

The City Bridge Trust

Bridging Divides: Application for a grant



About your organisation

Organisation Details

Name of your organisation: Volunteer Centre Greenwich	
If your organisation is part of a larger organisation, what is its name? N/A	
In which London Borough is your organisation based? Greenwich	
Contact person: Mrs. Michelle Martin	Position: Acting Director
Website: http://www.vcgreenwich.org.uk	Social Media Accounts: @VCGreenwich Volunteer Greenwich
What Quality Marks does your organisation currently hold? Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation, Matrix, in process of re accrediting Mentoring and Befriending Provider Status.	

Legal Status

Legal status of organisation: Registered Charity			
Charity Number: 1081369	Company Number: 3832423	CIC Number:	Bencom Number:
When was your organisation established? 26/08/1999			
Aims of your organisation: Volunteer Centre Greenwich mission is 'Enriching the lives of individuals and communities by enhancing the value of volunteering, through supporting and creating opportunities for all. Volunteer Centre Greenwich aims to do this by: (a) Promoting volunteering to disadvantaged groups and individuals; (b) Providing information and support to all people seeking volunteering opportunities; (c) Providing information and support to organisations seeking volunteers; (d) Providing support and training to volunteers and those who work with volunteers; (e) Promoting good practice around volunteering; and (f) Developing volunteering opportunities in line with good practice guidelines.			

Main activities of your organisation:

The organisation achieves this by providing:

A quality signposting service for people in Greenwich wishing to undertake voluntary work through a database of voluntary opportunities with organisations wishing to recruit volunteers - this is done through a unique network of 'outreach posts' which provide accessible information and interviews locally, for people interested in voluntary work.

A range of services to organisations that register their volunteering opportunities, including information sharing, training and advice on recruiting, managing and good practice in the best involvement of volunteers.

Promoting volunteering in practical, innovative and accessible ways, to a wide range of voluntary, statutory and private sector organisations in the Borough and working closely with providers of education, health and social care and youth provision.

Developing a range of products and services including supported volunteering to enable inclusive volunteering and developing a range of income generation activities to aid sustainability. This includes or pilot project Greenwich Bus Tours.

Your Staff & Volunteers

Full-time:	Part-time:	Trustee/Board members:	Active volunteers:
0	6	10	47

Do you have a Safeguarding policy? **Yes**

Are the following people in your organisation subject to DBS checks?

Paid Staff Yes	Volunteers Yes	Trustees / Management Committee Members No
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Property occupied by your organisation

Is the main property owned, leased or rented by your organisation?	If leased/rented, how long is the outstanding agreement?
Leased	March 2019

Environmental Impact**What action have you taken in the past year to progress environmentally sustainability principles and practice?**

VCG continues to work towards reducing carbon emissions and is still making steps towards achieving silver award.

Our working practices continue to work towards achieving a paperless office environment whilst sharing facilities and equipment with an adjoining organisation in the building. These areas of improvement are a fixed item on VCG's team meeting agendas.

Staff continue to use public transport and shared car journeys for events and outreach work where necessary.

The location of our premises gives VCG good access to public transport and now we are in a more centralised location, partners, members and beneficiaries are able to easily access our main office services via public transport.

Grant Request

Under which of City Bridge Trust's programmes are you applying?
Connecting the Capital

Which of the programme outcome(s) does your application aim to achieve?
Connecting the Capital\Civil society organisations are more effective and resilient

Please describe the purpose of your funding request in one sentence.
To sustain and develop the core services of Volunteer Centre Greenwich to continue to provide and improve volunteering for local organisations and residents of Greenwich.

When will the funding be required? **01/08/2018**

Is this request to continue work that is currently funded or has been funded in the last year by:

City Bridge Trust?

No

Another funder? (if so which)

How much funding are you requesting?

Year 1:

£62,074

Year 2:

£57,531

Year 3:

£49,513

Year 4:

£44,213

Year 5:

£37,270

Total Requested: £250,601

You and your grant request

What, specifically, are you applying for (your project)?

Volunteer Centre Greenwich (VCG) is seeking your support to strengthen its organisational infrastructure and long-term financial resilience in order to sustain and grow its contribution to civil society. Securing core funding will ensure stable leadership allowing valuable time to forward plan and focus on engaging the wider community in volunteering. The funding will also provide sufficient staff resource to explore, create and develop income-generating activities to sustain our core services beyond this funding period.

VCG is the only specialist in volunteer management in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, providing advice and support to over 400 volunteer involving organisations (VIOs). Each year we work with over 3,000 local residents looking to volunteer. We connect these volunteers with suitable VIOs and offer ongoing training, support and guidance to all parties.

Your support will enable our organisation to continue to be a leading strategic voice on volunteering, locally, regionally and nationally.

Finance Details

Organisation Finances

	Year of most recent audited / examined accounts	Current financial year forecast	Next financial year budget
End of financial year date	31/03/2017	30/09/2018	30/09/2019
Grants & donations:	£149,058	£269,017	£174,517
Earned Income:	£72,882	£55,176	£48,891
Other income:	£7,137	£14,370	£4,000
Total income:	229,077	£338,563	£227,408
Charitable activity costs:	£209,378	£337,456	£207,023
Cost of raising funds:	£14,793	£22,000	£15,000
Other costs:	£0	£0	£0
Total expenditure:	£224,171	£359,456	£222,023
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end:	£25,466	£4,573	£9,958

What is your organisation's reserves policy?

VCG adopts a risk assessment approach model to identify level of 'free' reserves required. This process is undertaken annually to ensure that the correct level of reserves determined is based on the current obligations and requirements of the organisation. For 2017-18 the level of free reserves to meet these obligations was identified as £34,354. Free reserves as at 31st of March 2017 were £25,466, but VCG has changed its reporting period to end of September 2018. It is anticipated that the free reserves will have dropped by that time but the Board is hopeful this will now increase.

For your most recent financial year, what % of your income was from statutory sources?
21-30%

Organisational changes

Describe any significant organisational changes to your structure, financial position or core activities since the date of your most recent accounts.

VCG will be moving premises at the end of September co-locating with another charity also based at Equitable House. This greatly reduces our rent expenditure but also includes use of their training room and a meeting room so we can continue our income generating activities. We are also looking to explore an agreement of services to further reduce costs.

What are the changes you hope to achieve?

Our overall aim is ?To sustain and develop the core services of VCG to continue to provide and improve volunteering for local organisations and residents of Greenwich?.

The changes we hope to achieve are:

Increase our long-term financial resilience by developing a range of income generating activities, including our accredited training programme and activities such as Greenwich Bus Tours

Strengthen our leadership to allow for a focus on future planning and organisational infrastructure

Build relationships and networks with civil society organisations at a local, regional and national level to create opportunities for dialogue and to share best practice, information and lessons learned

Increase the number of opportunities for local voices to be heard, through community events, local training and online platforms

Utilise digital technology to streamline services offering a more cost-effective, accessible, tailored approach

Be more able to respond to the increasing demand for providing volunteering opportunities to disadvantaged communities.

How do you know there's a need for this work?

Our support is essential, especially for organisations facing major challenges in delivering their services within budget. Many organisations see volunteers as a ?free resource? or ?quick fix? to enable them to continue existing services but do not consider all the implications, including the necessary resources to recruit, induct, train and manage the volunteers, and the financial impact of expenses and training. Having access to information, advice and support at the right time is vital for the organisation and the wellbeing and development of the volunteer.

VCG receives no funding for this service and as such, its reserves are depleting. To help finance this work, in 2017, VCG introduced a membership fee to participating organisations. This led to our membership numbers falling from 489 to just 32, highlighting the financial pressure that these organisations are under. We are therefore seeking to develop alternative funding sources to continue this core work.

How will the work be delivered - specifically, what will you do?

The CE post will increase to full time, specifically to:

Communicate the strategic voice of volunteering at regional and national levels. Recent cuts to resources have restricted attendance to local meetings only. Increased resources will allow us to build up our networks, connect with other volunteering organisations and share our expertise and experiences.

Streamline costs, such as improving digital technology and pooling resources with other organisations.

Develop existing income generating activities and explore new ideas, with a clear strategic business plan, to support the future sustainability of our core services.

Staff resources will be increased to:

Manage a team of volunteers to support organisations on volunteer management and best practice.

Develop digital resources to provide a range of online training and information, diversifying and streamlining our offer whilst increasing accessibility to our support services.

Manage the volunteering database in accordance with GDPR.

Why are you the right organisation to do this work?

VCG has been the leading, independent voice on volunteering and engagement in Greenwich for 18 years, supporting over 3,000 residents and 400 VIOs as an infrastructure organisation. VCG is a small charity delivering big results in one of the most deprived areas in London. Volunteering changes people's lives by improving health and wellbeing and providing the skills, confidence and experience needed to progress to a career.

We also access local, regional and national networks to ensure the strategic voice of volunteering in Greenwich is communicated. VCG holds: the Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation through NCVO; Matrix: is reaccrediting as a Mentoring and Befriending Approved Provider; and is an accredited training centre for NCFE and NOCN.

We are now at a critical point in our organisational development. We are well equipped with the skills, experience, connections and strategy to become financially sustainable, but lack the resources to put our plan into action.

How does your work complement and not duplicate other services within your area?

VCG is the leading volunteering agency in Greenwich and is the 'go to' organisation for support on volunteering. Our specialist advice and training complements the work of local organisations to ensure that their volunteer management programmes are robust, inclusive and adopt best practice. This face-to-face approach provides us with first-hand knowledge of the issues and challenges facing our members so that these can be voiced and our services and support can be adapted to incorporate this feedback.

Volunteering opportunities can be accessed from a range of services, but VCG engages directly with local residents and offers additional support to those who require it due to disadvantage or inequality. Through our Supported Volunteering programme, we are able to provide bespoke volunteering opportunities and a trained mentor for adults with a learning disability. VCG is regularly approached by organisations to work in partnership, providing specialist expertise on volunteering.

How will this proposal meet the Programme Outcome(s) under which you are applying?

The provision of a lead agency for volunteering in the borough ensures a local, regional and national voice and the co-ordination of social action and connectivity between partners and volunteer involving organisations.

Our proposal will increase our resilience and sustainability by developing our own income generating activities. This will not just contribute to the future sustainability of our own organisation but ensure that we can continue to offer free support and advice to civil society organisations making them more effective, resilient and sustainable. Encouraging responsible volunteering programmes will aid civil society organisations in maintaining their existing services in the wake of austerity measures and in light of Brexit.

VCG will connect local organisations with local residents looking to volunteer in a sustainable and mutually beneficial way. Our services will enable disadvantaged people to access training and advice and take part in volunteering to improve their health and wellbeing.

How will you ensure that your project will hear and represent the views and needs of disadvantaged people and/or diverse communities?

VCG is a grassroots organisation, firmly embedded in the community of one of the most deprived boroughs in London. Volunteering by its very nature improves the lives of disadvantaged people and communities by offering a pathway to employment, a sense of purpose and improved self-esteem.

Volunteers and organisations are regularly asked for their views and feedback through surveys and interviews. We will increase this engagement by developing an online forum where issues and concerns can be discussed and information accessed.

The CE sits on a range of local forums and partnerships including Voluntary Sector Strategy Steering group, Social Isolation Strategy Group, Learning Disability Partnership Board, Health & Well Being Forum, Greenwich Lifelong Learning Partnership and heads the Volunteering Communications group. The CE will also be able to represent VCG at a range of forums and events on a regional and national level including supporting NCVO, GLV and Team London.

How does your project engage and empower individuals and/or communities to come together on this issue? Will you be working with people who are particularly excluded?

Social isolation is a major concern in Greenwich and the connection of communities through volunteering can help to address some of this.

VCG engages with many hard to reach and disadvantaged individuals including 56% from BAME groups, 19% declaring a disability and 13% aged 24 or under. Over 48% are unemployed. Volunteering is a proven pathway to employment, increasing employability skills, vocational experience and confidence. Some of our volunteers have become trained mentors - passing on their knowledge and skills to those who need extra support to become a part of the community. In addition, our volunteers are trained to identify those socially isolated and help them access relevant services to help alleviate this.

By continuing our support to other organisations, volunteers can help to deliver the services desperately needed by community and individuals, particularly those who are disadvantaged and would be disproportionately affected by a reduction in community services.

Is the focus of your project meeting an already identifiable need (acute or otherwise) or are there elements which are preventative and/or incorporate early action?

Utilising volunteers in projects and services in light of recent cuts seems to be a popular approach to 'plug the gap'. The NHS 5 year forward review highlights how volunteering can be expanded to support services and assist with prevention easing the impact on the NHS.

Ensuring organisations have the resource and capacity to increase their volunteering programmes whilst providing a safe, reliable environment for both the service and the volunteer is the role of the volunteer centre, along with enabling this message to be heard on a local, regional and national level,. This is a need identified in the voluntary and community sector strategy conducted by the borough:

'Volunteering and being an active member of local communities increases wellbeing and fosters a strong sense of civic pride'?'Creating an environment where the social capital of volunteers is supported, recognised and celebrated is equally important to the delivery of this strategy?.

Who might you need to work closely with in delivering this project - whether before, during or afterwards?

VCG would work closely with the 400+ organisations in Greenwich that already involve volunteers and other local organisations new to volunteering. This funding would enable VCG to withdraw the fee for membership to ensure that we can work with all organisations that require our advice and support. It would enable us to connect the 3000+ individuals who engage with the volunteer centre each year with a broader range of volunteering opportunities and encourage social action within communities by increasing our online/offline reach.

The CE would also be able to attend and liaise with regional and national organisations, forums, events and meetings to ensure the local perspective is heard and initiatives, consultation and campaigns at that level supported by VCG.

Knowledge sharing of VCG's experience particularly on collaboration of services and income generation can be provided to RBG, our VIOs and partners at all levels, not just locally.

Our aim as a funder is to help people move positively between any of the four stages of Surviving, Coping, Adapting and Thriving. For your project at which of these stages will most people begin their journey?

Most of the organisations we support are at the surviving stage due to the recent cuts in funding, particularly the statutory cuts. For many therefore, they are looking at how they can adapt their services, or their volunteering programmes, to enable their services and activities to continue. With our continued support, these organisations could thrive once again.

Many local residents that engage with our services are adapting to the loss and changes to services and coping with the impact that has on their lives. This generally leads to many feeling more isolated as they spend more time indoors, increasing loneliness and spiralling into 'survival mode'. Many also feel that they are in an endless cycle of being referred back and forth to the same services. Volunteering breaks this cycle by supporting their well-being and giving them an empowering opportunity to be the giver of a service not a receiver.

Will there be any elements of this project that will help you or your beneficiaries to reduce your environmental footprint?

VCG is looking to collaborate with another organisation located on the 1st floor of our existing premises ? METRO. The collaboration involves the exploration and development to pool resources and reduce VCG's overall overhead costs. This will not only streamline costs but reduce our joint energy consumption and allow the sharing of equipment and resources. In addition, VCG continues to work towards a paperless environment with all membership registration now online. VCG continues to work towards using digital technology to support this ethos in all its activities.

By working with more organisations, we can increase the number and range of opportunities available to volunteers. This allows us to more closely match the volunteers to the opportunities on a geographical basis, reducing transport distances and costs.

What are the main activities or outputs you want to deliver?

Remove membership fee, a proven barrier to organisations, to increase number of registered organisations back to 400 and develop a range of online volunteer management resources and training tools to support even more organisations Indirectly.

Attend eight national /regional meetings, forums or events per year to represent the local voice for volunteering, build up networks and exchange knowledge.

Refine the business strategy to include a feasibility study for expansion of our training offer and promotion of our income generating services to a wider audience audience

What 3 main differences or outcomes do you hope the activities you have described above will achieve?

A diverse range of organisations is supported to provide robust volunteering programmes, offering a range of quality volunteering opportunities. We will engage more local residents by utilising a range of ways to promote volunteering and training opportunities, thus increasing the connection of communities in the borough

In addition to locally, the strategic voice of volunteering will be maintained and increased, regionally and nationally. This will strengthen the message around sustainable, safe and fair volunteer programmes and work to raise awareness of the value of volunteers and volunteering.

Increase the sustainability of the organisation to provide future core services, by increasing the income generated by 20-25% each year. The total of income generated as a percentage of total core income, will increase from 18% in year 1 to 39% in Year 5.

Funding required for the project

What is the total cost of the proposed activity/project?

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Staffing Costs - Chief Executive	23,295	23,760	18,177	18,541	12,607	96,380
Staffing Costs - Volunteer & Operations Manager	15,997	16,317	16,643	12,732	12,987	74,676
Staffing Costs - Admin Support Year 1	5,727	0	0	0	0	5,727
Premises, financial, governance and office costs	9,705	9,996	7,722	5,250	5,461	38,134
Promotional Costs	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	400	6,000
Volunteer Expenses	2,990	2,990	2,990	2,990	2,990	14,950
Training Costs	600	600	0	600	0	1,800
Staff Expenses	200	200	200	200	200	1,000
VC Connect - database costs	2,160	2,268	2,381	2,500	2,625	11,934
TOTAL:	62,074	57,531	49,513	44,213	37,270	250,601

What income has already been raised?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
TOTAL:	0	0	0	0	0	0

What other funders are currently considering the proposal?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
TOTAL:	0	0	0	0	0	0

How much is requested from the Trust?

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
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Who will benefit?

How many people will directly benefit from the grant per year?

3,400

In which Greater London borough(s) or areas of London will your beneficiaries live?

Greenwich

Does this project specifically target any groups or communities?

This project will specifically work with the following age groups:

This project will specifically work with the following gender groups:

This project will specifically work with the following ethnic groups:

If Other ethnic group, please give details:

This project will specifically work with Deaf and disabled people:

No

This project will specifically work with LGBTQI groups:

No

This project will specifically work with other groups or communities:

How will you target the groups/communities you have identified? What is your expertise in providing services for these groups?

Are there any groups or communities you think your organisation will find hard to include through this project?

No

If yes, please specify which groups or communities? Where possible using the categories listed above.

If yes, what steps will you take to make your services accessible to and meet the needs of the groups/communities you have identified?

Declaration

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, all the information I have provided in this application form is correct. I fully understand that City Bridge Trust has zero tolerance towards fraud and will seek to prosecute and recover funds in every instance.

Please confirm: Yes Full Name: **Michelle Martin**

Role within **Chief Executive**
Organisation: