



Medical
Research
Council

BBRAG Community Groups Fund

Introduction

The Black in Biomedical Research Advisory Group (BBRAG) was established as part of the Black in Biomedical Research (BBR) project through the approval of the Medical Research Council's (MRC) Executive Board, Strategy Board, and Council. The project's aims revolve around helping to address the persistent underrepresentation of Black biomedical researchers.

Backed by £3.7 million in funding over three years, BBRAG has launched several impactful initiatives including support for school outreach programmes, pilot conferences, new fellowship schemes and summer lab internships for Black students and researchers, and a James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnership focused on respiratory conditions in people of Black heritage.

Building on this foundation, the Community Groups Initiative aims to support Black-led grassroots and community organisations and networks that play a vital role in advancing equity and inclusion in the biomedical research sector. Through this initiative, a total of £140,000 will be awarded to ensure that a wide range of community groups across the UK will receive a one-time grant of £5,000. This funding is designed to provide a short-term financial boost to help tackle the challenges these organisations face in securing and sustaining resources for their valuable efforts.

Eligibility Criteria

We encourage proposals from a broad range of community groups who have demonstrable experience of working with Black and/or racially minoritised communities. Prospective organisations of any size, small, medium or large are welcome to apply.

We highly encourage proposals from Black-led organisations. Similarly to the Wellcome Trust, we define a Black-led organisation as one where at least 70% of the leadership and decision-making power resides with individuals who identify as Black (any Black background) and/or Black-mixed (any Black-mixed background).

To be eligible for this funding, applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Alignment with the Biomedical Discipline

Community groups must engage in work within the biomedical research field and contribute towards the MRC's mission to improve human health through worldclass medical research. While this does not need to be the group's primary remit, applicants must demonstrate how your activities impact the biomedical sector, academic research, or the wider public. Relevant areas of biomedical research include:

- Infections and Immunity
- Molecular and Cellular Medicine
- Neurosciences and Mental Health
- Population and Systems Medicine
- Global Health
- Translational Research

More information about the MRC's [research remits](#) may be found here.

2. Purpose of the Grant

This grant is intended to help sustain the organisation's existing objectives. Examples of eligible uses include:

- Staff salaries or payments
- Training and professional development
- Legal consultation services
- Digital infrastructure (e.g., subscriptions for tools like Zoom)
- Organising events or community activities

3. Organisational Requirements

- Demonstratable experience of working with Black and/or racially minoritised communities.
- Groups may apply even if they are not legally registered or do not hold a business bank account.
- However, applicants must have access to a UK bank account to receive funds. Where possible, it is preferable to transfer funds through an applicant's institution.

4. Funding Restrictions

- This funding cannot be used for personal financial gain.
- Funding is for established groups and is not to be used for establishing new community groups.

5. Reporting and Accountability Requirements

- **Evaluation Form:**
Recipients will be required to complete an evaluation form detailing how the funds were used and the outcomes achieved. This form will be sent to recipients after **10 months** and must be submitted **12 months** after receiving the grant.
- **Optional Follow-Up Interviews:**
The MRC may contact recipients to arrange optional interviews to gain deeper insights into the impact of the funding for evaluation purposes.
- **Progress Reminder:**
A reminder will be sent to all recipients **6 months** after the grant is issued, reminding them to ensure they are collecting evidence of activities. This evidence may include:
 - **Testimonials:** Quotes or written statements from participants, beneficiaries, or stakeholders about the project's impact.
 - **Attendance Metrics:** Numbers of attendees at events, workshops, or other funded activities.
 - **Photos or Videos:** Visual documentation of events or activities (with necessary consent).
 - **Financial Records:** Receipts or documentation showing how the grant was utilised.
 - **Quantitative Results:** Data showing measurable outcomes, such as increased participation, skills development, or new partnerships formed.

Application Process

Those interested in applying must complete an official application form **by 17 January 2025**. Applicants must complete all sections of the form, ensuring they provide detailed and accurate information.

[Access to the application form may be found here.](#)

Assessment Process

The application assessment process will incorporate a **partial randomisation** method, ensuring an equitable and transparent selection among applications of comparable quality. The process will proceed as follows:

1. **Application Review:**

- All applications will be evaluated by the Black in Biomedical Research Advisory Group's 'Community Groups' Sub-Committee.
- Each application will be assessed based on its alignment with BBR project objectives.

2. Categorisation and Final Funding Decisions:

- **Gold:** Applications that exemplify outstanding alignment with BBRAG's missions and goals. These will receive immediate confirmation of funding to be awarded.
- **Silver:** Applications that meet the fund's aims and objectives and align with BBRAG's ethos. These will enter a lottery selection process where applications exceed the amount of funding available. This partial randomisation ensures a fair opportunity for funding among proposals of similar merit, mitigating potential biases inherent in traditional selection methods.
- **Bronze:** Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria or fail to align with BBR funding objectives. These will not be funded.

This approach draws inspiration from successful implementation by organisations such as [Wellcome](#), which have utilised partial randomisation to allocate funds equitably among applicants.

Timeline

- Applications Open: **Friday 20th December 2024**
 - Emails will be sent to all prospective applicants with link to application form, exemplar application and details on the funding process.
- Applications close: **Friday 17th January 2025**
 - All completed applications must be submitted by this date.
- Application Review and Lottery: **Monday 20th January – Friday 24th January 2025**
 - BBRAG will review and categorise submitted applications.
- Communicating Selection Decisions: **Monday 27th January 2025**
 - Successful applicants (Gold and lottery-selected Silver applications) will be notified about funding decisions, next steps, and deadlines for submitting documentation required for issuing payments.
- Submission Deadline for New Supplier Information: **Monday 3rd February 2025**
 - All forms must be received by this date.