

Communities Innovating Yorkshire Fund (CIYF) Application Guidance



Section 1: Background of YPIP

The Yorkshire Policy Innovation Partnership (YPIP) is a UKRI-funded project operating in Yorkshire and the Humber across the 4 Mayoral Combined Authorities of York and North Yorkshire, Hull and East Riding, South and West Yorkshire.

The project looks to develop additional regional structures and processes that incorporate and empower low income, marginalised and/or spatially isolated communities – truly ‘working with’ these groups rather than ‘doing to’.

The project brings together universities/academic research, local government and community organisations on place-based initiatives themed around:

- Inclusive economy
- Creative industries
- Climate

The diverse stakeholders working across these will also have an input into creating a shared facility to access and analyse local and regional data sources. Community engagement and an inclusive voice based on lived experience cuts across all these themes.

The project explores new ideas and practices through pilot initiatives, whilst also platforming innovative working within the region. The aim is to co-create collaborative spaces for replication and scaling up.

YPIP is part of the [Local Policy Innovation Partnership \(LPIP\) programme](#).

Read more about YPIP [here](#).

Section 2: Communities Innovating Yorkshire Fund

A key element of YPIP is the £800k [Communities Innovating Yorkshire Fund \(CIYF\)](#), which is open for applications from **3 February 2025**.

The aim of the CIYF is to support projects, studies, activities, and collaborations that:

- advance YPIP’s commitment to innovative approaches to inclusive growth, sustainable living, and data informatics
- include partnerships with – or significant input from – members of Yorkshire communities, and/or that deepen the capacity for the involvement of members of Yorkshire communities in policy innovation.

The CIYF particularly encourages:

- projects that focus on socially marginalized residents of the region- racial/ethnic or national minorities, women, residents of spatially isolated communities, those living in poverty and/or without adequate access to educational or vocational opportunities
- demonstrator projects, research addressing evidence gaps, the piloting or study of new approaches (or of existing approaches in new places).

CIYF project applications must align with one of the 5 YPIP themes:

- 1. Collecting and Utilising Community Data**
- 2. Good Work and Better Business**
- 3. Culture and the Creative Industry**
- 4. Climate-Ready Places**
- 5. Communities In Their Places**

Applications for funding can come from the following organisations, with a registered address in one of the 4 Mayoral Combined Authority areas of York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire:

- **Voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations or groups**
- **Local businesses**
- **Local authority officers working on policy, inclusive growth, sustainability, and community engagement, including area committees and elected members**
- **Public sector organisations**

Bringing together community, policy and universities/academic research

The guiding principle behind the Local Policy Innovation Partnership (LPIP) initiative of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), that has provided the resources for YPIP is to have universities use their academic expertise to help local stakeholders – businesses, local and combined authorities, and residents in any area – innovate new policy approaches to solving the socio-economic challenges they jointly face. ‘Innovate’ here means new processes or ways of working. The word ‘policy’ included here means that these innovations should have the potential to enhance well-being and sustainability for all the residents of a given area. Of the 4 nationally-funded LPIP programmes, YPIP’s special focus is on residents who are socially, economically, or spatially marginalized.

Involvement by university staff in designing or implementing any funded project is not required. In such cases, the link to university expertise will be made at a later stage: for example, university experts might explore the broader policy relevance and implications of what such a project has found.

We can clarify the three elements that will be combined in some way in funded projects:

1. Community

Every project must engage with members of marginalised groups. This can be done in a variety of ways – through co-design or co-delivery of funded activities, through consultation with community members, and so on. No project will be funded that lacks meaningful involvement with community as defined here.

2. Policy

The aim of YPIP is made clear in its name – the creation of policy innovation partnerships. Some form of policy innovation – efforts to enhance well-being or sustainability for residents in the region, through experiments with new practices, new ways of working – must be undertaken through some form of partnership among stakeholders in the region. These experiments or ways of working can be focused on small (local) areas within the region, instead of the region as a whole; in such cases, the potential for replicating any learning on a wider spatial scale is a plus.

3. Universities and academic research

The focus of this fund is community and as noted, academics do not have to be involved in design or delivery of projects. Academic engagement can occur as a project unfolds, by engaging with YPIP colleagues, or as its impact is evaluated.

The CIYF offers two funding pathways, to be inclusive of grassroots and larger scale organisations to demonstrate their innovative ideas.

Please read on for further detail on the fund and how to apply.

Section 3: The 5 YPIP themes

CIYF applications must select and have a leading focus on one of the 5 YPIP themes. Each theme is explained below:

Theme 1: Collecting and Utilising Community Data

Data gathered from communities plays a crucial role in the decision-making processes of local authorities and the long-term social, economic, and environmental vitality of the region. However, barriers such as difficulty in generating and accessing up-to-date data, lack of recognition for community-generated insights, and limited information sharing can prevent communities and policymakers from effectively innovating and collaborating with each other.

As part of the Yorkshire Policy Innovation Partnership (YPIP), we invite applications for collaborative projects that aim to address the above-mentioned barriers by:

- exploring how data can be utilised to foster evidence-based decision-making for local communities and policymakers alike;
- finding novel ways of collecting and utilising data to support economic growth at local and regional levels, and/or;
- promoting the recognition and inclusion of community-generated data in policymaking.

Regardless of whether the focus is on collecting, integrating, applying, or disseminating data, projects under this theme will contribute to building stronger connections between public organisations, businesses, and communities; ensuring that future innovations are equitable, data-driven, and impactful.

Existing YPIP activity: As part of YPIP, a regional information database and engagement hub will be created, to provide support and guidance for communities to navigate and analyse relevant local, regional and national data and to better understand what kinds of data and evidence best serve community needs.

Theme 2: Good Work and Better Business

Good work matters for the wellbeing of workers and success of businesses across the region. It is the foundation of an inclusive and sustainable economy. Businesses can play a key role in providing good work that benefits employees and creates a stable, productive and healthy workforce while providing job opportunities for underrepresented groups.

However, too much work remains badly paid or insecure and the challenges and opportunities for engaging businesses in the good work agenda are not widely understood. By addressing these challenges, YPIP aims to empower local partners, stimulate innovation, influence policy change, and build a thriving and inclusive economy that benefits businesses, employees, and communities across the region.

We invite applications that explore practical ways of promoting inclusive business practices and good work (e.g. fair pay, secure contracts, healthy working environments, work-life balance and worker voice). We are particularly interested in applications around four priorities (though welcome alternative suggestions):

- **Foundational Economy:** Identifying opportunities for good work in sectors where low-wage, low-productivity work is prevalent (e.g. social care, hospitality, retail, logistics).
- **Inclusive recruitment:** Developing more inclusive pathways into work for groups facing barriers in the labour market.
- **Business support:** Exploring opportunities to pivot business support towards inclusion goals.
- **Work and health:** Supporting employers to recruit and retain employees with health conditions and disabilities.

Applications could include: research into existing challenges; evaluation of current innovations; new demonstrator projects; innovative ways of working e.g. co-design of solutions with employers or underrepresented groups.

Existing YPIP activity: As part of YPIP, an inclusive business network will be set up to share good practice amongst the community, local good practice will be studied, and a space will be created where disadvantaged communities can come together with employers to understand how they can benefit one another.

Theme 3: Culture and the Creative Industry

Access to cultural experiences has the power to transform our lives, whether we are in an audience or involved in creative activity directly. Culture connects us to one another, opens new horizons and perspectives, it and builds confidence and skills. Culture is good for our wellbeing. But many people have limited access to cultural activity, not all communities' cultures are recognised or valued and investment and engagement in cultural education and skills programmes has declined significantly in recent years. Earning a living as a creative is often precarious and insecure.

The ambition of this theme is:

- to reaffirm the significance of culture in our lives and its importance to the prosperity of the UK;
- to look at the practical steps which can be taken to ensure everyone has the opportunity to take part in culture, whether they follow their passion and use their talents as a creative, paid/unpaid, or just love to watch, to listen, to read and enjoy.

We would welcome applications which focus in 3 areas – i) community definitions of and participation in culture ii) widening education and employment pathways into the creative sector iii) business support models for the creative sector. Bids may include: evaluation of existing innovative models, deeper research around key challenges/issues or running of an innovative demonstrator project.

Existing YPIP activity: As part of YPIP, participants will take Bradford – in its year as the UK City of Culture 2025 – as a case study of a place which has identified the creative sector as part of its growth agenda.

Theme 4: Climate-Ready Places

A climate-ready place is one where carbon emissions are falling rapidly, nature is being restored, and people's lives, livelihoods and infrastructure are adapting to the pressing challenges of the changing climate. It's also about tackling inequalities: lower-income and spatially-isolated communities, who tend to be most at risk from climate change and whose places are often least climate ready, are often not heard by decision-makers. Innovative solutions are needed, and we want them to be shaped by those who are intended to benefit from the policies as they are implemented.

Current strands of this work include how heritage buildings (pre 1920) and Conservation Areas can become climate-ready, and how to effectively join up different land-use goals to make more progress on local nature recovery. Applications are welcome from collaborations that cover both the north and south bank of the Humber, as well as from Yorkshire.

We would especially welcome applications that can bring local, place & citizen-based knowledge into play in influencing policies. For example:

- How do people with homes or businesses in older (pre-1920) or heritage settings want to upgrade their buildings? How are their decisions about upgrading shaped by how they use those buildings and their understanding of the available options and constraints? How do these issues manifest in heritage social housing?
- How can people's knowledge of their local green spaces, the needs of nature and their communities, be better used to shape policies and funding programmes for nature recovery and community amenity value? Can this be developed in a way that further enhances the benefits that green spaces provide, helping us adapt to climate change and a range of increasingly frequent extreme weather events?

Existing YPIP activity: YPIP will use pilot projects to show what a joined-up approach might achieve. There are two demonstrator projects: one on 'resilient urban places', where people within deprived inner-city communities are getting involved in making their places more climate-ready. The other focuses on coordinating citizen led activity to shape nature recovery within green corridors.

Theme 5: Communities In Their Places

Communities sit at the frontline of experiencing the impact of economic and environmental issues. For marginalized and spatially isolated communities, this is doubly true. Yet, too often community preferences, experiences and voice are an afterthought and sidelined in both policy-making and research. The relationship is one that is often a lot of take and not a lot of give where communities are utilized for insight without recognition and shared ownership of research findings.

Communities in Their Places seeks to redress that balance by placing communities at the heart of YPIP's work alongside academics and policy makers exploring processes which enable all voices to be heard equitably. Key to this process is engaging communities in co-production research around topics that matter to them and for communities to be alongside academics and policy makers from the start rather than consulted later on.

Applications would be welcomed that:

- Community-led and community co-designed research
- Focus on economic/environmental inequalities and the role of community voice
- Embed co-production with peer researchers
- Directly engage communities with policy makers and researchers to inform research led policy making.

Existing YPIP activity: YPIP will establish a Community Panel and will work collaboratively with panel members and local organisations/communities in the region to review and draw learning from examples of community-led action. YPIP will also facilitate the coming together of local communities, voluntary and public sector organisations to build a collaborative space or community of practice to build change together.

Section 4: Who can apply?

The following groups with a registered address in one of the 4 Mayoral Combined Authority areas of York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire can apply for funds:

- **Voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations or groups**
- **Local businesses**
- **Local authority officers working on policy, inclusive growth, sustainability, and community engagement, including area committees and elected members.**
- **Public sector organisations**

Specifically, organisations must have a registered address in one of the following areas to be eligible for CIYF funding:

York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority:

- City of York Council
- North Yorkshire Council

Hull and East Riding Combined Authority:

- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Hull City Council

South Yorkshire Combined Authority:

- Barnsley Council
- Doncaster Council
- Rotherham Council

- Sheffield City Council

West Yorkshire Combined Authority:

- Bradford Council
- Calderdale Council
- Kirklees Council
- Leeds City Council
- Wakefield Council

Organisations working Humber-wide are also welcome to apply, but the project must be working with communities within our CIYF geographical boundaries.

Other eligibility requirements:

- Projects must demonstrate an intention to work with/a connection with marginalised groups.
- Lead applicants must be 18 or over.
- Organisations must have a UK bank account to be eligible for funding.
- Organisations must ensure that they have the capability to deliver their project – i.e. the staff and resource to deliver what is proposed.
- Organisations will be required to provide information to support the University of Leeds due diligence process – more information available [here](#) and in section 12 (payment terms can be adapted to suit the awarded organisation and their project/budget plans.)

Section 5: Funding pathways

The CIYF offers two different funding pathways:

Seedcorn funds of up to 10k

This funding pathway is for small/pilot projects, to be inclusive of smaller, grassroots initiatives. Applications for seedcorn funding will enable organisations to develop/pilot their ideas. The purpose of the seedcorn round is to enable groups without prior experience of grant applications to have the opportunity to ‘learn by doing’.

Larger project funds of up to 50k

This funding pathway is for developing existing/more established ideas. Larger projects should propose ‘deeper dives’ into one or more of the five priority areas identified above.

Other project information:

- The time length for funded projects (of either pathway) will vary depending on their scale and scope.

- All projects must be designed to finish by the end of September 2026, three months before the scheduled end of YPIP project funding.
- Funded projects/organisations will be required to:
 - Attend a virtual project update meeting during the first 6 months of the project;
 - Host a visit by the YPIP Core team during the project timeline;
 - Submit an end of project report.
- We endeavour to fund a portfolio of seedcorn and larger projects that fits the capacity of our operational team and a suitable spread of theme and location.
- Although it is likely that CIYF projects encompass multiple YPIP themes, CIYF applications must select and have a leading focus on only one theme for ease of administration/project categorisation for the YPIP team.

Section 6: What we fund

The organisations listed in section 4 are eligible to apply for this fund.

Costs must follow the [UKRI Research Funding Guide](#) (see pages 27-34).

As per Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) rules, **UK business, third sector or government organisations** will be funded at 100% of eligible costs.

Within the CIYF, examples of eligible costs are as follows:

- Workshops/activities/events
- Travel/subsistence for workshops and events
- Costs of organising activities
- Materials/equipment
- Community participation expenses
- Staff costs required for specific elements of/running the project
- Training costs
- Academics may be included on projects, but their involvement is capped at 20% of each project budget to allow the majority of funds to go towards community organisations. As per ESRC rules, **academic** colleagues included on projects will be funded at 80% of eligible costs ([page 27 of the funding guide](#))

Please note, a reasonable amount of funds should be committed to CIYF project delivery and activities, as opposed to overall organisational core costs.

Section 7: What we do not fund

The following are not eligible for CIYF funds:

- Individuals.
- Organisations with a registered address outside of the 4 Mayoral Combined Authority areas of York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. Organisations working Humber-wide are also welcome to apply, but the project must be working with communities within our CIYF geographical boundaries.

- Costs incurred prior to grant approval.
- Pre-existing activity/ongoing operations (this fund must be project/YPIP theme focussed)
- Alcohol

Section 8: Application process

An online application form for each of the seedcorn and larger project funding pathways will be made available on the webpage and will close at 23:59 on Sunday 23 March 2025.

The application form will require:

- information about the organisation applying;
- a description of the project;
- responses to each of the 5 assessment criteria;
- a breakdown of the budget.

Section 9: Assessment process

- Applicants will submit their funding application via an online application form.
- After eligibility screening, applications will be distributed for review by the review panel. The panel will be assembled during the process and will include the YPIP Co-directors, Co-Investigators and members of the YPIP Community Panel.
- Multiple panel members will score each application.
- Panel members will score applications against 5 criteria and scores will be collated.
- Applications meeting the scoring threshold will be discussed jointly in a final discussion session attended by the panel.
- As part of the review process, conflicts of interest must be declared by panel members and where applicable, panel members will remove themselves from discussing applications they have connections with. The panel will receive training on the assessment process.
- Application outcomes will be sent from the YPIP mailbox (ypip@leeds.ac.uk)
- For those not selected for funding, feedback comments from the panel will be available on request.

Section 10: Assessment criteria

The 5 assessment criteria on the application form are as follows:

1. Please explain how your project clearly aligns with its chosen YPIP theme
2. Please explain how your project demonstrates a link to local policy innovation
3. Please explain how your project involves stakeholder collaboration and community participation to codesign/co-deliver the project
4. Please explain how your project involves/reaches underrepresented and minoritised groups
5. Please explain how your project is achievable within the timescale and budget requested

Please note, we anticipate more applications than we have resources to support. As this is a regional project, abundance of theme/geographic location will also be considered as part of the final decision

process, after review and scoring has taken place. This approach will help us ensure that funds are fairly distributed across a wide range of projects, both geographically and thematically, aligning with the aims of YPIP.

In line with team capacity and resource, we will place a limit on the number of seedcorn projects funded, to ensure we are able to support and connect with funded projects during the funding timeline.

What we mean by ‘innovation’

The project aims to co-create new or improved approaches to issues/policy by working alongside communities or groups of people who are directly affected by them.

What we mean by ‘stakeholder collaboration’

Working together in a way where all stakeholders, including academic staff, policymakers and community members, share power equally between them, and make sure no-one is excluded. This collaboration relies on listening, contributing and sharing, and making sure the process is accessible to everyone.

Section 11: Equity, diversity and inclusion

YPIP is committed to promoting equal opportunities and valuing diversity including all protected characteristics. We expect applicants to also be committed to the promotion of equality, cohesion, and inclusion.

Section 12: Onboarding

Please note, the ESRC YPIP/CIYF funding is held by the University of Leeds, who have the following external funding awardee requirements:

University of Leeds Due Diligence form for organisations

The University of Leeds will carry out due diligence on the organisations whose applications have been approved for funding. Organisations will be required to provide information to support this process and funding will not be confirmed until this process has been successfully completed.

The level of due diligence required will depend on the funding amount and the nature of the organisation.

Example templates for the various funding amounts and organisations can be found below:

1. [Any organisation receiving funding of up to £10k;](#)
2. [Charity or Other organisation receiving funding of between £10 and £50k;](#)
3. [Commercial \(business\) organisation receiving funding of between £10 and £50k;](#)
4. [Public Body organisation receiving funding of between £10 and £50k.](#)

If you are unsure about anything in these forms, please contact us at ypip@leeds.ac.uk

University of Leeds external funding awardee contract

The University of Leeds is also required to enter into a legal agreement with funded applicants, to formalise the work we will be doing together. This means funded applicants will be required to sign a contract/collaboration agreement prepared by our Research and Innovation Service in order to confirm project funding. As part of this contract, we will confirm the payment terms for the project.

Payment terms appropriate to the project and organisation - and also the evidence that will need to be submitted to support the transfer of funding - can be adapted to suit the awarded organisation and their project/budget plans.

Section 13: Monitoring

Funded applicants will be required to input into the monitoring requirements from our funder.

- Funded projects/organisations will be required to:
 - Attend a virtual project update meeting during the first 6 months of the project;
 - Host a visit by the YPIP Core team during the project timeline;
 - Submit an end of project report.

Section 14: Funder/brand

Project outputs should acknowledge funding by YPIP and UKRI and be co-branded with the UKRI and YPIP logos. Branding guidelines will be shared with successful applicants.

Section 15: Expression of interest (EOI) form

During the application window, an online expression of interest form will also be made available, for those who would like to explore particular topics/themes related to the CIYF subject matter. Prospective applicants who have an idea requiring development or further collaboration may submit their thoughts using this EOI form. Depending on areas of support needed, YPIP will host subject specific webinars to cater to these to help applicants develop their idea.

The YPIP Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators will lead this process, and further information will follow. The link to the form can be found on our webpage.

Section 16: Information webinars

YPIP will host two online information sessions/webinars to outline the aims of the fund, application and assessment process.

Webinar details will be on the webpage, dates as follows:

1. Tuesday 11 February 4pm
2. Tuesday 4 March 10am

Section 17: CIYF timeline

Potential timeline for applicants (subject to change):

Application period	3 Feb-23 March 2025
Projects commence	May-June 2025 (depending on onboarding timeframes)
Projects end by	End of September 2026
Evaluation/end of project report	September to December 2026

Section 18: Contact

For queries, please contact ypip@leeds.ac.uk