

Advancing Racial Justice (ARJ) Fund Information Session

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**The
Robertson
Trust**

Change takes trust



How the fund came about

The Robertson Trust

- Scotland's largest independent **grant-making trust**
- Focused on tackling **poverty and trauma**
- Recognises **systemic racism** as a driver of poverty and trauma

Why ARJ was created

- Co-designed with **Black and People of Colour (BPoC) community leaders**
- Response to **long-standing inequities** in funding
- Recognition that BPoC-led organisations are often **underfunded**
- Funding often prioritises services over **systems change**

What ARJ is trying to achieve



Resource BPoC-led organisations to tackle systemic racism



Address root causes, not just symptoms



Invest in community knowledge and lived experience



Support long-term thinking and strategy



Build a stronger anti-racism ecosystem



Support movement building and solidarity



Test new funding relationships and community-led decision making

Key Dates

July 2026

Fund opens for
applications

March 2027

Decisions
announced

October 2026

Fund closes for
applications

Change takes trust

Funding available

£1 million is available across the fund. Approximately **10-12 organisations** will be funded

Development Grant

£10k
upfront

Action Phase

£10-40k pa
For 3 years

How the funding process works

Development (3-9 months)

- Research
- Community engagement
- Planning
- Strategy development

Plus:

- Training
- Learning gatherings
- Annual systems change event

Action (3 years)

- Delivery of systems change work
- Ongoing learning and support

Who can apply?



- ✓ Unconstituted groups
- ✓ Constituted organisations
- ✓ Charities
- ✓ CICs

Must:

- Be BPoC-led (50%)
- Work with BPoC communities in Scotland
- Have annual income of £200,000 or less

Who can apply?



This fund is specifically for:

Black and People of Colour-led organisations addressing systemic racism

The fund is not intended to address religious or cultural discrimination, although we acknowledge how this intersects with racism.

These are very important issues, but outside the specific purpose of this fund.

Understanding the income threshold

Maximum annual income

£200k

based on....

Most recent accounts

Up to 3 years where income fluctuates

Projected income for new organisations

Exceptions may be considered where income has been affected by one-off funding.

Typical funding levels

INCOME	TYPICAL ANNUAL GRANT
Under £50k	Around £10k
£50k - £100k	£10k - £20k
£100k - £150k	£20k - £30k
£150k - £200k	£30k - £40k

Each application will be assessed individually.

What do we mean by systems change



Systems Change Focuses On:

- Root causes
- Structures
- Power
- Long-term change
- Not simply responding to immediate need.

We are interested in work that:

- Challenges systems
- Creates alternatives
- Builds community power
- Shifts decision making

Type of work we will fund

Reforming the system

Training, influencing policy,
organisational change

Holding the system to account

Legal action, media, campaigns,
monitoring

Taking charge of changemaking

Building and spreading
alternative models to the current
system

Movement and Community Building

Organising, solidarity, community
spaces

"Lots of our young people have experienced school exclusion"

Reforming the system

We train schools in unconscious bias.

Holding the system to account

We challenge exclusion policies that disproportionately affect BPOC children.

Taking charge of changemaking

We establish inclusive radical and democratic learning spaces for young people at risk of exclusion.

Movement and Community Building

We organise with young people to challenge racism in education.

Systems change examples

We offer CV writing and interview skills workshops

We challenge discriminatory employment policies

We provide housing advice and advocacy

We develop cooperative community-led housing

We organise activities for BPOC families in our area

We create pathways for BPOC residents to shape resource allocation in our neighbourhood

Important...

**You apply with an issue you want to tackle,
not with a project idea**

What the application asks

Your current work

- What does your organisation or group do? How long have you been doing this work?
- Who do you work with or support? Roughly how many people have you worked with or impacted over the past 12 months?
- Who leads your work? How do people get involved?

The systemic racism issue you want to tackle

- What issue would you like to tackle with this funding? Why is this important to your community?
- What long-term change do you want your project to contribute to?
- Who would your work seek to engage, influence or challenge, and why?

Your approach

- How will you use the project development phase to plan your project?
- How will you involve your community in taking action on this issue?
- Will you work with other organisations or groups? If yes, which groups will you work with?

What makes a strong application



Understanding the Issue

- Clear problem
- Root causes identified
- Understanding of power and systems
- Clear change sought

Community-Led Approach

- By and for community
- Collaborative
- Intersectional
- Connected to existing work

Strong Planning

- Focused planning of the development phase
- Realistic and achievable
- Acknowledges risks and challenges

How decisions will be made

Process

- Eligibility and due diligence checks
- Panel assessment
- Shortlisting
- Community panel decision



Decision-making panel

- Independent community members
- Lived experience of racism



Why the Development Grant matters

Every successful applicant receives £10,000 upfront

for...



Research



Community
Engagement



Staff time



Planning

If you complete a feasible development plan, you will move into the full funding phase. You will be supported throughout this phase and part of the ARJ Learning Community.

Joint applications

Joint applications are **allowed** and **encouraged**, where meaningful

Expectations

- Equitable partnerships (not tokenistic)
- Clear roles and shared power
- All co-applicants must meet eligibility criteria

Additional points

- Can include partners/ expertise in budget
- Fund may suggest connections, but not guaranteed matchmaking role
- Welcome to get in touch around this

Unconstituted groups

Unconstituted groups are **eligible** to apply

Expectations

- Active for 12 months prior to applying
- Supported via Social Change Nest (fiscal host)
 - Hold and administer the funds
 - Provide support with other aspects of your work to help make it strong and sustainable

Requirements

- Minimum 3 members
- Referee
- Basic documentation

Requirements

- Grant uplift provided for hosting fees
- Get in touch before applying

Additional points

Using AI for applications

- AI can be a helpful drafting tool, but your application should reflect your organisation's own thinking. Check, edit and take ownership of any AI-generated content.
- Strong applications are specific and accurate. AI often lacks the depth required, and we value authenticity over perfect spelling, grammar or sector jargon.

Peer Reporting

- Report to another funded group
- Learning-focused
- Not compliance-focused

Support available and next steps

Application support

- Written, audio or video application
- 1:1 support sessions
- Drop-in Q&A sessions
- Translation and accessibility support

If applications are unsuccessful, **follow-up conversations** are available as well as access to **wider learning opportunities**



Connect & engage

Q&A drop ins

18th Aug, 2-3pm
2nd Sept, 6-7pm
17th Sept, 3-4pm
6th Oct, 10:30-11:30am

POWER/SHIFT *in person*

26th Aug
10am-4pm
Glasgow

POWER/SHIFT *online*

8th Sept
6-8pm
Online on Teams

1-1 guidance sessions

Email Martha to arrange:
ARJ@therobertsontrust.org.uk

Recap

- Apply with your current work, the issue you want to tackle, how you will plan your project in the development phase
- The development phase is for you to create a full project plan
- Unconstituted groups can apply but please get in touch first
- CICs can apply but please check the full guidance to ensure you are eligible
- Groups and organisations must meet the lived experience leadership criteria

- The maximum income is £200,000 (some exceptions)
- Joint applications are welcomed when equitable
- We anticipate funding approx 20% of your income, min £10k
- You can get further support with your application if you need it
- POWER/SHIFT events are there to help you think through your systems change ideas

Questions?