

Booster Fund: Recruitment of new investment panel members and assessors

About community shares

Community shares are a popular approach to raising finance in which local people and organisations invest and become co-owners of vital local enterprises – from pools to pubs, community housing to heritage buildings. It is a form of investment unique to co-operative and community benefit societies and is contributing to their growth across the UK.

Ten years ago, community shares were almost unheard of. Yet since 2012, £200 million has been raised by more than 126,000 people supporting in excess of 670 vital businesses – an impressive 92% of which are still trading. Co-operatives UK, our partners in the Community Shares Unit and the Booster Fund have been at the forefront of this rise in community owned business made possible by community shares.

Community shares are particularly appealing as they offer a flexible and patient form of equity investment that is different to loans and grants. They help directly connect money in communities to projects that really matter to people.

You can read more about community shares here: www.communityshares.org.uk

Funded by:



Delivered in partnership:



About the Booster Fund

The Booster Fund has helped to catalyse and grow the community shares market and provides:

- Business development support and advice to new share offers
- Development grants to cover some of the costs of preparing a share offer
- Matched equity investment

The fund originally started out as a pilot programme but has since grown in size and scope. To date we have invested more than £3m in over 50 enterprises and helped them leverage in a further £9m in community investment. The fund has catalysed and supported community share offers in less affluent communities and in less developed markets and created some truly inspiring stories of community led change.

The Booster Fund is led by Co-operatives UK and the Community Shares Unit. It is delivered as a partnership with Locality, Co-operative and Community Finance, Plunkett Foundation and special advisor Jim Brown.

We currently work with funders Power to Change Trust and the Architectural Heritage Fund. The current panel is drawn from these organisations and led and administered by Co-operatives UK.

Who we are looking for

We are looking to recruit up to two new members to our Booster Fund investment process. This will either be as an assessor or a voting panel member.

We want to develop the diversity of thought and experience of our investment panel and processes. We also are interested in people who bring lived experience of the communities, services and businesses that we invest in.

This is part of our wider work to ensure community shares are appealing and accessible to all communities and businesses. You might be working within an existing organisation and want to develop your experience, or you might be a freelance individual. Either way, you will bring new thinking, backgrounds, experience, and analysis to our investment decisions.

Investment panels occur every four to six weeks. They are usually about 3 hours long. You would need to be available to carry out assessments or review papers in a timely manner prior to meetings.

As an assessor you would attend panel to present a summary of your assessment. We anticipate anything from six to twenty assessments will be needed annually per assessor.

As a panel member you would be present for the whole meeting to discuss applications and cast your vote. Decisions have to be unanimous for an award to be made.

Below are some of the key skills and areas of expertise we are looking for. We encourage applications from individuals with a diverse range of knowledge and backgrounds. We realise you might not tick all the boxes, or you might feel less confident in some areas. However, we would still like to hear from you if this interests you:

- Experience of assessing grant, loan and/or equity applications.
- Financial skills to understand business plans, financial projections and accounts.
- Any specific subject matter specialisms; for instance, land and asset development, tackling the climate emergency, digital transformation or health and social care.
- Experience of community enterprise, cooperative and charitable structures and community shares
- Passion for community led endeavours and understanding of community engagement
- Confidence in using online systems to access application data and log in to panels (we will bring you up to speed with our systems)

We have two types of assessments that come to panel. Firstly, smaller assessments of development grants and secondly larger assessments of equity investment requests.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

We encourage applications from people and communities underrepresented in the community shares market including (but not limited to) from communities experiencing racial inequality, disabled people (visible and non-visible) and LGBTQ+ people. Please get in touch if you have any questions about necessary adjustments we are able to make.

What do you get in return?

We will partner you with an experienced community shares panel member and provide you with a full induction. Assessors time will be covered at a day rate of £550, with time allocated to each assessment and attendance at panel. You will over time review some amazing proposals and develop your knowledge and expertise on this unique form of investment.

The initial appointment period will be for twelve months with the potential to extend.

To apply

If you are Interested, please send a two-page CV with no more than one page of A4 page explaining your interest in the role to communityshares@uk.coop by 3 June.