



Employability Small Grant Application Guidance 2025/26

In 2025, Stirling Council introduced a Procurement Framework for the commissioning of employability support provision. All organisations who provide employability support were encouraged to register with Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) to bid for contracts in 2025/26.

To ensure that no organisations are excluded from applying for NOLB funding during the transition to a Procurement Framework, Stirling LEP has set aside a proportion of NOLB funds to be distributed via a small grant application process for those not yet registered on PCS.

We are therefore welcoming **small grant applications of up to £5,000** from organisations delivering employability opportunities in the Stirlingshire area. Applications are open to organisations that can provide employability support services to the priority groups, communities and locations as detailed in Stirling's Local Employability Delivery Plan but are **not currently registered on the Employability Framework with Public Contracts Scotland**.

Who can apply?

Organisations applying do not need to have employability as their sole focus, but the application does have to clearly outline how the project supports people/communities on their employability journey.

This fund is open to all public, private and third sector organisations delivering within the Stirling Council area **not currently registered with the Employability Framework on PCS**. Organisations who are registered on PCS as a **partner**, where another provider is the **lead** organisation may also apply. We expect applicants to become members of Stirling's Local Employability Providers Forum.

Priority Groups

- 16–19-year-olds/school leavers without a positive destination.
- Care experienced young people (16- 26).
- Those with involvement in the criminal justice system (all age).
- Unemployed people with physical or learning disabilities who are able and wish to progress/return to work (all age).
- Low income employed parents with physical or learning disabilities or with children with a physical or learning difficulty (all age).
- Unemployed people with health conditions wishing to progress/return to work including those in recovery from addictions (all age).
- Long term unemployed residents (all age).
- Unemployed residents residing in 5% most deprived datazones (SIMD2020) (all age).
- Unemployed Black and Minority Ethnic residents including refugees (all age).

- Unemployed people in homeless /temporary accommodation (all age).
- Unemployed/low-income parents (all age).
- Lone parents.
- Parents with three or more children.
- Parents whose youngest child is under the age of one.
- BME parents.
- Parents with a disability (or with a child who has a disability).
- Young parents under the age of 25.

Please note, your application must provide support services to one or more of the priority groups outlined above to be considered.

Priority Communities:

Unemployment affects people across all areas of Stirling, however there are communities more impacted than others. Whilst provision is open to the priority groups above regardless of where they live and including rural communities, there is also a need for provision targeting our Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) communities in Stirling:

- Raploch.
- Cornton.
- Mercat Cross and City Centre.
- Bannockburn and Hillpark.
- St.Ninians.
- Cowie.
- Plean.
- Fallin.

The panel would be particularly interested in projects or programmes which work with the priority areas and groups as outlined below:

- Programmes for those with Additional Support Needs.
- Rural employability provision.
- Support to the recovery community.
- Support to those engaged with criminal justice services.
- Young people.
- Activity targeting those 25+ who are experiencing long term unemployment.

Please note, your application does not need to deliver employability support services in the localities detailed above or to the groups listed in this section to be considered.

What can be funded?

The table below shows what NOLB grant funding can and cannot support.

We will fund	We cannot fund
Staff costs to facilitate the project, including the direct administration and management of the project.	Capital costs above £1000.
Recruitment costs for staffing.	Any goods/services you buy or order before we confirm our grant.
Staff and volunteer expenses and transport costs.	Routine repair and maintenance costs.
Transport/travel costs of participants.	Electricity generation and feed-in tariff payment.
The delivery of accredited training, industry recognised certification and Vocational Qualifications.	Contingency costs, loans, endowments or interest.
Equipment.	Political or religious campaigning.
Training allowances towards support for participants whilst undertaking the employability project.	One off event.
Venue hire.	Profit-making/fundraising activities.
Any other programme costs that include direct additional organisational costs that are incurred through the delivery of this project.	VAT you can reclaim.
	Statutory activities.
	General organisation overheads that cannot be considered additional and direct to the delivery of the project.
	Any employment costs arising from the Grantees legal obligations to its employees for example parental leave, sick leave, redundancy.
	Insurance costs that are not a directly incurred premium related to the delivery of the project.
	Overseas travel.
	Alcohol.

Grant pots available

No One Left Behind (all age employability) - £20,000

Child Poverty Parental Employability Support - £10,000

Grants will be confirmed at the end of October 2025 and allocated as soon as possible after receipt of the signed Terms and Conditions and must be spent by the 31st of March 2026.

Monitoring and Evaluation

If you are successful in your application, you will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on how the grant money has been used and the impact it has had. You will be asked to provide both qualitative (descriptive) and quantitative (numerical) data.

In addition, projects will need to collect and provide equalities monitoring data. This means recording information related to equality and diversity to ensure fairness and inclusivity in the project's implementation and impact.

How to Apply?

Applications for the fund open on **29 September 2025**

Applications must be submitted by **5pm on Friday 24 October 2025**

Applicants will be notified by **Friday 31 October 2025**

You can also request a word format application by emailing janet@sventerprise.org.uk or matty@sventerprise.org.uk

You will need to provide the following documentation along with the application form.

- a. A copy of your governing document;
- b. A copy of your organisations last signed accounts;
- c. A copy of your organisations latest bank statement*

*We need evidence that the bank account is in the name of organisation and require a bank statement from the last month that shows the **name and address** of the organisation and the **account number and sort code** you have supplied for the payment of grant. If one page of your bank statement contains all of the above information, please only send that page or ensure any personal details in transaction lists are redacted.

The shortlisting process will be taking place between the week commencing **27 October 2025** with successful applicants notified no later than **31 October 2025**.

As part of the application process, you will be asked what stage of the employability pipeline your project contributes towards. You can view the employability pipeline [here](#).

As part of the funding process, we ask all applicants to adhere to the Fair Work Framework which can be accessed here: [The Fair Work Convention](#).

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your application prior to submission please contact Janet Kennedy via email janet@sventerprise.org.uk or Nicole De Brincat debrincatn@stirling.gov.uk

Appendix 1- Employability and Community Planning

The National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) sets out a clear vision for a strong economy where good, secure and well-paid jobs and growing businesses will drive a reduction in poverty and, in particular child poverty.

The LEP are a subgroup of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). The CPP produced the local outcome improvement plan for Stirling, The Stirling Plan 2017-2027. The Employability Delivery Plan 2022-25 launched as part of a review on the Stirling Plan outlines locally agreed outcomes and performance indicators which will contribute to the wider national objectives of the No One Left Behind approach in Scotland.

The LEP is supported by two subgroups; the Employers Engagement Forum (EEF) and the Providers Forum to have the widest representation possible of agencies across Stirling delivering employability interventions.

Appendix 2-No One Left Behind

No One Left Behind (NOLB) is the Scottish Government's approach to placing people at the centre of the design and delivery of employability services and transforming employment support in Scotland. The approach to delivery is based on partnership, local flexibility and person-centred services and it focuses on the needs of the individual and builds on their strengths, giving them the right support to help to improve their life chances.

Scottish Government is keen to fund support for:

- Individuals who reside in Scotland.
- People from school leaving age up to 67 years who are experiencing barriers to employment.
- Young people over the age of 15 years who are within 6 months of the school leaving date and who are identified as being at risk of not moving on to a positive destination.

National objectives/expected outcomes of the grants programme

- To reduce levels of child poverty by supporting parents from the priority family groups to increase their income from employment.
- To reduce inequality in the labour market by supporting those further from the labour market to increase their income from employment.
- To maximise the role that employability plays in delivering national and local aims of tackling poverty, promoting inclusion and social justice and creating a fair and prosperous Scotland.

National target/milestones:

- The number of individuals engaging with employability support and training, broken down into age groups, parental status and by protected characteristics.
- The progression of individuals towards education, training or employment.
- The number of individuals taking part in employment opportunities supported by employability funding.
- The number of individuals achieving sustainable outcomes.
- The number of parents achieving in-work progression.