

Community Economic Development

An Introductory Guide

Introduction to the Project

The Community Economic Development (CED) programme is a new initiative designed for local community groups and organisations who want to take a lead in shaping their economies for the benefit of local communities.

If you belong to a community that wants to work towards seeing real economic change in your area - whether this is in food, housing, finance, energy or any other local economic opportunities - then the CED programme will set you on the right path.

The programme provides specialist support, advice and grant funding to help residents, local businesses and public sector organisations to work together to develop the best ideas to strengthen the local economy.

Whether that's working on a strategy to promote local spending, exploring the possibility of developing a rural broadband co-operative, or working with key organisations to promote community-led housing, this programme is for passionate people who are committed to working together on a local economic plan that can deliver real local benefits.

What is Community Economic Development?

CED gives people the opportunity to shape how their economy develops. The approach recognises that local economies are characterised by the relationships and activities which everyone faces, based around where you live, work and play.

However, CED is best understood when it is being put into action. Examples include:

- In [West Dorset](#) rural communities have created local food links and new food enterprises.
- In [Haringey](#) money and jobs are being saved through a co-operative programme on energy efficiency.
- In [Preston](#) the local authority, police and health services are looking at where they can place contracts with locally owned businesses.
- In [Bristol](#) growing numbers of people have joined the local credit union for local savings and a currency that can be cashed with local enterprise.

- In the [Black Country](#) a loan fund supports local businesses turned down by high street banks to survive and thrive.

The CED programme will help 50 deprived communities to develop their own community economic development plans. Each bespoke plan will identify practical opportunities to develop the local economy and boost engagement so the community are actively shaping the economic future of the local area.

Why should I get involved?

*“Rather than complaining about things, we’re getting on and doing something.”
Carolyn Loftus, member of Esk Energy Society, Yorkshire*

CED will give you the means to get on and do something that will benefit your local economy. And by working together as a community, those benefits can be felt where they are needed most, such as tackling unemployment, improving energy efficiency, boosting local spend and beyond.

We encourage you to apply for the CED programme if you want to make these kinds of changes happen in your community. You just need to be involved in an existing organisation - whether that’s a local community group, local business, parish council or any other local body.

How can I apply?

The programme opens for applications on 1 April 2015. You can apply by visiting:
<http://mycommunity.org.uk/programme/community-economic-development/>

If you would like to register your interest or have any questions about the programme ahead of applying, please contact a member of the CED team by emailing: CED@uk.coop

How will it work?

The CED programme will support the selected communities throughout the process of developing a well-supported, dynamic and deliverable local economic plan. This will include:

A dedicated advisor

All communities will be allocated an experienced advisor who will act as the main point of contact, providing guidance and support through each stage of the programme. Your advisor will:

- Work with you to build initial support for your community's involvement, pulling together a local leadership team of representatives from the community, local businesses and the public sector.
- You will be able to attend a regional event which brings together other participants and the wider adviser group, to understand the support activities you will be able to access to help you towards producing a community economic development plan.
- Deliver a full-day workshop to explore possibilities, identify priorities and potential activities that will form the basis of your plan. This workshop will also help to identify further support you may wish to access and how your grant could be used to help develop your initial ideas.
- You will continue receiving support from your advisor over the course of the programme to help you move towards completing your plan.

Flexible funding

A grant of up to £5,000 will be available to support the further development of your plan. This grant can be used to fund various activities including further consultation within your community, accessing professional support to develop technical aspects of the plan, or support to produce the plan.

Specialist support

In combination with the grant, the programme partners can provide six days of additional specialist assistance to each community covering these areas:

- **The entrepreneurial community:** helping communities to better understand the key dimensions of community enterprise: business planning, community engagement, governance and finance
- **Financing our future:** helping communities to better understand their local economic financing possibilities and potential
- **Strengthening local economic impact:** assisting communities in enabling their key businesses or other large organisations to more actively engage with the local economy
- **Business planning and asset transfer:** showcasing the range of Community Rights and how they can assist in community economic development including the transfer of land and buildings into community ownership, neighbourhood planning and public service re-design and delivery.

Partners and delivery associates

CED is being delivered by a partnership that includes Cooperatives UK, New Economics Foundation, Locality, Community Development Foundation, and the Community Development Finance Association.