

Hand in Hand Tenants & Residents Association

Managed in England by the Department for Communities and Local Government, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) focuses on reducing economic disparities within and between EU member states by supporting economic regeneration and safeguarding jobs. The fund has helped a wide variety of projects from large scale public works to small local initiatives, with over €8billion to be invested in England alone by 2013.

Project overview

The Hand in Hand Tenants & Residents Association is one of 12 tenants associations in Leicester City representing the views of local tenants and residents. The association recently delivered a two year project funded by ERDF (European Regional Development Fund).

The project provided pre-business support to potential entrepreneurs in the New Parks area of Leicester. Funding was focussed on people who were interested in starting up a business, but needed advice and guidance. This support increased entrepreneurial confidence; knowledge; capacity and access to procurement opportunities.

The emphasis of the project's support was on community business coaching and support, equipping individuals with the capability and knowledge to undertake enterprising activities.

Project funding

The total project value of Hand in Hand was £60,305. Match funding for the ERDF investment came from ERDF Leicester City Council's Working Neighbourhoods fund with an ERDF intervention rate of 72%.

Hints and tips – the application process

Hand in Hand would advise anyone

applying for ERDF funding to be patient, be prepared to provide information on a regular basis, and keep an eye on both their costings and what is happening externally that could affect their project delivery.

Hints and tips – project management

In terms of the delivery and management of ERDF contracts, Hand in Hand recommend that regular communication is maintained with the ERDF project manager, that plenty of time is allowed for monitoring and administration, and most importantly that successful applicants, however small, believe that their organisation is capable of delivering the project themselves.

Learning points

The most important lessons Hand in Hand learned from their ERDF experience were that it is possible for a small VCS organisation to deliver and manage a contract, that it is a myth that ERDF projects are difficult to monitor, and that through the experience of running an ERDF funded project, small VCS organisations can improve their operational and management systems overall.

For further information on the Hand in Hand Tenants & Residents Association email handinhand3@btconnect.com.

For further information on One East Midlands visit

www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk. For further information on EMFAN visit www.emfan.org.uk.

For further information on ERDF visit www.communities.gov.uk/regeneration/regenerationfunding/europeanregionalevelopment.