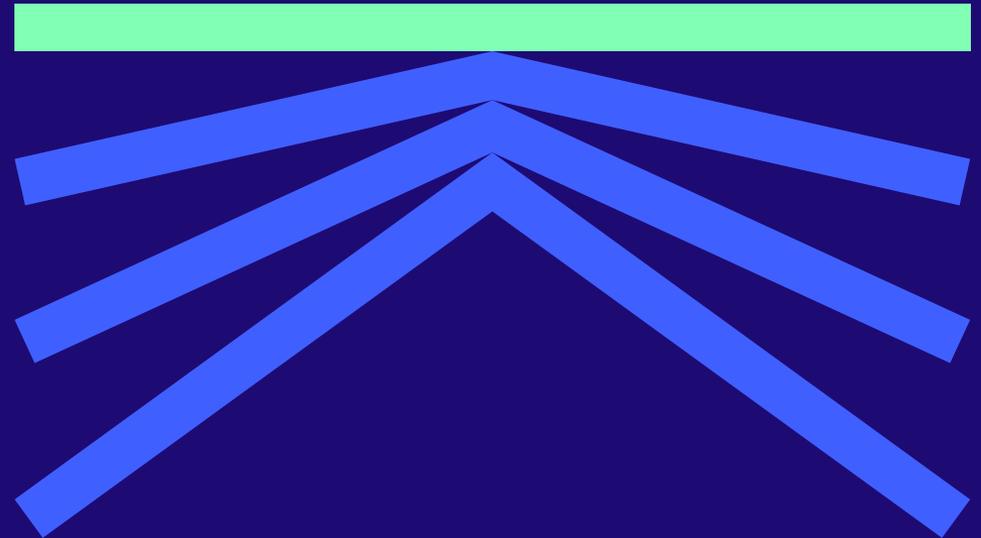


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# Introducing LEF's new open grants programme

Webinar  
15 July 2025



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# Introduction to LEF

- Created as a grant-making foundation in 2012 following the sale of the College of Law.
- The trustees decided to treat the proceeds as an endowment, giving away 3.5% above inflation each year.
- We are a social justice funder, with a focus on shaping and using the law.
- We are now LEF.
- Power, Culture & Inclusion.
- 27 staff, including the Justice Together team, a funder collaboration which we host.



# LEF's new strategy 2025-30

- Shaped by learning from the past 5 years – including many grant partners on this call
- Advisory Panel and wider consultation
- Continues our direction of travel towards long-term, flexible grants – an emphasis on connecting advice provision with wider change and the importance of centring people affected by issues in identifying and implementing solutions
- Builds on past funding e.g. on human rights frameworks, disability justice, employment rights, housing rights, racial justice and violence against women and girls
- Welcome applications on other equalities and human rights issues such as LGBTQ+ rights and women's rights (beyond VAWG)

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# Our new grants programme

Emerging Justice fund  
Strengthening Justice fund



# Overview

- We want to create new connections between the law and communities facing injustice.
- We are looking to fund organisations that:
  - prioritise accountability to their communities
  - use and shape the law (or want to) to influence wider change.
- We have two funds within our open grant programme:
  - Emerging Justice
  - Strengthening Justice

# Emerging Justice fund

A dedicated fund for **'by and for'** organisations working on human rights and equality issues – who would like to explore how to add legal tools to their campaigning work.

You can apply for short-term or urgent work up to £50,000 over up to 12 months, for example, to :

- Find a legal partner
- Work with a law firm to develop a legal strategy
- Understand the law relevant to your campaign and identify potential changes and opportunities to influence.

You can also apply for up to three years' flexible funding to test out a new legal approach or partnership, for example:

- Using the law for change e.g. complaints to ombudsmen or public sector equality duty challenges to hold institutions to account.
- Influencing the legislative process on your campaign issue to improve the law.
- Contributing to strategic litigation.

**We can offer £50-£75k but we will not normally fund more than 50% of your organisation's annual income.**

# Strengthening Justice fund

This fund aims to connect organisations already using and shaping the law more closely with communities facing injustice and to create the space for these organisations to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges.

We will consider:

- How accountable your organisation is to the communities you serve.
- How your organisation uses the law to drive wider change.

**Funding is via flexible grants of £50k-£100k per year over 3-5 years to support your work related to the law. We will not normally fund more than 35% of your organisation's annual income.**

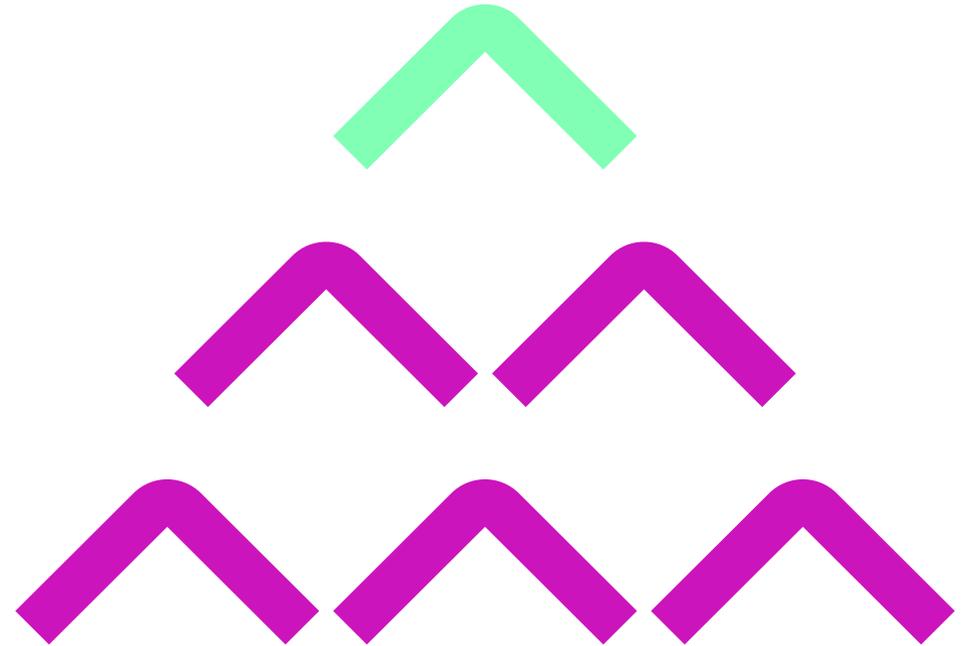
# Our funding in numbers

- Our board has committed an additional £15m so we expect to spend around £50m on grants, support for our grant partners and running the Justice First Fellowship over 2025-30.
- Urgent or short-term grants will be up to £50,000 over 12 months.
- Longer term grants will be £50-£100,000 per year for 2-5 years.
- We will update the website with the range and average size and length of grant, once we have completed our first funding round.



# Funding criteria

- **Accountability** to communities
- **Using or shaping the law** to drive wider change in society.
- We prioritise **small and medium-sized organisations** (usually under £2m annual income) undertaking charitable work in the UK.
- We will take your **context** into consideration, including opportunities for influence, number and/or geographical spread of people impacted by the issue and who else may be already working on it.
- We want to promote **solidarity** between different groups of people facing injustice.



# Eligibility and exclusions

We do not fund work on **criminal law** – e.g. the creation of new offences – we do fund work which focuses on discrimination in the criminal legal system.

We fund work to strengthen **migrants' rights** but our support for access to justice in the immigration system is channelled through the funder collaboration, Justice Together.

We do not fund projects to develop or manage pro bono legal advice.

We do not make grants to replace or subsidise government, legal profession or university funding including the costs of law clinics.

LEF funds organisations not individuals. Organisations do not need to be charities or companies but they need a structure and access to a bank account with two signatories.

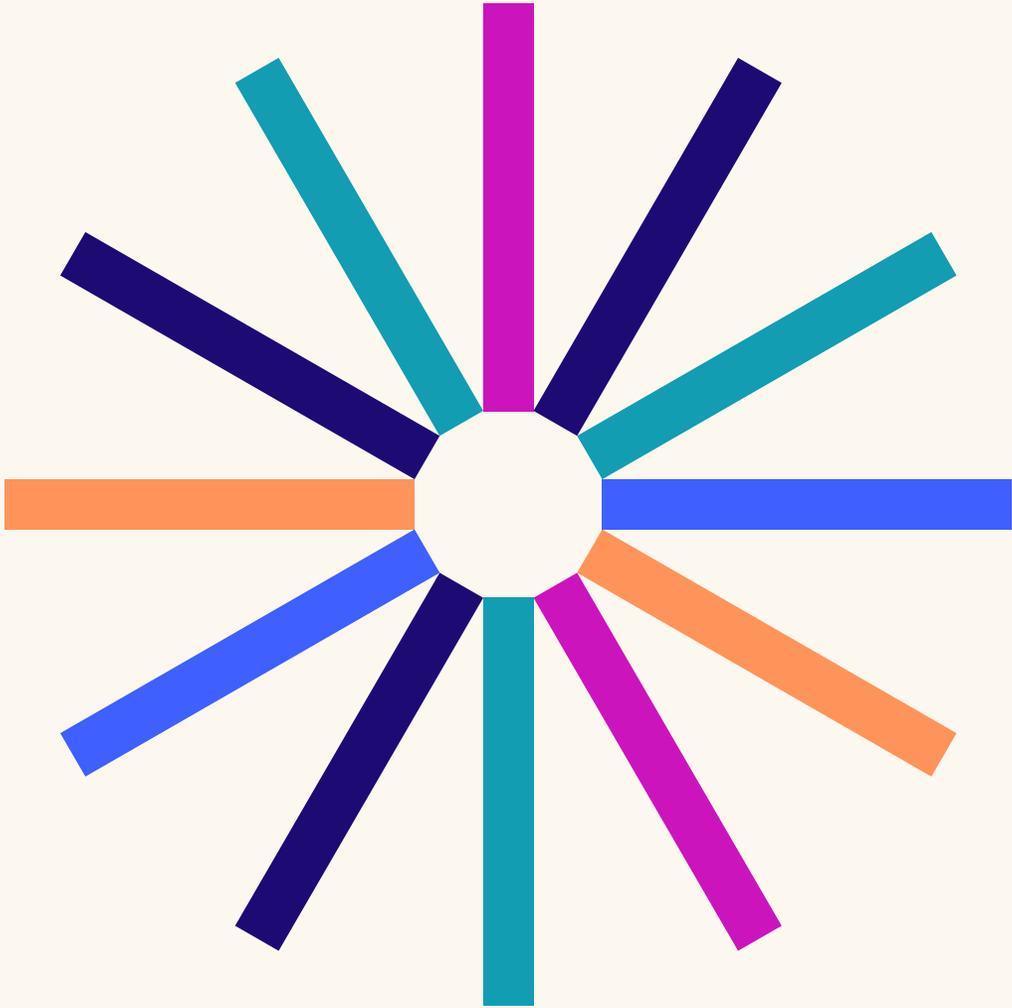
We are unlikely to fund organisations:

- That have not previously received funding.
- Are in serious financial deficit
- Have more general reserves than in their policy
- Have fewer than three Trustees, Directors or Committee members.
- Are based outside the UK.

The full list is on our website.

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# Applications and decisions



# How to apply

We encourage you to take our short quiz on the application portal.

Register on our portal.

Choose how to apply:

1. By answering our questions online.
2. By sharing video or other online content.
3. By uploading documents such as an application to another funder.

If they are not already publicly available, please send us your governing document and most recent accounts.

You can apply at any time.

If you need help with your application:

- You can book a short guidance call with the grants team through the portal or via the contact form on our website.
- Word and PDF versions of the application form and funding guidelines are available on our website.
- There will be an Easy Read version of the funding guidelines.
- Access payments are available for Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people to help with applying.

# What happens next?

The grants team assess which applications best fit our criteria.

For Emerging Justice short-term grants (under £50k), the grants team will make a collective decision on the applications. You will hear within 12-14 weeks.

For all applications over £50k, the grants team makes a collective decision about which applications are strongest within the available budget. You will hear within 5 weeks.

If your application is shortlisted, a member of the grants team will visit you or meet you online.

We will ask for financial information about the current year at second stage e.g. organisational budget

There is no second stage application form. But, if you did not complete our application questions at first stage, we will work with you to complete these at second stage. This is so our Grants Committee has equivalent information to consider.

All shortlisted applications are considered by our Grants Committee, which makes the final decision.

We are recruiting new external members for the Grants Committee to widen the lived and learned experience in decision-making.

All unsuccessful applicants are told the reason(s) for our decision. This is more detailed at second stage but everyone can request additional feedback.

# Key dates

You can speak to us and apply at any time but, for applications over £50,000, we have two decision points each year. For autumn 2025, these are the key dates:

- 16 July – 12 September      Application guidance calls available with the grants team.
- 18 September              Deadline for applications to be considered in autumn round
- 20 October                  Notification of first-stage decisions
- October-November        Second stage assessments (visits/meetings)
- 19 December              Notification of final decisions

Thank you

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