decide

Applications are assessed by an independent panel that includes external specialists in each stream. The panel makes recommendations to the Trustee Board, which takes final decisions.

We assess every application against five questions:

- 1 Does it fall clearly within one of the three streams?
- 2 Is there a clear and identifiable public benefit?
- 3 Is the work educational, research-based, or capacity-building in character?

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- |          |                                                                  |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>4</b> | Is the applicant credible and capable of delivering the project? |
| <b>5</b> | Is the budget realistic and proportionate?                       |

We may contact applicants for a brief conversation before making a final decision. We aim to notify all applicants within eight weeks of the closing date.

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## How to apply

When the application round opens, we will publish a short application form on our website. You will be asked to provide:

- A brief description of your organisation or background
- A description of the project: what you will do, who it will reach, and what difference it will make
- Which funding stream you are applying to, and why the project fits
- A simple project budget, showing how the grant will be spent
- The names of any partner organisations
- Evidence of your track record (e.g. a previous project report, reference, or link to your work)

**Keep your application concise. We read every application carefully. Longer is not better.**

Applications are accepted in English only. We cannot accept applications by post.

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## If you receive a grant

All grantees must sign a grant agreement before any funds are released. You will be asked to:

- Submit a brief mid-project update
- Submit a final report within four weeks of completing the project, covering what was done, who was reached, and what was learned
- Acknowledge the Muslim Institute in any materials or communications related to the funded work
- Notify us promptly if the project changes significantly or cannot proceed

Grants are normally paid in two tranches: 60% on signing the agreement, 40% on receipt of a satisfactory mid-project update. Smaller grants may be paid in a single tranche at the Trustees' discretion.

We may invite grantees to share their work at a Muslim Institute event or in the journal *Critical Muslim*, where appropriate. We see this not as a reporting burden but as an opportunity. The Muslim Institute reserves the right to reproduce any materials including images and video and text relating to the project for marketing and publicity purposes.

## Key dates

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|                                   |                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Application Stream 1 opens</b> | Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2026                                                                                              |
| <b>Application deadline</b>       | Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2026 (UTC)                                                                                 |
| <b>Decisions communicated</b>     | The successful applications will be announced at the Muslim Institute Winter Gathering 2026, with grantees notified beforehand. |
| <b>First grants awarded</b>       | Autumn 2026                                                                                                                     |

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## Contact and further information

For general queries about the Fund, please email us at [cef@musliminstitute.org](mailto:cef@musliminstitute.org). Please do not contact us with proposals or draft applications - we are not able to provide individual pre-application feedback.

Website: [musliminstitute.org](https://musliminstitute.org)

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*The Muslim Institute is committed to supporting grassroots excellence. We look forward to hearing from you.*