

Enhance your Community Food Project with a Cultivate Cambs grant

Community food projects offer access to food for people who are facing food poverty and insecurity. This may be due to barriers to affording sufficient food, to accessing good food, or to preparing meals. In Cambridgeshire, there is a large and growing network of schemes that tackle food poverty, including food banks, community fridges and pantries, food halls and food hubs, sustainable supermarkets, and community food growing initiatives.

Cambridgeshire County Council welcomes [Cultivate Cambs](#) grant applications to enable Community Food Projects to offer enhanced support and services to alleviate food poverty. You can apply for a grant of up to £5000 to enhance your Community Food Project.

What does an Enhanced Community Food Project look like?

An enhanced community food project offers additional services or activities that help people to move from emergency food dependence toward food resilience and independence by addressing some of the root causes of their food poverty.

We would encourage grant applicants to take a 'cash first' approach to reduce the need for emergency food provision by helping people to maximise their income. This could include offering advice and support to:

- access benefits entitlements
- access social tariffs, for broadband, water, energy
- reduce debt
- learn budgeting skills
- access paid employment
- increase uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers and Free School Meals
- increase digital skills

You could also consider evolving your food provision to a different model of delivery, e.g. developing a food pantry or community café model where people contribute financially for a weekly food shop or cooked meal and are offered sustained support with their longer-term needs. These approaches enable opportunities to build relationships, consider individual needs, and offer other support and services.

Finally, we would encourage proposals that support a more collaborative approach to food access in your district by bringing together frontline organisations to better coordinate services.

Please note that the grant will not pay for food for emergency distribution.

What makes an Enhanced Community Food Project suitable for this fund?

Food poverty and insecurity can affect anyone: families facing rising household costs, individuals facing job loss or benefits cuts, people with no recourse to public funds, children unable to access free school meals during the holidays, and older or disabled people who are unable to prepare meals without support.

An enhanced community food project can help to reduce pressure on County Council early help services by helping people to address some of the root causes of their food poverty or insecurity and connecting them with appropriate services and support before their needs escalate.

What do you need to enhance your Community Food Project?

- A good understanding of your clients:** What extra support do your clients need? Ask them questions and start conversations. Listen out for the reasons they need support and the discuss ways your project could meet their support needs. Seek feedback and ideas from your frontline volunteers.
- A good understanding of your community assets:** What local projects, groups, and businesses already exist in your community? Explore how enhancing your food project could complement and add value to the great work they do. Are there local libraries that offer digital skills workshops, businesses that are willing to offer work placements, or kitchens with spare capacity for meal preparation? Find out how many potential volunteers could support your project, and the skills and ideas that they could offer. This can be done through a door-to-door survey, a questionnaire, a public meeting, or a social event. You can also learn more about your community from the Parish and Ward Profiles on Cambridgeshire Insight: <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/>
- Appropriate expertise and credentials:** These will depend on the additional support you will offer.
- Join your local food poverty alliance network:** The Cambridgeshire Food Equality Strategic Partnership is a new network for Cambridgeshire, with local network members in each district (please note that South Cambridgeshire does not yet have its own network). The local networks are comprised of community food activists, organisations, and experts by experience, who aim to support and highlight local solutions. The countywide Strategic Partnership is supporting the development of learning networks, events and peer to peer support, and shares updates, data, resources, and examples of the successes and challenges that community food projects have experienced. All grant recipients will be required to join their local network.

What we can provide:

- Funding:** You can apply for a maximum of £5,000 to enhance your community food project. Other funding may be available from sources such as your Town or Parish Council, local businesses, charitable grants, and your own fundraising efforts. For funding advice and opportunities, please see: <https://www.idoxopen4community.co.uk/supportcamb>

☑ **Support:** The Cambridgeshire Food Equality Strategic Partnership and its local member networks will offer advice and support to get your new initiative started, including links with other local and national food projects that can help with advice and training.

What do I need to do next?

Every community is different, so you will need to do some research and scoping to see how enhancing your community food project will meet the needs of your clients and your community *before* you apply for funding. You should also seek advice from **Sam Dyer** at **Cambridge Sustainable Food** on sam@cambridgesustainablefood.org. She will connect with you with an appropriate local network member in your area.

Pre-application advice is offered by county council officers before each funding round. You will need to make an appointment to discuss your application proposal before submitting. The grant application form and further details about the fund, including application deadlines and pre-application advice appointments, may be found at <https://www.cambscf.org.uk/cultivate-cambs>

Further information

Cambridge Sustainable Food

<https://cambridgesustainablefood.org/>

Sustain – food poverty resources

<https://www.sustainweb.org/foodpoverty/>

<https://www.sustainweb.org/publications/oct21-empowering-local-action-on-food-poverty/>

https://www.sustainweb.org/publications/making_the_most_of_healthy_start/