

# RSA CROWDFUNDING

**Guidance for Fellows**

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# What is crowdfunding?

Good question! Crowdfunding involves the creation of a campaign to do something, or create something, which requires funding to succeed. The 'crowd' (the general public) is invited to pledge funds to contribute toward the sum needed to enable the project behind the campaign to happen.

Crowdfunding can take many different forms, through donation of skills or money. Campaigns tend to be hosted on online platforms accepting primarily online payments.

## What does it mean to crowdfund with the RSA?

The RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) aims in all its endeavours to enrich society through ideas and action. Crowdfunding with the RSA provides Fellows with an additional opportunity to raise support for their creative initiatives and ideas, from the development of e-learning platforms to the renovation of community centres for local benefit.

With a network of 28,000 Fellows, the RSA has the capacity to harness incredible support for projects for the public good. Past crowdfunding campaigns supported by the RSA have enjoyed tremendous success, with a significant number of projects hosted on our RSA-curated Kickstarter page reaching 100% (or more) of their financial target between the launch of the page in 2013 and the temporary close of our crowdfunding offer for review in summer 2017.

## Learn about the RSA's plans to continue to support and promote Fellow-led crowdfunding campaigns.

Crowdfunding with the RSA involves applying for support through an online application.

### If your application is successful:

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We will include your campaign on one of our curated crowdfunding pages with our [select partners](#)

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We can make our 'RSA Fellowship' logo available to you to use in connection with your campaign

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We will promote your project via our social networks:

- On [Twitter](#) we have 48,600 Followers translating into 500,000 average monthly impressions with 1,200 average Re-tweets, Likes and Replies
- An [RSA Facebook](#) post may receive up to 500 likes, comments and shares and has an organic reach of 40,000

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You can contribute a blog about your campaign to be published on our website. The RSA sees average monthly traffic of approximately 40,000 visits to our [blog pages](#)

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Through the RSA Fellowship, you can make amazing connections with our [Fellow-led networks](#) and other crowdfunders through attending [RSA talks](#) and participating in our [Engage and MeetUp events](#) where there are opportunities to pitch and network.

## Eligibility for RSA Crowdfunding support

Could RSA Crowdfunding be for you? Consider whether your campaign meets our simple requirements before making an application.

- ✓ Are you a Fellow of the RSA?
- ✓ Do you have an innovative project designed to benefit the wider public or enrich society?
- ✓ Is your project in need of financial backing?
- ✓ Does your project have a clearly defined financial goal and rationale for the funds to be raised?
- ✓ Does your campaign broadly align with the RSA's key themes of [Public Service & Communities](#), [Creative Learning & Development](#), and [Economy, Enterprise & Manufacturing](#)?
- ✓ Is the structure of your project eligible for RSA support? For details of the types of organisations we can support visit [our website](#).

## Crowdfunding through our partner platforms

In September 2013, the RSA launched a curated page on the [Kickstarter](#) website – the first partnership of its kind, bringing together an international charity dedicated to enriching society through ideas and action, and an international crowdfunding giant.

Campaigns launched via RSA Kickstarter have enjoyed phenomenal success testament to the dedication and creative thinking of the Fellows who have led them.

Starting October 2017, the RSA has embarked on another exciting partnership, this time with [Spacehive](#), the UK's dedicated crowdfunding platform for places.

## Find out more about the RSA's dedicated partnerships with Kickstarter and Spacehive.

Both Kickstarter and Spacehive host curated spaces for RSA Fellows' crowdfunding projects. This joined-up offer is designed to provide Fellows with a choice of platform to best suit their crowdfunding goals. Fellows might consider Kickstarter, a large-scale international platform ideal for supporting projects involving the development of products, such as [One Third Stories'](#) children's books designed to help children learning languages through stories.

Meanwhile, a project focused on a specific community space, such as a local festival or the development of a community hall, may benefit from launching their campaign in partnership with Spacehive's team of experts. Spacehive, founded by Chris Gourlay FRSA, recognises that making places better can be tricky, so the platform provides expert viability checks carried out by Locality, to boost each project's chances of success from the outset. Spacehive also partners with a range of grant-makers, so pledgers can be enticed from councils, companies and foundations, as well as from within your networks.

The logo for Kickstarter, featuring the word "KICKSTARTER" in a bold, white, sans-serif font centered on a solid green rectangular background.The logo for Spacehive, featuring the word "Spacehive" in a white, rounded, cursive-style font with a thick white outline, centered on a solid yellow rectangular background.

## A comparison of our partner platforms

### RSA Kickstarter

### RSA Spacehive

<b>Funding</b>	All or nothing – if you don't reach your target, you won't receive the funds	All or nothing – if you don't reach your target, you won't receive the funds
<b>Where is the platform based?</b>	Globally-renowned US platform championing creative projects	UK-based, community-focused platform for projects that make local places better
<b>What support is available through platform?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <a href="#">Comprehensive FAQs</a></li> <li>– Online guidance in the form of Kickstarter's <a href="#">Creator Handbook</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <a href="#">Comprehensive FAQs</a></li> <li>– <a href="#">Events (including workshops and webinars)</a></li> <li>– Spacehive's <a href="#">Ultimate Guide to Crowdfunding</a></li> </ul>
<b>What cut does the platform take?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 5% if a campaign meets its goal and nothing if it doesn't</li> <li>– Pledges are subject to a <a href="#">small payment processing fee</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 5% if a campaign meets its goal and nothing if it doesn't</li> <li>– Pledges are subject to a small <a href="#">transaction fee</a></li> </ul>
<b>Rules/Guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <a href="#">Specific rules apply to Kickstarter projects</a></li> <li>– Three-day turnaround screening process to ensure campaign is aligned to rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <a href="#">Specific guidelines apply to Spacehive projects</a></li> <li>– Additional <a href="#">viability check by Locality</a> ensuring campaign is all set to go</li> </ul>
<b>Campaign opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Campaigns focus on securing straight forward monetary donations</li> <li>– One of the most well-known crowdfunding platforms globally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Skills-based contributions welcome in addition to monetary donations</li> <li>– Spacehive hosts partners who actively invest in campaigns</li> </ul>
<b>Rewards for backers</b>	Compulsory	Optional
<b>Fellow-led platform?</b>	Platform itself is not Fellow-led	Fellow-led platform

## Alternative platforms to consider

We recognise that not all Fellows will want to crowdfund through our selected platforms. Kickstarter and Spacehive may not be the preferred option for some Fellows' projects, for example, as both run solely all-or-nothing campaigns, in which projects must hit their fundraising target in order to receive the funds pledged. We have chosen to take this approach as there is tried and tested thinking behind this mode of crowdfunding, which has been found to:

- Help campaigns increase pledges
- Reduce the risk of a campaign not delivering on its aims, as projects are unlikely to be in a position to succeed if only a proportion of the target funding is received
- Increase backers' confidence, as they are more likely to pledge to a campaign if they know they will only be required to part with their money once the campaign has reached its intended target

If this approach does not suit you, you might want to consider the following Fellow-led platforms. Our relationship with these platforms, while less formal (these do not host a curated space for us) is no less friendly and their services come highly recommended.

## Some options for fellows seeking alternative finance and flexible fundraising.

The logo for CrowdPatch, featuring the word "CrowdPatch" in a white, serif font on a dark olive green rectangular background.

[crowdpatch.co.uk](http://crowdpatch.co.uk)

A free crowdfunding platform patching together groups of people who live in the same community or have common interests. Crowdpatch offers commission-free crowdfunding and support system to project owners through the assignment of a Patch Leader who is able to assist with the fundraising process. The platform does not work on an 'all or nothing basis' and you get to keep the funds you raise. Led by Simon Krystman FRSA.

The logo for fundsurfer, featuring the word "fundsurfer" in a white, bold, rounded sans-serif font on a dark olive green rectangular background.

[fundsurfer.com](http://fundsurfer.com)

A crowdfunding and commercial finance platform providing access to a unique blend of funding options and support for projects and companies. Funding options range from crowdfunding and green investment to start up loans and equity investment. Led by Oliver Mochizuki FRSA.



## What makes a great campaign?

We've learnt a great deal from supporting Fellows' campaigns since our initial Kickstarter page launched. Here are a few key points that Fellows embarking on crowdfunding might want to consider to increase their chances of success.

### Platform

It is important to choose the most appropriate platform for your campaign and tailor the design of your campaign to their requirements. Consider any charges that might be applied to pledges, rewards, the platform's audience, and guidelines and rules.

### Purpose

Set clear goals within your campaign and ensure you have a clearly defined objective which is straight forward to understand for potential backers considering your proposal. Run this by someone (or a few people) outside of your project team to see how easy it is to understand and how engaging it is for someone looking for a project to invest in.

### Content

Draft and proof your campaign content ahead of launching. Create quick, good-looking video content outlining your project's aims and inviting backers to pledge to your campaign – this is straight forward to do using a smartphone or webcam. Keep your content fresh and engaging. Help people want to support you.

### Timing

A successful campaign doesn't begin with the online launch of your invitation for backers to pledge to you. Time should be set aside prior to your online launch to identify potential backers, flesh out campaign goals and content, develop a communications strategy, and to promote your plans to family, friends, peers and your wider network so that they are primed to invest.

### Securing donations

Overwhelmingly donations come from people already known to crowdfunders – family, friends and networks made up of stakeholders who are invested, personally or professionally in the work that you plan to do. Crowdfunding with the RSA is no guarantee that Fellows will invest, and launching without laying the promotional groundwork is unlikely to encourage backers to seek out your campaign.

### Mobilising your networks

With the above in mind, let people know your plans! Reach out to your networks and drum up enthusiasm for your campaign. It's a fun way to connect with people and update them on the work you are doing. Putting a campaign online purely provides a space for that campaign to inhabit – the responsibility to drive people to that page sits with you.

### Rewards

If your campaign includes incentives for backers, make sure these are realistic (in terms of cost, availability, ease of making them available to your backers) and desirable for those who might pledge to your campaign. Additionally, consider the link to your campaign and the overall message your incentives send to backers – do they encourage financial and personal investment?

### Publicity

Think about how the message of your campaign will proliferate. What media are you using? Social networks are invaluable for spreading messages, i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. You might also want to consider community or social groups who may have a keen interest in your project goals. Consider contacting your local newspaper to tell them about your project, or drafting a press release/contacting a press syndicate to share news of the work you are doing. Encourage your contacts to share your campaign widely. Above all, make sure your campaign gets out in the world.

## Crowdfunding with the RSA: What you can expect

We're excited to hear more about your campaign! If you are thinking of applying to RSA Crowdfunding, here are some helpful guidelines of what RSA support for campaigns entails.

### Requirements

#### In order to support your campaign, the RSA requires:

You to have successfully completed our application process and be eligible for crowdfunding support ([see page 5](#)).

That we coordinate crowdfunding support directly with the RSA Fellow leading the campaign at all stages of development and publicity.

You to comply with the terms & conditions of your chosen crowdfunding platform.

### What you'll get

#### In supporting your campaign, we will:

Champion your initiative by promoting it through our networks using content provided by you. This may include RSA Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, blogs and events, as agreed with the lead RSA Fellow on the campaign.

Host your project on our curated pages on either Kickstarter or Spacehive, as agreed with the lead RSA Fellow on the campaign, flagging your work to our Fellowship and lending our name in support of your work.

Endeavour to answer your questions about crowdfunding support at the RSA and direct you to useful resources as appropriate to your aims.

### What you won't get

**Our external partners can provide invaluable guidance to your campaign given the richness of their expertise in crowdfunding, however, our support for your campaign cannot extend to:**

Assessing the quality of your campaign to ensure success.

Financially supporting your campaign.

Providing individual mentoring for campaigns or consultancy on crowdfunding, although you can draw on the wealth of expertise within the RSA fellowship by connecting directly with Fellows for guidance and support.

Guaranteeing that RSA Fellows will financially support a Fellow-led crowdfunding campaign

## Crowdfunding with the RSA: A Fellow's Journey

Follow our step-by-step guide to seeking RSA support for your crowdfunding campaign.

### Getting started

Have you checked you are eligible for RSA support? See our criteria on [page 5](#).



### Tell us more!

Complete our Campaign Outline Form

We'll let you know whether we can support your campaign within 10 business days

Meanwhile, factor in time for fine tuning the design and promotion of your campaign. Read this guidance widely and consider the suggested [further resources](#).

### If we cannot support you...

We are sorry not to be able to support your campaign directly on this occasion, however you are free to commence crowdfunding on any platform (including our alternative suggested platforms which are listed at [page 8](#)).

### If we can support you...

When ready, register your campaign on your chosen platform.

### Using Kickstarter?

Kickstarter will guide you through their process.

### Using Spacehive?

Spacehive will guide you through their process.

Once everything's set up with your selected platform and your networks are primed and ready to invest, populate your campaign page and launch when ready!

Don't forget to keep your networks and the RSA up-to-date with your campaign progress and activity. We'll help you promote your work as the campaign unfolds.

## Looking for crowdfunding expertise?

There's a world of information available on different kinds of crowdfunding and how to run successful campaigns. We've pulled together a short selection to get you started.



Kickstarter's [Creator Handbook](#)



Spacehive's [Ultimate Guide to Crowdfunding](#)



Indiegogo's [Expert tips for running a successful crowdfunding campaign](#)



The Guardian's [Expert Advice: Crowdfunding](#)



Crowdfunder's [Planning your project](#) (includes downloadable expert guides)



Social Misfits Media's [Make It Rain: Tips and Tricks for Crowdfunding Success](#)



Nesta's [Working the Crowd: A short guide to crowdfunding and how it can work for you](#)

## Need more information?

Crowdfunding at the RSA is managed by the Engagement Team in the Fellowship Department, who you can contact directly with any questions about the application process for RSA Crowdfunding and support for Fellows' campaigns.

Send a message to the team using [engagement@rsa.org.uk](mailto:engagement@rsa.org.uk), or call us on +44 (0)20 7451 6928.