MISSION44

GRANTMAKING POLICY

SEPT 2026

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Approved by Board: July 2022
Last review: September 2026
Next review: September 2027

1. ABOUT MISSION 44

Mission 44 is a charitable foundation, seeking to transform the lives of young people from underserved communities. Our vision is a fair and inclusive society where all young people can reach their full potential. Through grantmaking, advocacy and research we aim to support, champion and empower young people from underserved communities to succeed through narrowing opportunity gaps in education, employment and wider society.

1.1 OUR VALUES

WE ARE BRAVE

We have an ambitious sense of possibility, working to transform young people's lives.

WE ARE COLLABORATIVE

We never work alone. We work with humility, building partnerships and coalitions to make change happen.

WE ACT WITH INTEGRITY

We are honest, transparent and build trust-based relationships.

WE ARE INCLUSIVE

We put equity as the heart of everything we do and amplify the voices of the underrepresented.

WE ARE CURIOUS

We are evidence-led, continuously learning to grow our impact.

1.2 PURPOSE

This policy applies to Mission 44, a charity registered in England and Wales (registered charity number: 1199596). Mission 44 is governed by a Board of Trustees. A staff team led by the Chief Executive has delegated responsibility for day-to-day activities.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Outline principles of grantmaking adhered to by Mission 44
- Articulate those principles and our criteria for grantmaking
- Provide a standard of grantmaking practice for Mission 44

2. GRANTMAKING FRAMEWORK

Our grantmaking principles guide how we work with partners and make funding decisions. Designed to support wider systemic change, they reflect our commitment to a trusting, inclusive and relational approach, with young people and communities meaningfully shaping how and where our resources are used.

PRINCIPLES	APPROACH
We offer flexible funding, working with our partners to respond to the needs across different geographies.	We strengthen partners through funding, access to learning and networks to improve collective impact.
Transparent about our grantmaking and who we fund, we are accountable to our partners, seeking feedback to continually improve our approach.	100% of funding decisions >£10,000, shaped and/or co-decided by Youth Advisors.
Taking an empowering approach, collaborating with young people and their communities to shape our grantmaking.	We draw on research and learn alongside our partners, using our platform to amplify their voices and influence wider systems, rather than only sharing our own.
Using our grantmaking to catalyse innovation, collaboration and draw in additional investment.	We adopt a systemic approach, building a diverse portfolio of partners of grassroots organisations and those who are able to build at real scale.

We recognise that many grassroots organisations, particularly those led by people of colour, have historically been underfunded. We therefore aim to ensure that at least one-third of our grant funding goes to organisations led by people of colour.

We will prioritise funding organisations that share the values of Mission 44 and consistently demonstrate them in how they operate day-to day. This includes prioritising organisations that embed young people from underserved communities into how they work and are governed, including in proposal development and programme delivery.

3. FUNDING PRIORITIES & PARAMETERS

3.1 OUR PRIORITIES

Mission 44's distinctive model is to invest in partners in order to influence systems. We believe lasting change requires more than funding individual interventions. Our operating philosophy has two complementary approaches:

- **Invest** in leaders and ideas to drive long-term change. We fund and strengthen the organisations closest to young people through grantmaking, providing access to networks and utilising our platform.
- **Influence** systems through advocacy and policy engagement. We use the learning, evidence, and relationships that come from our investments to change how schools, employers and governments act.

Youth participation, convening and storytelling act as strategic enablers across both.

The three core areas in which Mission 44 drives systemic change are:

- **Priorities** – the policies, incentives and decision-making environments that determine whether inclusion is prioritised
- **People** – the adults and peers influencing young people's opportunities
- **Practice** – the organisational systems and day-to-day behaviours and actions affecting inclusion

Our grantmaking works across two areas that fundamentally shape young people's futures:

CLASSROOM

More young people from underserved backgrounds thrive in education

CAREERS

More young people from underserved backgrounds access and thrive in great careers

We focus our efforts on funding initiatives that reach young people under the age 11 and 30 from underserved communities, such as young people from low-income households, young people who face barriers because of their race or ethnicity and young people in places that have been left behind. This age range will depend on the different priority areas, as well as the different geographical context.

3.1 HOW WE WILL FUND

We believe lasting change requires more than funding individual interventions. We invest in organisations that are close to young people and have the expertise, relationships and credibility to test promising approaches to some of the most persistent barriers within the education system. Alongside funding, we strengthen partners through learning, connections, networks and by platforming their work. Our investments also allow us to learn and share this learning with the wider sector.

Working with partners and young people, we generate evidence about what works, identify where existing systems create barriers, and understand what needs to change in policy and practice.

We then use that evidence - alongside young people's experiences and voices, partner expertise, research, convening, storytelling and Mission 44's relationships and platform - to influence the decision-makers who have the power to achieve change at greater scale.

Our model is therefore:

INVEST → TEST AND LEARN → BUILD EVIDENCE → INFLUENCE → SYSTEM CHANGE

Within this model, grants can be of varying size and lengths. The number and value of grants awarded by Mission 44, is necessarily limited to the amount of funds that are available for distribution each year. Mission 44 will allocate a budget for grantmaking which will be reviewed annually to ensure appropriate allocation of resources.

There are multiple ways a potential partner can come to Mission 44 for review, including application to an open fund, through the enquiries form, a recommendation (e.g. staff, stakeholder) and research by staff or commissioned.

Although some of our funding will be by invitation only, in our efforts to be transparent and equitable, we aim to offer an open fund where possible. Our open funds will be designed in consultation with our Impact Committee and critical friends from the wider sector. We will publish clear guidelines for organisations considering applying, with specified budgets, timelines and eligibility criteria. Despite differences, considerations during pre-assessment, due diligence and proposal development (incl. alignment, risk and feasibility) remain aligned with the solicited approach that Mission 44 also takes.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND GRANTMAKING

Young people are meaningfully involved throughout the grant lifecycle, from assessing potential partners through to grant management, learning and closure. Youth Advisors

bring their perspectives and lived experience to help us understand the potential impact on young people, challenge assumptions and identify opportunities or risks when assessing grants, in partner visits and calls, as well as whilst reviewing the impact of closing grants. We support Youth Advisors to participate effectively and close the feedback loop by sharing how their input has shaped our thinking and decisions.

3.2 WHO WE WILL FUND

- Registered charity
- Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- Social enterprise or Community Interest Company (CIC)
- Community Benefit Societies
- Cooperative societies
- Other non-profit organisations with asset locks to protect against private gain
- Statutory body (e.g. local authority)
- State-funded schools, further education or higher education institutions

3.3 WHAT WE WON'T FUND

- Work that is not legally charitable
- One-off or annual events such as galas or festivals
- The practice or promotion of religion or any particular belief systems
- Recoverable VAT – if you are not VAT registered, you will need to include VAT costs as part of the funding you request for your programme
- Loan repayments

In exceptional circumstances, we will also consider providing grants to the Individuals or the following organisations where doing so will play an important role in achieving our strategic ambitions:

1 for profit organisations, where funding will be ring fenced for a not-for-profit initiative

2 smaller nonprofit organisations where the grant equates to more than 50% of their annual turnover

For open grants, we will tailor our eligibility criteria and grant making approach in line with the Fund's needs. More broadly, we will regularly review our eligibility criteria and grantmaking approach to ensure that our grantmaking remains responsive to changes in the external environment and continues to support Mission 44 to achieve our strategic goals.

4. GRANTMAKING PROCESS

Mission 44 will aim for its grantmaking processes to be transparent and flexible. Organisations will be guided through the following process. We will collaborate with young people and their communities throughout, to inform our decision making.

We are evidence-led, and are keen that the organisations we fund are too. We will ask delivery partners to consider the role of evidence at every step of the grantmaking process – from exploratory conversations and proposal development (whether that be to support an initiative already found to be effective or to fund work where there is a clear gap or need) to progress reviews, evaluating impact, and sharing learnings. We will provide active support for the research components of our funded partnerships and where relevant commission external evaluation or learning partners to understand the effectiveness of our funding programmes and partnerships.

4 .1 ASSESSMENT JOURNEY

ENTRY ROUTE

Via application to an open fund, enquiries form, recommendation from stakeholders or research by staff etc.

STAGE 1 ASSESSMENT

A light assessment via calls and documentation to explore strategic alignment and organisational fit.

PROPOSAL

Mission 44 team will invite and support potential delivery partners to submit a more detailed proposal, alongside some additional documentation.

STAGE 2 ASSESSMENT

An in-depth assessment via calls and proposal review to understand proposed partnership in greater detail, agreeing grant outcomes.

DECISION

All grant decisions are made by Mission 44's Board of Trustees (in collaboration with Mission 44's Youth Advisory Board and funding partners in accordance with any agreed delegations). The Mission 44 team will make recommendations to the Trustees, working with experts. We aim to make decisions within three months of receiving a proposal.

GRANT AWARDED

The Mission 44 team will formalise the partnership, agreeing the reporting requirements, payment arrangements, signing the grant agreement and holding the initial kick off meeting.

NOT AWARDED

The Mission 44 team will provide feedback and signpost to any additional support.

Below is a table which demonstrates average time periods for each stage of a solicited grant. This is only a guide and will be different for each grant, dependent on size and complexity.

	Purpose	Indicative Timeline
Stage 1	Exploring strategic alignment and organisational fit	4 weeks
Stage 2	Assessing the proposed partnership in greater detail, agreeing grant outcomes	6 weeks
Grant Approval	Formal internal review, with any additional follow up if needed.	2 weeks
Post-Decision Activity	Formalise the partnership, agreeing the reporting requirements, payment arrangements, signing the grant agreement and holding initial kick off meeting.	2 weeks

Please note, open funds timelines may be different and could take up to 6 months from the launch of the application form to approval, tailored using internal deadlines, scope of outreach and other factors.

4.2 DUE DILIGENCE

Organisations being assessed by Mission 44 can expect:

- Introductory conversations with relevant Mission 44 team members
- Discussion of strategic alignment and partnership potential
- Initial organisational and reputational due diligence
- Opportunities for both organisations to ask questions and learn more about one another

Over a 2 Stage assessment process, Impact Managers will be assessing the prospect partners in the below areas:

- Strategic and Impact
- Governance
- Leadership
- Reputation and Public Profile
- Finance
- Safeguarding

Please note that our assessment framework takes a proportionate approach to reviewing applications. We recognise that expectations of organisational capacity, systems, and evidence may vary according to an organisation's size, stage of development, and operating context.

NON UK GRANTS

For organisations based outside the UK, we adapt our due diligence to reflect the relevant legal, regulatory, cultural and operating context. We aim for equivalent assurance rather than requiring uniform documentation or processes across jurisdictions.

We use country-specific due diligence frameworks where appropriate and draw on local expertise, including country-based consultants and advisers. In particular, we:

- adapt our due diligence requirements and terminology to reflect local legal and regulatory frameworks;
- accept equivalent local evidence where UK-standard documents or structures do not exist;
- accept supporting documents in their original legal form and language where they can be appropriately reviewed, and only require certified translations where necessary;
- provide applicants with appropriate guidance and materials in the local language where possible;
- consider relevant local tax, registration, reporting, banking, foreign exchange, sanctions, anti-money laundering and other regulatory requirements before awarding a grant; and
- seek local legal or tax advice where an issue could have material legal, tax, financial or operational consequences for Mission 44 or the prospective grantee.

We do not assume that UK legal terms, organisational structures or documentation have direct equivalents in other jurisdictions. Where possible, we place the burden of adapting our processes on Mission 44 rather than on applicants.

5. DECISION-MAKING AND GOVERNANCE

The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for all funding decisions in line with Mission 44's charitable purposes and any restrictions agreed with donors and funding partners. In some cases, the Board of Trustees delegates these decisions to other representatives of Mission 44 to act on its behalf. All decision making is supported by information provided by the Mission 44 Team. In the majority of cases, the Board will delegate funding decisions as follows:

UP TO £10,000	Decisions go to the Head of Impact for the relevant of Impact Pillar, consulting first with the Chief Impact Officer.
£10,001 - £75,000	Decisions go to Mission 44's Youth Advisor Impact Committee Co-Chair and the Chief Impact Officer, consulting first with the CEO.
£75,001 - £150,000	Decisions go to Mission 44's Youth Advisor Impact Committee Co-Chair and the CEO, consulting with the IC if needed.
£150,000 - £400,000	Decisions go to Mission 44's Impact Committee which consists of representative members of our Youth Advisory Board, our CEO and members of our Board of Trustees.
£400,001 +	Decisions go to Mission 44's Board of Trustees, consulting with the IC for input.

The exceptions to these delegations are for proposals considered to be 'noteworthy'. These are cases where the risk has been assessed to be highand therefore requiring escalation to the Board for final decision. Please note that variation decision-making reflects the same grant brackets as original grants.

Trustees reserve the right to apply conditions to any grant. Trustees also reserve the right not to approve any recommendation or nomination if they (or those acting with their delegated authority) determine that the resulting grant would not be charitable, or would conflict with Mission 44's stated policies or damage its reputation.

6. REPORTING AND GRANT MANAGEMENT

6.1 MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Our approach to grant management reflects Mission 44's values and our commitment to strong, trusting and equitable relationships with funded partners. We use grant management to understand progress, learn together and work alongside partners to strengthen their impact. We recognise that programmes operate in complex and changing environments. Through open and constructive relationships, we create space to celebrate progress, explore challenges and adapt where needed.

Funded partners can expect us to:

- Build relationships based on trust and openness: We seek to understand our partners, their context and ambitions, and encourage honest conversations about progress and challenges.
- Support and challenge constructively: Our Impact Managers act as partners and critical friends, helping organisations reflect on their progress, impact and opportunities.
- Be responsive and flexible: Where appropriate, we work with partners to adapt plans, milestones or approaches as circumstances change.
- Be clear and transparent: We communicate our expectations, decisions and information needs clearly.
- Value partners' time: Our reporting and payment processes are proportionate, purposeful and accessible.
- Listen and learn: We seek feedback and encourage learning and constructive challenge in both directions.
- Add value beyond funding: Where useful, we connect partners with expertise, opportunities and relationships across our networks.

We agree on reporting and learning milestones during grant set-up, with partners normally meeting their Impact Manager at least quarterly to discuss progress, learning, challenges and support needs.

Reporting is proportionate to the size, nature and stage of the grant. We only ask for information we need and intend to use and, where possible, accept existing reporting. We work with partners to use evidence and learning to understand impact and inform programme decisions.

6.2 BEYOND GRANT MANAGEMENT

We will not only support our delivery partners financially, but will supplement our grants with access to capacity support and partnership with advocacy and storytelling.

PRINCIPLES	APPROACH
We prioritise supporting capacity building with people of colour leading nonprofits.	Tailored Impact Manager support and honest conversations about successes and challenges.
We are demand-led: we work with our partners to understand their needs and curate support opportunities.	Opportunities to attend Communities of Practice, to share learning, strengthen networks, and build collaboration.
We believe in learning and collaboration and amplify the expertise of our partners.	Opportunities to work with learning partners and to understand collective impact across the portfolio.
Strong focus on providing a high-quality offer, getting regular feedback from our partners.	Opportunities to share expertise, contribute to policy discussions in different forums.

LEARNING AND STORYTELLING

We create opportunities for funded partners to share learning, build relationships and connect with the wider Mission 44 network. We use insights from our partnerships to support wider learning and change. We work collaboratively with partners to tell the story of our work and amplify the voices of underserved young people, ensuring storytelling is ethical, purposeful and respects their agency and experiences.

INFLUENCING AND ADVOCACY

Where our priorities align, we create opportunities for funded partners to contribute their expertise, evidence and insight to Mission 44's influencing and advocacy work, while respecting their independence and recognising that this will not be appropriate for every partnership. We also create meaningful opportunities for young people and communities to shape our influencing work, using learning and insight from our partnerships to influence policy, practice and systems. Through our grantmaking, we aim to catalyse innovation and collaboration and draw in additional investment.