

JUST FACT ACTION LEARNING GRANTS

COMMUNITY LAB GRANT GUIDANCE

Introduction

These guidelines have been created by the [Wen \(Women's Environmental Network\)](#) for applicants for a Community Lab Grant within the Just Food and Climate Transition (Just FACT) Programme.

Wen is the lead organisation for the Just FACT programme and is responsible for awarding the grants. The funding is provided by The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF)'s [Climate Action Fund](#), and the grants are compliant with their funding guidelines.

We only have a limited amount of funding to award, so please make sure you have read all the grant guidance and criteria before applying. If you are unsure if your project is suitable for Community Lab funding and would like to find out more, please come along to one of our upcoming events. There will be an updated list of frequently asked questions and upcoming events on the website – www.justfact.co.uk. [There is also a needs and offers document](#) where people can post anything they need or can offer for the delivery of a project.

One to one support is also available for people who are applying for funding for the first time, for whom English is a second language, who have a sensory impairment (visual, auditory), who are neurodiverse (dyslexia, dyscalculia, autism etc). Please express interest in receiving one to one support by emailing justfact@wen.org.uk.



About Just Food and Climate Transition (Just FACT)

Just FACT is a partnership programme led by Wen (Women's Environmental Network) with research from Platform London. It is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF)'s Climate Action Fund. The programme launched in 2021 and will run until 2025.

Just FACT seeks to create a more environmentally sustainable and socially just food system in Tower Hamlets, London. This means a system where the food we eat is both good for both people and the planet.

As part of the 5 year programme, people in Tower Hamlets are researching what a better food system could look like, and testing ideas through a wide range of practical projects. This includes projects funded through these grants. What we learn will help us create a 'Blueprint' for change (a plan or a model that can be developed on a bigger scale), that can inspire others and have a wider impact around the UK.

Key terms

It is important that you understand the below key terms before you complete the application form.

What is the food system?

The food system is the web of activities that gets food from farms to our forks – in other words from the land into our plates and our tummy. This includes everything that happens from before the moment the seed is planted, to how the food is grown, where we buy it from, how it got to the market/supermarket/café, how we cook it, where we eat it and how we discard, recycle, compost it – the cycle includes farming, manufacturing, packaging, transporting, retailing, food preparation, consumption, and how waste is managed.

What do we mean by environmentally sustainable?

Environmental sustainability is about protecting natural resources and global ecosystems to support health and wellbeing, now and in the future. Our current food



system is not good for people or the planet. If we stop and think of how the land and people who grow food are treated around the world (when food comes in planes), but also closer to us in the UK, we realise that our food system is in crisis.

Some of the environmental issues in our food system include:

- A highly industrial system reliant on pesticides and chemicals. This degrades soil, pollutes water, reduces biodiversity and contributes to climate change.
- The large-scale production of meat and dairy (contributes 60% of all carbon emissions from agriculture)
- Commercial and domestic food waste (contributes 6-8% of carbon emissions).
- Plastic packaging, which has carbon emissions several times greater than materials such as paper and glass, and contributes to plastic pollution in soil and water.

A third of global carbon emissions come from our food system – driving climate change. Climate change is a crisis of injustice, to both people and the planet, not just a problem of carbon emissions. Although it's a global issue, some communities of the world are more vulnerable to its effects than others. People in the global south, are feeling the impacts most severely – even though they are least responsible for the problem.

What do we mean by social justice?

Social justice in the food system (or food justice) means that access to good food is a human right: nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate food is for every one of us. In a 'just' food system those of us hardest hit by the injustices in our food system – both in the UK and globally - would be listened to, and we would have more influence or control over how people and the land are treated, how food is grown and gets to our plates.

What do we mean by a just transition?

Just transition is a framework for thinking about how we combat climate change in a way that also considers social justice. In other words, how we move towards more



sustainable options in a way is fair and benefits everyone. It often includes evidence of 'wealth' being redirected back into communities hands (eg. this could be land, local resources).

What do we mean by community-driven?

This means that important local and cultural perspectives and experiences are centred. Local people are in the driving seat, have the opportunity to meaningfully shape the work, have a sense of ownership and/or are in positions of responsibility and leadership.

Just FACT Action Learning Grants

Through the Just FACT Action Learning Grants we want people to identify an issue or issues linked to the food system, then test ideas and solutions to see what works and doesn't work.

We want to explore how our relationship to the food we eat can be transformed, what might empower and enable us to make more sustainable food choices in a way that celebrates our cultures and traditions, and what bigger changes are needed to create a food system that is better for people and planet. We want to know what the challenges and opportunities for change are in a borough like Tower Hamlets.

What you learn through your project will contribute to the Just FACT 'Blueprint' which is being developed over the 5 years of the programme by [Platform and the Blueprint Architect group \(more about them here\)](#). The Blueprint is our community vision for a better food system, and will have case studies and practical examples of how we might get there.

Community Lab Grants

Community Labs grants are a way of applying for larger amounts of funding for community-driven projects that help reduce carbon emissions from our food system. Your project will demonstrate that a new system is possible, presenting an alternative to what exists at the moment. Projects could look at any part of the food system – from



farming, manufacturing, packaging, transporting, retailing, food preparation, consumption, and how waste is managed.

Your project might involve new infrastructure, new enterprise, and solutions that have the potential to be replicable and long-term. This could involve creating something new, or building on or expanding something that already exists.

Project criteria

1. Help address climate change, with activities that **reduce carbon emissions**
2. Help build towards a **just transition** for Tower Hamlets
3. Help create a new **community-driven food system**, involving representation from the local community in developing and delivering the project
4. Create a way for **learnings to be shared beyond the project**, with other people and organisations
5. Have the **potential for impact beyond this grant**, by exploring solutions that are long lasting / can be expanded upon by you or others

See 'key terms' for definitions. Your project will only be eligible for funding if it meets all of the project criteria. If you are unsure of whether or not your project idea is eligible, please come along to one of our upcoming events or you can get in touch with us at justfact@wen.org.uk

We will look favourably on projects that:

- Can demonstrate collaboration with other local groups and organisations
- Can show match funding or in-kind contributions
- Will use the funding to build on existing work
- Can provide evidence of financial sustainability (for example, where our funding might unlock more financial investment from other sources)
- Are considering different ways to finance their projects, including developing the potential for income generation from non-grant sources.

Examples of types of projects

- Reducing food waste / Increasing sustainable processing of food waste (eg. Community owned composting schemes)



- Reducing local food miles (i.e. distance travelled in fossil fuel powered transport e.g. car, van, moped)
- Increasing use of more sustainable transport (e.g. bike or e-bike)
- Routes to market and sustainable supply chains (eg. air-freighted foods and fair trade)
- Less/ better meat and dairy, Less/better palm oil, Less ultra-processed foods, increasing consumption of lower carbon and/or plant-based foods (eg. Plant-based cafes/pop ups)
- Increasing urban food production (sustainable food growing, organic and regenerative methods, increasing productivity of spaces)
- Increasing links to peri-urban/ fringe farming
- Increasing access to healthy sustainable food (local/ sustainably produced)
- Alternative trading that reduces plastic use and/or sells more local sustainable food (e.g. food buying groups, box schemes, pop-up shops, bulk buying, refill schemes)
- Increasing use of more sustainable packaging and/ or reducing packaging
- Closed loop systems and circular economy projects
- Sustainable food social enterprises

Detailed example: R-Urban Poplar (run by Public Works and LEAP)

R-Urban Poplar is an eco-civic hub located on the corner of the Teviot estate, in Poplar, London. The project aims to develop civic resilience in the face of climate change through a public programme of events, workshops and infrastructures. Using shipping containers housed in a disused car park, R-Urban provides space for green experimentation for solutions to London's biggest environmental challenges, such as poor air quality and waste management.

A key aim of the project is to build a localised circular food system. This involves working with [LEAP](#) to develop anaerobic digestion (AD) and composting systems to deal with local food waste on the Teviot Estate. The digestate (fertiliser) from the AD, and compost from the composting units, is used to grow food in the allotment spaces, and the gas produced powers the community kitchen.



Currently organic waste is transported 10-50 miles to landfill sites or processing facilities. Local waste management through AD and growing food using the by-products for local consumption has the potential to save over 73 tonnes carbon emissions per year (per system, processing 1 tonne of food waste per day), compared with business as usual. On site waste management can also support renewable energy production and help create local green training and employment opportunities, alongside offering further support to existing, thriving food growing cultures.

R-Urban are also testing new growing systems and technologies such as low-tech hydroponics and have installed a rainwater and greywater harvesting system.

How it meets the project criteria:

- **Criteria 1:** Activities that reduce carbon emissions include sustainable processing of food waste and food production, reducing transport miles (waste to landfill sites), renewable energy production
- **Criteria 2:** Helps build towards a just transition by increasing access to healthy sustainable and culturally appropriate food, generating community wealth (eg resources such as growing space and community kitchen; local training and employment opportunities)
- **Criteria 3:** People on the Teviot Estate shape the programme of activities that happen on site, including leading cooking and growing workshops. Allotment spaces are managed by residents.
- **Criteria 4:** R Urban are hosting site visits and speaking at events. They are also building a 'store cupboard' of resources.
- **Criteria 5:** In order to scale up their replicable model for local waste digestion and composting, R-Urban is now one of three sites establishing neighbourhood food waste collections.

Decision making

Funding decisions will be made by the Just FACT grants panel. The panel will include 4 community representatives and 3 other partners (eg. representatives from the Council, local housing associations, Sustain - the alliance for food and farming). The panel will be chaired by a member of the Women's Environmental Network (Wen), who will not participate in decision-making. Any individual or organisation who declares a conflict of interest will not be eligible to sit on the panel.



Grant offer

In this final funding round we will be awarding £130,000 through the Community Labs Grants. You can apply for anything between £10,000 to £40,000. **We anticipate funding 4-6 eligible projects.**

The length of the project may vary, but must be 1 year minimum and the funding must be spent and reported on before August 2025.

Who can apply

Any organisation or group who hasn't already accessed Just FACT funding and that has a Tower Hamlets focus can apply for a grant. Your organisation or group does not necessarily have to be based in Tower Hamlets, but you will need to demonstrate that the work you're doing is Tower Hamlets focused or provides a direct benefit to the borough's food system.

We will prioritise groups with smaller incomes. Organisations that have a large annual income might not be eligible to receive funding. Below summarises who we can and can't accept applications from.



| Who we can accept applications from: | Who we can't accept applications from: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Voluntary and community organisations ● constituted groups or clubs ● registered charities ● charitable incorporated organisations (CIO) ● not-for-profit companies ● community interest companies (CIC) ● schools ● community benefit societies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individuals ● sole traders ● organisations based outside the UK ● one organisation applying on behalf of another (including businesses or consultants who say they can support you with your funding applications). ● companies that can pay profits to directors, shareholders or members (including Companies Limited by Shares) ● organisations currently receiving funding through the Just FACT Programme |



What we can fund

| We can fund things like: | We cannot fund: |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff costs ● volunteer expenses ● general project costs ● engagement activities ● learning and evaluation ● utilities or running costs ● organisational development and management costs ● some capital costs - this could be for buying equipment or buying, leasing, refurbishing or developing land and buildings, or other construction-related work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Statutory activities and activities that replace government funding (for example, we can only fund school activities that happen outside of normal teaching hours) ● loans, endowments or interest ● paying someone else to write your application ● political activities, including lobbying ● activities where a profit will be distributed for private gain ● VAT you can reclaim ● alcohol ● things you've spent money on in the past and are looking to claim for now ● items which will only benefit an individual, rather than the wider community ● religious activities (note: religion and faith can be used to discuss the climate crisis and environmental justice, but the project must be open to all and not promote one particular faith) ● Projects that create an unfair advantage over local |

| | |
|--|---|
| | competitors (see below note on subsidy control) |
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Capital costs

Capital costs are fixed, one-off expenses to purchase land, buildings, construction and equipment. We can fund some capital elements of your project. Where relevant, you will need to provide evidence of land ownership or lease with guaranteed access to the land for a minimum of 5 years. You must meet the Climate Action Fund’s terms and conditions if you are buying, refurbishing or developing land or buildings with our funding. If your project involves capital funding, tell us about it at your early-stage application form and our team will be in touch to provide further information should your project progresses to the next stage.

UK’s Subsidy Control Commitments

Our grants must comply with the [UK’s International Subsidy Control Commitments](#) (the new rules replacing the State Aid rules). This means projects cannot create an unfair advantage over local competitors. It is possible to run affordable sustainable food access projects, but you just need to check that what you want to do is possible within these rules. If you think this might apply to your project please contact us, and we can give you further information and advice: justfact@wen.org.uk

