

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Essex Learning Partnership Fund 2021/22

Community Learning

SPECIFICATION

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Procurement Project CO0100

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## Introduction

* 1. At Essex County Council (ECC), we are passionate about better lives for people in Essex. We believe prosperity is the best route to achieve that - so people can help each other, and themselves. We are also ready to step in - to protect vulnerable children, to support care for older people – and to support our economy to flourish.
	2. Our Organisation Strategy sets out four aims that we want to achieve to ensure prosperity and wellbeing for our residents:
* Enable inclusive economic growth
* Help people get the best start and age well
* Help create great places to grow up, live and work
* Transform the council to achieve more with less

More information on our Organisation Strategy can be downloaded from the ECC website[[1]](#footnote-2).

## Essex Learning Partnership Fund – Community Learning

* 1. As in previous years, ECC has allocated funding to the Essex Learning Partnership Fund (ELPF) to deliver training which support its strategic aims. This funding draws on ECC’s Adult Education Budget funding allocation from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). There is a maximum of £150,000 available. The maximum funding that organisations may bid for is £50,000. Projects must deliver a minimum of 250 enrolments.
	2. ECC is looking to award funding to organisations that can demonstrate the most effective way in which the money will be used and has the greatest impact on learners. Funding will be awarded to the highest scoring bids that meet the minimum requirements as set out below.
	3. This competition will be run using ECC’s supplier portal, Proactis, which can be accessed using the link: <https://www.proactisplaza.com>. Bidders will be expected to supply all information requested, including a tender response document to outline the rationale for the project, the proposed project approach and the impact/benefits it will deliver to both employers and learners.

## Safeguarding

* 1. Bidders will be required to complete the Safeguarding section (section 8.11) within the Standard Selection Questionnaire, confirming compliance with existing legislation. Bidders will also be required to provide additional evidence in the Tender Response Document, together with a **copy of their Safeguarding/Prevent and Safe Recruitment Policies**.
	2. Bids will need to achieve the following **minimum requirements** for Safeguarding/Prevent:
* achieve a **‘Pass’** for each question in the Safeguarding/Prevent section of the Standard Selection Questionnaire;
* achieve a **minimum score of 2** for each question in the Safeguarding section of the Tender Response Document.

Bids which do not achieve the minimum requirements for Safeguarding will not be considered further. This will not be included as part of your overall score.

## Project Scope

1. 1. The following section outlines the type of projects to be supported by the Essex Learning Partnership Fund, the funding requirements and the tender and assessment process.
	2. Projects supported by this funding are intended to help address the issue of worklessness in Essex. The aim of the fund is to develop the skills levels of residents (aged 19 and over) whilst complementing other available provision and providing progression routes to further learning, employment and volunteering.
	3. To reach individuals and local communities across Essex, we would particularly welcome bids from voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations whose reach extends to those in greatest need.
	4. Bidders wishing to apply for funding will need to complete all the questions and requests for information laid out in the Tender.

## Objectives

* 1. The key objectives of this funding are:
* To deliver a programme of community learning activities which enable adults to move towards sustained employment and active citizenship, involving one or more of the following:
	+ improve employability and essential skills, including digital skills
	+ provide opportunities for learners to become involved in the local community
	+ increase learners’ confidence and motivation
	+ have a positive effect on learners’ health and wellbeing
* To encourage Essex residents who are not in employment and have low level skills to engage in learning and progress to further training opportunities, particularly targeting those who mainstream provision struggles to engage or help to progress into further learning or employment.
* To provide Information, Advice and Guidance for residents not in employment about further learning, volunteering or mainstream employment services and/or getting work.
	1. The priority target group for activities supported by this fund is unemployed adults (aged 19 or over and resident in Essex), particularly those who have completed a ‘work programme’ without progressing into employment, those with low level skills and those who are less likely to be engaged into learning directly by a mainstream provider. These are likely to include:
* Universal Credit claimants who are out of work
* Job Seekers Allowance claimants
* Income Support claimants
* Employment Support Allowance claimants
* Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment claimants
* Other working age people not on benefits who wish to return to the labour market.

* 1. The list below provides an overview of the type of activities that this fund would like to support:
* programmes which support learners to get involved in learning and to progress into further learning, employment and/or active citizenship (can include development of skills such as communication (e.g. digital communication), motivation, independence, resilience, assertiveness, anger management and management of health issues and other barriers to learning);
* programmes with anemphasis on voluntary work and community involvement to enhance employability skills (e.g. employability programmes with built in volunteer placements or community projects involving voluntary work);
* programmes which develop sector specific and employability skills (e.g. introduction to health and social care or activities to help unemployed people to identify and evidence their skills and pathway to work);
* programmes which support those who wish to become self-employed (e.g. workshops on promoting self-employment and business start-up as a viable form of employment and/or sessions supporting participants to develop a business plan, conduct market research, establish formal business accounts/HMRC requirements, marketing, networking (social and local).
	1. Organisations will be required to evidence a local or county-wide need for the provision they aim to deliver (this may take the form of demographic data or local consultation to identify individual learning needs), and the impact on learners and local communities (social inclusion, social mobility). In addition, bidders will be expected to demonstrate clear and established progression/ destination routes and positive outcomes that will enable participants to progress on to one or more of the following:
	+ A vocational course leading to a recognised qualification at Entry, Level 1 or Level 2
	+ An English, Maths, ESOL, Digital Skills course, leading to a recognised qualification
	+ Significant volunteering activity
	+ Enrolment onto an appropriate Employment Support Programme
	+ Full time or part time employment
	+ Other progression clearly demonstrating a continuing benefit in line with the programme aims

 Organisations will be expected to track outcomes for learners after they have completed their courses in order to measure impact and provide this information to ECC.

* 1. Organisations will be expected to propose the content and length of the proposed programmes. However, we are looking for delivery that provides meaningful contact time with learners giving them the support they require at a pace that meets their needs. The training will be expected to utilise a variety of teaching methods and technologies, including the ability to be able to deliver online/blended learning to engage with and retain learners, making a positive impact on unemployment and providing essential skills for the local labour market. As participation in this training will be voluntary, organisations will be expected to outline how they will market the provision in order to attract and retain learners.
	2. Programmes will be expected to complement other existing provision but should not replicate provision in which learners have already participated without good cause; e.g. providing standard job search support, interview techniques and creating a CV. Rather, bidders will be expected to build on and enhance the previous provision that learners may have completed. Programmes should also state clearly what the learning outcomes will be, how learners will be engaged into the activity and how they will progress towards employment and/or further learning or training following on from this activity. Organisations will be expected to work with ECC and other partners to identify adults who would benefit from this training.

## Funding

* 1. This funding draws on ECC’s Adult Education Budget funding allocation from the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Revenue funding is for all the running costs of the programme, for example tutor salaries, room rental and materials, such as learner packs.
	2. The total value of funding available is £150,000. The maximum funding that organisations may bid for is £50,000 and projects must deliver a minimum of 250 enrolments.
	3. The funding will be allocated on a competitive basis, to be awarded to the highest scoring bids that meet the minimum requirements until the funds are exhausted.
	4. Funding will be calculated using a rate per learner GLH (guided learning hour) i.e. for every learner completing one hour of learning, organisations can apply for £6.75 of funding. See Annex A for examples. Bidders will be required to complete the Subcontractor Matrix calculator provided with this tender.
	5. Learners supported by this funding must be resident in Essex (i.e. the area defined as political Essex and not including Southend-on-Sea or Thurrock) and not currently in education, employment or training. Bidders will be expected to work alongside ECC and other partners to identify people who would benefit from this training.
	6. Essex Learning Partnership funding cannot be used to deliver accredited units and/or qualifications.
	7. Organisations may only submit one bid to the Essex Learning Partnership Fund. Multiple bids from the same organisation will not be accepted.
	8. All bidders must be listed on the Register of Learning Providers and will need to supply their UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN). Further details are available from [www.ukrlp.co.uk](http://www.ukrlp.co.uk).
	9. ECC will act as the prime contractor for Education and Skills Funding Agency contracts. Allocations will be made in the form of sub-contracts to successful applicants and will be subject to the following sub-contracting rules (subject to final confirmation by the Education and Skills Funding Agency):
* Organisations cannot be subcontracted if they already hold contracts with an overall value of £100,000 or above per academic year with one or more directly funded providers or if the subcontract from us would take the total value of their contracts over £100,000, unless the organisation is listed on the Register of Training Organisations;
* Any organisation who has an above average risk warning from a credit agency cannot be funded;
* All organisations must be recorded as 'Active' on the Companies House database;
* An organisation cannot be funded if it has passed a resolution (or the court has made an order) to wind up or liquidate the company, or administrators have been appointed;
* Organisations cannot be funded if their statutory accounts are overdue;
* Second level subcontracting is not permitted;
* Applications from a consortium can only be accepted only where it is registered as a legal entity able to take primary liability under the contract. Informal partnerships between organisations, where one organisation acts as lead partner to bid on behalf of others to deliver a jointly run project, would be classed as second level contracting and will not be considered.
	1. Contracts will be for a maximum of 12 months up to, but not beyond, 31 July 2022. There is no funding beyond this stated date.

## Assessment

* 1. As outlined above, bids for funding will first be assessed on the evidence provided as to how bidders implement safeguarding/prevent policies and procedures. Only those bids which achieve the minimum requirement for Safeguarding/Prevent will be considered further.
	2. Proposed projects, as outlined in the tender response document, will be assessed against the criteria listed below. Information submitted by bidders will be assessed using the Scoring Methodology Table C and weighting framework outlined in the Bidders Guidance. Minimum required scores for each element are included in brackets.
* a clear rationale as evidence for the proposed project, supported where appropriate, by stakeholder feedback and relevant baseline data. **(Minimum required score: 2)**
* an explanation of how the proposed project will be delivered and address the needs of learners **(Minimum required score: 3)**
* proposed quantifiable targets/benefits/measures, particularly in relation to achievement and progression outcomes and how learners will be supported and monitored after completing the training. Targets should be realistic and achievable **(Minimum required score: 3)**
* how the proposed project complements other existing provision and the activities taken by the bidder to integrate the proposed activities with other key initiatives across Essex. Bidders will be expected to demonstrate established links with employment support programmes, further learning providers and other relevant support agencies **(Minimum required score: 2)**
* value for money **(Minimum required score: 2)**
* a proven track record in delivering similar provision to the identified target groups, including evidence of project outcomes against targets **(Minimum required score: 3)**.

## Payment model & reporting requirements

* 1. It is proposed to fund projects using the following payment model, with a proportion of the total amount payable linked to the achievement of targets agreed for the project:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 20% | Paid at beginning of project (pump-priming) |
| 20% | Held until end of project pending confirmation of achievement through RARPA |
| 20% | Held until end of project pending delivery of agreed learner number targets |
| 40% | Paid in equal instalments across length of project |

* 1. Training providers will only be paid for learners who are registered as having started the programme and for whom learner documents have been submitted. It is the responsibility of each training provider to ensure learners are eligible for public funding. Organisations will not receive funding for ineligible learners.
	2. Reporting requirements for projects awarded funding are as follows. Sub-contractors will be required to:
* complete a learner welfare form for each participant where the duration of the course is more than two days.
* submit learner documents each month, as specified by ECC;
* participate in a review of contract performance each quarter, led by ECC to judge progress against key targets (including enrolments, retention, achievement, success rates, progression and employer engagement);
* monitor and report to ECC on learner progression beyond the end of the contract, at three-month and six-month intervals;
* complete an end of project evaluation.

## Key Dates

* 1. The timetable for the award of contracts is set out in the Bidders Guidance. Projects are expected to commence on or after 1st August 2021 and all learning is to be completed by 31 July 2022.

## Statement of Technical Requirements

* 1. The following sets out the technical requirements of contracts awarded by ACL Essex:
* Providers must be able to accept and submit necessary documentation electronically; in addition, original auditable learner documents will need to be submitted in a way that ensures appropriate Data Protection
* Organisations awarded funding will be expected to undertake appropriate DBS checks in line with current legislation at their own expense; however, when applicable, ECC may carry out appropriate checks for a fee.
* Applicants must comply with the General Data Protection Regulation in management of all learner information.
* Have the necessary safeguarding processes to ensure that they are compliant with ECC policies.
* Successful applicants shall not enter into any contract with any political or religious organisation using any funding provided by Essex County Council under this contract if the effect of that contract would be to promote a particular political or religious point of view.
* Organisations allocated funding will be subject to ACL Essex Quality Improvement processes.
* Intellectual Property rights will apply to material jointly developed as part of this contract and owned by ECC.
* It is a requirement that tutors/trainers delivering learning through the subcontract hold or are working towards an appropriate teaching qualification.
* Targets will be set for the participation of eligible (for public funding) learners, successful achievement of learning aims and evidence of required outcomes.
* The performance of subcontractors will be monitored on a monthly basis, with remedial actions put in place to address underperformance. Progress reviews will take place quarterly.
* Successful applicants will be required to produce a detailed delivery plan specifying planned learning programmes, learning aims and objectives, intended outcomes and planned progression routes.
* Quality Assurance will be monitored using Ofsted criteria and the Education Inspection Framework. Provision may be inspected during an Ofsted inspection.
* Evidence of appropriate Health & Safety Risk Assessments will be required for all venues/premises where learning is delivered through the subcontract.
* A Business Continuity plan will be required to identify how the contract will be met if unforeseen circumstances affect the ability to deliver planned programmes.
* A Self-Assessment report will be required to identify how successful applicants will ensure continuous improvement in the teaching and learning they are delivering throughout the contract.
* Successful applicants must inform Essex County Council if evidence of any irregular financial or delivery activity arises. Irregular activity could include, but is not limited to:
* non-delivery of training when funds have been paid
* sanctions imposed on the subcontractor by an awarding organisation
* an inadequate Ofsted grade
* complaints or allegations by learners, people working for the subcontractor or other relevant parties
* allegations of fraud.
* Successful applicants must not use this funding to make bids for, or claims from, any European funding on their own behalf or on behalf of Essex County Council or the ESFA.
* Successful applicants must not use payments made as match funding for ESF Co-Financing Projects.

## Authorities policies

* 1. Council’s Information Policy Requirements - <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Business-Partners/Supplying-Council/Documents/ECC_information_policy_requirements_for_contractors.pdf>.

## Insurance and warranties

12.1 As described in the Standard Selection Questionnaire:

* Employer’s (Compulsory) Liability Insurance = £5 million
* Public Liability Insurance = £5 million
* Professional Indemnity Insurance = £500,000

## E-Procurement Requirements

Overview

* 1. Essex County Council has implemented a fully automated Purchase to Pay system. Purchase to Pay enables the full purchasing and payment process to be carried out on-line, from order creation and authorisation to receipting and invoice matching. It is easier, faster and more efficient than conventional purchasing processes.
	2. Marketplace is a Proactis Solution. It is a web-based system used by Essex County Council to submit purchase orders electronically and receive and process e-invoices and e-credits.
	3. The Marketplace supplier interface is both simple and secure. All the successful bidders will need to access Marketplace using an Internet browser. Marketplace supports the latest release of web browser technologies, for example, Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari etc.

Electronic Ordering

* 1. A record on Marketplace will be created for the successful bidder and a user ID and password will be issued via e-mail.

* 1. The user ID and password will allow the successful bidder to:
* View their purchase orders online
* Update their status
* Notify delivery
* Submit and monitor the status of electronic invoices and credits, once they have been submitted
	1. Purchase orders will be sent electronically to the successful bidder’s central e-mail address.

Emailed Purchase Orders

* 1. Orders will be sent electronically, via Marketplace, to the successful bidder’s preferred central e-mail address from the contract start date. To ensure continuity of service, the successful bidder will be responsible for ensuring that orders are processed quickly and efficiently. It is therefore not advisable to provide individual e-mail addresses unless appropriate access is available, to ensure that orders are still processed if the main contact is unavailable. There is no transaction charge for e-mail orders which are sent to a preferred central e-mail address, via Marketplace.

Electronic Invoicing

* 1. The successful bidder will be expected to submit electronic invoices and credit notes via Marketplace by utilising the PO Flip method from the contract start date. On approval of the electronic invoice an automatic payment will be made via BACS, direct to the successful bidder’s bank account, in line with Essex County Council’s contracted payment terms. In addition to the above, the successful bidder will be able to view the status of their invoices, via the Marketplace system.

Purchase Order Flip (PO Flip)

* 1. The successful bidder will be able to gain access to the Marketplace system via a web browser, to view their Purchase Orders and turn any outstanding Purchase Orders into electronic invoices, by choosing the PO Flip method. There is no charge for this method.
	2. Further information about all of the above can be found on ECC’s website: <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Business-Partners/Supplying-Council/Pages/IDeA-Marketplace.aspx>.
	3. Please be aware, the successful bidder will also be registered onto ECC’s Finance system, Oracle. They will in turn receive a registration email to activate their iSupplier portal account. This account is used to:
* View the status of invoice payments
* Amend your supplier details e.g. address, contact details, bank details
* Create additional user accounts

E-Procurement Terms of Trading

* 1. A preferred central e-mail address, (where orders will be sent electronically via Marketplace) must be provided. It is the responsibility of the supplier/ successful bidder to ensure that they can provide a central e-mail address for orders sent electronically via Marketplace from the contract start date. The Successful Bidder/Supplier/Contractor will be asked to submit this e-mail address. It is also the supplier’s/ successful bidder’s responsibility to ensure that continuity of service is maintained at all times and that orders are processed promptly.
	2. All invoices and credit notes must be submitted electronically by the supplier/ successful bidder to Essex County Council and as a minimum must be raised using the PO Flip method via Marketplace from the contract start date.
	3. Goods/Services should only be provided/carried out on receipt of an Official Purchase Order which has been issued via Marketplace by the Authority.
	4. The Successful Bidder assumes full responsibility for ensuring that programs or other data downloaded uploaded or in any way transmitted electronically to the Authority are free from viruses, or any other items of a destructive nature whatsoever. The Authority makes every effort to virus check information made available for download from Marketplace. The Authority cannot accept any responsibility for any loss, disruption or damage to your data or your computer system which may occur whilst using material derived from Marketplace. The Authority recommends that users recheck all downloaded material with their own virus check software.

## Agreement term

14.1 The Agreement term for this agreement will be 12 months.

## Payment

15.1 Payment will be made as per details set out in Section 8 above.

## Annex A: Adult Education Budget (Community Learning) funding rate examples

**What is the funding rate?**

Organisations will be paid £6.75 for each learner completing each hour of learning. Organisations will only be paid for learners who are registered as having started the programme and for whom learner documents have been submitted.

**How to work it out**

Use the Subcontractor Matrix Calculator to input details of the courses you plan to run. Where courses will be repeated throughout the duration of the contract only the total needs to be included in the calculations. Examples are included in the matrix.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subcontractor Name:** |  |  |  |
| **Course Title** | **No of courses** | **Learners per course** | **Total no of learners** | **GLH per course** | **Total GLH** | **Rate per GLH** | **Total Value** |
| Course Title 1 | 4 | 10 | 40 | 10 | 400 | £6.75 | £2,700.00 |
| Course Title 2 | 8 | 14 | 112 | 20 | 2240 | £6.75 | £15,120.00 |
| Course Title 3 | 10 | 10 | 100 | 40 | 4000 | £6.75 | £27,000.00 |
| Workshop Title | 1 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 25 | £6.75 | £168.75 |
| **Total Bid** |  |  |  |  |  |  | £44,820.00 |

1. <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Your-Council/Strategies-Policies/Pages/Strategies-Policies.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)