

## Funding offer

# Equal opportunity funds

To support equal opportunities and diversity in the research system, the Volkswagen Foundation offers the possibility to apply for so-called 'Equal opportunity funds' within the regular application process in its initiatives. These funds support measures that serve to compensate for disadvantages at an individual level and/or aim to strengthen diversity in the education and research system in general.



Applications have to be a part of regular applications for funding (Please note: this funding offer does not apply to calls in the profile area [zukunft.niedersachsen](https://www.zukunft.niedersachsen.de))



Measures to compensate for individual disadvantages and to strengthen diversity in the research system



Up to 1% of the total grant (excluding overhead; in addition to the max. funding amount)



The funds are restricted to the stated purpose and cannot be reallocated

# 1 Objectives

In its position paper on [Funding Diversity](#), the Foundation explicitly formulates its commitment to diversity in a holistic understanding. Based on the German General Equal Treatment Act, it defines seven diversity dimensions that should be given specific consideration in funding activities in order to address and compensate for structural inequalities. The dimensions encompass

- Gender
- Sexual identity,
- Disability,
- Age,
- Ethnic origin,
- Religion or world view,
- Social background (non-academic family background, financial or economic situation, status as migrant or as a direct descendant of immigrants, as well as status as refugee or asylum seeker)

In order to compensate for inequalities resulting from these diversity dimensions and to promote diversity in the research system in general, the Volkswagen Foundation has launched an additional support programme called 'Equal opportunity funds'.

# 2 Scope of funding

Equal opportunity funds support measures implemented over the duration of a research project that are aimed either

- at equalising structural inequalities in the sense of compensating for individual disadvantages, or
- promoting diversity in the research system in general.

Equal opportunity funds can be applied for as a lump sum when submitting regular applications for project funding. The lump sum can then be used flexibly and according to all project members' needs over the course of the project (see section 4). Equal Opportunity Funds can be applied for up to 1% of the total application amount (excluding overheads) and they are granted in addition to the maximum funding sum.

**Please note:** Information on whether equal opportunities funds can be applied for in a funding program can be found in the guidelines of the respective initiative (see webpage). Currently, there is no possibility to apply for Equal opportunity funds in programs of the profile area zukunft.niedersachsen. Further, it is not possible to apply for Equal opportunities funds in calls for workshops or other events. Instead, funds for childcare can be applied for directly in such calls (see respective guidelines).

### 3 Application procedure

Equal opportunity funds must be applied for as part of a **regular application**; subsequent applications are not possible. To apply, please check the type of costs 'Equal opportunity funds' in the expenditure plan (as provided in the application system). The calculation of the funds – a lump sum of 1% of the direct project costs – is done automatically. A breakdown of the costs or a commitment to specific measures is *not* necessary at the time of application.

Please note: As this is additional funding, the application for Equal opportunity funds has *no* influence on the actual review process and the funding decision regarding your application.

### 4 Use of Equal opportunity funds

The project team can use their Equal opportunity funds in the course of their project flexibly as they see fit and depending on the needs of the project team. The use of Equal opportunity funds must be proven to the Foundation in the statement of account at the end of the project.

**Without consulting the foundation, the funds can be used for activities, such as**

#### **Childcare and care support**

- Child care support during workshops, conferences or field research
- Emergency/backup childcare, out-of-hours childcare
- Emergency/backup support for caring for relatives/partners in need of care
- Compensation for parental leave/caregiving services (e.g. hiring student assistants, upgrading a position if the parental leave replacement is in a higher pay grade)

#### **Travel and mobility support**

- Subsidies for accompanying care giver
- Travel expenses for children
- Barrier-free transport and accommodation
- Funds for visa applications for people from the so-called Global South (e.g. travel to visa offices, fees)

#### **Mentoring, coaching and career development**

- Participation in or organisation of anti-bias trainings, awareness workshops, DEI and gender sensitivity or anti-discrimination training
- Individual or group coaching directly related to the topic of 'equal opportunities'
- Participation in or establishment of mentoring networks for underrepresented groups

- Training courses on work-family balance; participation in specific programmes for women
- Leadership/career coaching
- Writing and presentation workshops
- Counselling services, psychosocial support for diversity-related reasons

#### **Language and communication support, inclusive communication**

- Professional editing for non-native speakers, e.g. for high-impact journals
- Accessible websites/materials
- Media and visibility initiatives
- Translations/editing to address or to make underrepresented groups visible
- Sign language interpreting at events

#### **Cultural and integration support**

- Intercultural training
- Cultural/language modules
- Measures for integrating non-German team members or those who are not fluent in English (e.g. including non-academic partners)

#### **Accessibility and assistive technologies**

- Technical aids/software
- Set-up of child-friendly facilities in institutions (e.g. playrooms, changing tables, mobile play modules)
- Additional requirements (technical and personnel) for people with disabilities, physical limitations or chronic illnesses

The use of funds for activities or measures not listed above must be approved by the foundation. Please contact your project manager. They will check whether the activity / measure can be approved by the foundation.

#### **Equal opportunities funds must not be used for activities such as**

- Standard measures that do not go beyond normal and expected activities within the scope of a funded project
- Purely financial subsidies
- Activities and measures without sufficient relevance to the topic of diversity and equal opportunities

- Activities and measures that do not explicitly benefit disadvantaged or underrepresented groups (this includes the allocation of funds to team members without respective needs).

### Further information

The foundation considers it a **matter of course** that the funds are used in accordance with its objectives—compensating for individual disadvantages and strengthening diversity in the scientific system. The measure(s) must go beyond normal and expected activities within the scope of a funded project and explicitly benefit disadvantaged groups or individuals (this also includes allocating funds to the team members with the greatest need(s)). For this reason, equal opportunity funds cannot be reallocated!

The use of Equal Opportunity Funds must be proven to the foundation. The proof must be provided in the same way and at the same time as for all other approved funding. Spending of Equal opportunity funds must also be detailed in the **statement of account**. Please keep receipts in case of a possible inspection.

## 5 Contact

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## 6 Further information

- [Website Volkswagen Foundation](#)
- [Equal opportunity funds website](#)