

## 2022 European Social Services Awards

### *Call for Applications*

The annual European Social Services Awards (ESSA) recognises outstanding achievements in social services, shining a spotlight on successful new approaches and the extraordinary ongoing work done by public social services managers, funders, planners, providers, and deliverers of social services.

As the sole Awards for social services in Europe, its aims are to:

- identify and promote best practices in social services
- recognise excellent work done in the field across Europe
- facilitate peers to work with and support each other in improving their practice.

This year will be the fourth edition of ESSA. Over the years, more than 250 applications have been made from 30 countries. The annual Awards Ceremonies have been attended by over 220 participants. In previous years, the ESSA has awarded projects in quality care, community care and resilience in social services.

### 1. Theme - ESSA 2022

From the ageing of populations to the increase in social inequalities, to the impact that climate change has on local communities, social services face many global challenges. Most recently, the Covid-19 pandemic and the invasion of Ukraine have intensified pressure for social services to modernise and adapt in order to meet newly emerging social needs. The response of public social services to these challenges has shown that innovation is at their heart and that they are indeed capable of transforming to ensure adequate and sustainable services that enable people to live independent and better-quality lives.

Therefore, the theme for the 2022 edition of the European Social Services Awards is **'Innovation for Social Change'**.

In this way, ESN wants to recognise the social services that have developed and implemented a new and innovative process, product, approach, model or programme that improves the services themselves or the lives of the populations they work with. This year's Awards will give visibility to social services at the forefront of social innovation developing new, creative and inspiring solutions to a structural challenge, a deep-rooted problem or an emerging need.

### 2. Who can apply?

Any organisation involved in social services that has a project related to the ESSA theme/categories and fits the general criteria may apply. Applicants may self-nominate.

### 3. General criteria

Applications must demonstrate:

- that the project is innovative for their respective context/environment
- that the project has a positive and sustainable impact

In addition, applicants must agree to the following rules:

- Each organisation may submit a maximum of 2 projects (use one application form per project) and only one per category.

- Applicants agree that their photographs, video images, and details of their project may be used by ESN for promotional purposes.

## 4. Categories

In order to recognise the diverse nature and responsibilities of social services, applications can be submitted in five categories.

We wish to acknowledge excellence in cities, hence this year we will be awarding the excellence award with a focus on '**cities innovation for social change**', selected from cities that apply in these five categories:

### Service Delivery

One of the main purposes of social innovation is to improve the lives of people in vulnerable situations using social means. This Award honours innovative approaches in the delivery of social services to provide better quality services that meet the needs of people who require care and support.

Specific examples of applications may include:

- innovations in the delivery of existing or new services or programmes for emerging need(s) or to respond to crises;
- plans to improve social services preparedness to address a future crisis;
- innovative outreach practices;
- improvements in the delivery process, such as an innovative practice in public procurement;
- outstanding effort made by the workforce to improve service.

### Workforce Support

Without a well-performing workforce, we cannot have well-performing social services. This category recognises innovations that profoundly impact the social services and care workforce in a positive manner.

Specific examples of applications may include:

- innovative recruitment and retention strategies;
- inclusive leadership and management programmes;
- new professional figures;
- training and development programmes;
- programmes that promote cooperation between professionals and sectors.

### Collaborative Practice

ESN strongly believes in the importance and value of collaboration between organisations, services and sectors, which are key to driving successful social innovation. This Award honours cooperative relationships between different levels of government, public agencies, services, third and private sector organisations through which they have led innovation in social services.

Specific examples may include:

- partnership frameworks that foster constructive collaborative processes;
- jointly set up service;

- an agency pooling services or professionals from across agencies, sectors or budgets;
- an integrated case management approach.

### Technology Tool

A key driver of social innovation is digitalisation and the development of new technology tools. On the one hand, this Award recognises technological and digital improvements that enable social services to improve their accessibility, usability by professionals and person using services, and their availability for those in need. On the other, it recognises projects that promote choice, personal autonomy and enable people to remain in their own homes.

Specific examples of applications may include

- new technology to help professionals in their decision-making process or their day-to-day work;
- digital platforms to support people access social services or digital support for people using social services;
- IT case management to better manage the specific situation of people using services;
- assisted living technologies for people to remain in their homes;
- new tools to improve communication with people using services.

### Research Project

Without a proper understanding of how a social problem arises, it can be difficult to come up with the right social innovation to address it. Backed with data, research provides this link to social services. This Award honours research that provides knowledge that led to the development of evidence-based innovative initiatives in social services.

Specific examples of applications may include

- a study carried out or guidance developed by social services;
- cost-benefits studies in social services;
- evaluation reports on the impact of programmes on social services;
- return on investment studies;
- randomised controlled trials (RCTs) in social services;
- social impact assessments in social services;
- research (projects) on the topic of social services innovation.

### Excellence Award: Cities Innovation for Social Change

Cities play a central role in enabling innovation due to the proximity of multiple and diverse stakeholders. Many of the social, environmental and economic challenges facing us today are exacerbated within urban areas, a pressure that often leads to greater innovation. With this headline award, ESN seeks to highlight the city that has risen to these challenges in the most innovative manner.

This prize will be awarded to a project from all the applications that cities submitted in the categories above.

## 5. How to Apply?

Applications are submitted via a questionnaire on SurveyMonkey supported by material that could also include:

- photographs showing evidence of the practice
- impact data, press clippings, external endorsements, or other relevant materials produced in the project

Apply for ESSA 2022 [here](#)

To help prepare your responses, you can find a PDF of the application form [here](#).

**The deadline to apply for ESSA is 15 July 2022**

NB: Each organisation may submit a maximum of 2 projects (use one application form per project) and only one per category.

## 6. Evaluation Process

The award winners are selected in a two-step scoring process that combines an:

1. Expert Judging Panel
2. Online Public Vote

Applications are first checked by ESN for completion and to ensure they respect the criteria. An expert judging panel then score the applications and create a shortlist for each category.

The panel is selected based on their strong experience in social service management, planning, funding, provision and research. The composition of the judging panel aims to reflect the diversity of the ESN community by achieving a balance of gender, countries, areas of social services, sectors, levels of government, seniority, and expertise of the theme.

In order to reflect the nature of ESN as a platform for the wider social services community as well as a network of experts, an online public vote will be held for all shortlisted applications that will be combined with the judges scores to determine the winners.

\* During the evaluation process, ESN or the judging panel may decide to assign the application to a different category and will inform the applicant accordingly.

## 7. Ceremony

The winners for the 2022 European Social Services Awards will be announced at the annual European Social Services Awards Ceremony, which will take place in Málaga (Spain) on 24 November. In order to be eligible to win an award, shortlisted applicant organisations must register a minimum of two representatives per organisation to attend the ceremony and cover their participation costs.

Participation costs are as follows:

€59 for ESN members:

€99 for non-members

## 8. Timeline

15 July	<b>Deadline to apply for ESSA 2022</b>
End of September	<b>Shortlisted applications announced</b>
Mid October	<b>Online public voting opens</b>
24 November	<b>ESSA 2022 Awards Ceremony, where winners will be announced</b>