

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

The National Lottery Small Grants Programme

Application Guidance Notes

Deadline for Applications: This is a rolling programme

Decisions: We will aim to make a decision within 2 months of receiving your application

Applications must be submitted on-line at www.artscouncil-ni.org/funding

Please Note: Due to the current demand for Small Grants funding, the maximum grant is unlikely to exceed £5,000.



**arts
council**
of Northern Ireland



Awarding funds from

The National Lottery[®]

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the National Lottery Small Grants Programme.

These guidance notes give information on who is eligible to apply to the programme and how to submit an application. It also describes how your application will be assessed, how decisions are made and what you will be asked to do if you are awarded a grant.

These Guidance Notes and the relevant application form are available on our website at [Arts Council of Northern Ireland Small Grants Programme | Arts Council NI \(opens in a new window\)](#). They may also be requested in large print or other accessible formats if required. Please contact us at artgrants@artscouncil-ni.org if you need further assistance in this regard, including alternative language versions. You can also contact us at that address if you have any queries about any aspect of the programme or its application requirements. Further contact details for all our Artform staff can be found on the Arts Council Website [Arts Council of Northern Ireland Contact Us \(opens in a new window\)](#).

In promoting these award schemes, the Arts Council particularly welcomes applications from groups referenced in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

About the Small Grants Programme

The Arts Council has designed this programme to encourage you to develop and deliver your ideas, linked to your artistic needs and to your future plans.

The aim of this programme is to assist organisations to deliver arts projects which contribute to the growth of arts in the community for new and existing audiences and which reflect the diversity of Northern Ireland's society and culture.

We want to support activities which benefit the people of Northern Ireland or that help arts organisations in Northern Ireland carry out their work.

All applications should fit within the objectives stated in the Council's five-year plan¹.

¹ [Arts Council Five-Year Plan \(opens in new window\)](#)

Eligibility

Who can apply?

We welcome applications from the widest possible range of organisations. Including,

- Registered charities and other organisations which cannot distribute profits
- Groups of organisations working together to deliver specific projects
- Formally constituted parent-teacher associations

You will be required to provide your governing document – such as a constitution - and your organisation must have a committee or board with at least two unrelated members - by unrelated we mean people who aren't family members, such as siblings, parents and children, married couples or civil partners or people living at the same address.

Who cannot apply?

- **Organisations currently in receipt of Arts Council funding from its Annual Funding or National Lottery Project Funding programmes**
- Individuals or Sole traders
- Commercial trading companies
- Companies that exist to distribute a profit or which are constituted to allow payment of dividends to non-asset-locked bodies
- Statutory authorities or organisations governed by statutory authorities i.e. NI Education Authority schools
- Organisations who are in breach of any previously issued ACNI award grant conditions

How much can you apply for?

You can apply for an award between £500 and £5,000 for any project. Please keep in mind that the amount of money available is limited and demand for funds is extremely high. It is not usually possible to fund all applications that simply meet the criteria or to fund the entirety of any given request.

You should be realistic in your expectations and budgets, and bear in mind that the Council may choose to fund specific elements of your proposal rather than the full proposal.

In exceptional circumstances, we will consider awards above £5,000; if you wish to make such an application, you **must** have discussed your proposal with the relevant artform Officer who will advise you on its eligibility. Please remember that if an Officer advises that your proposal is eligible for a grant in excess of £5,000 that does not guarantee that you will be funded to that level. If you are advised that your proposal cannot be considered exceptional, you may not apply for an amount in excess of £5,000 and your application will be deemed ineligible if you submit an application for more than that amount.

What you can apply for

You can apply for the following costs:

- Costs of artists/facilitator/tutors (including fees, accommodation, subsistence, travel).

Important Points

- If you know which artists/facilitator/tutors you are hiring for the project and you are seeking costs for their fees, you **must** supply the CVs of those named individuals you intend to hire.
- The maximum contribution ACNI will make towards artists/facilitator/tutor fees are set at the following rates:

£70 : Half Day

£125 : Full Day for 3 days or less

£545 : Full Week

You should keep these rates in mind when you are costing your project and calculating your request amount. Remember that you may not receive the full range of your request. For example, you may seek fees for 5 weeks of programme delivery, but may only be allocated costs for 4 weeks or less.

- Materials
- Travel expenses within Northern Ireland – *please note Arts Council has a maximum allowance of 25.7p per mile.*
- Equipment hire
- Volunteer expenses
- Venue hire for workshops, training, rehearsals and performance
- Publicity and marketing costs
- Participation, education and outreach work in film and media and film festivals.
- Equipment costs to a maximum value of 50% of your requested amount. Equipment items will only be considered if identified as essential within your project and where it is vital for its successful delivery. Arts Council will not fund equipment only projects. The equipment must be an essential element of your proposal.

What you cannot apply for

- Costs that will have been incurred before we make a decision on your application
- Travel to events outside Northern Ireland
- Events which promote religious or political views
- Commissioning projects²
- Musical instruments
- Hospitality/refreshments
- Merchandising costs

² The Arts Council provides a separate Commissioning Programme for such proposals.

Can you hold more than one award?

You can hold only one Small Grants Programme award at a time. An award is not finished until we receive your End of Project Report.

You will not be eligible to apply for another Small Grants Programme award where a previous award, if applicable, has not been completed.

How to apply

Help With Your Application

These Guidance Notes and the relevant application form are available on request in large print format and other accessible formats if required, and also on the Arts Council's website at [Arts Council of Northern Ireland Small Grants Programme | Arts Council NI \(opens in a new window\)](#).

If you have any queries about the programme or need any help or advice completing the application, please contact the Arts Council. A list of staff can be found on our website at [Arts Council of Northern Ireland Contact Us \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Making an application & mandatory enclosures

You **MUST** apply online. We will not accept applications in hard copy, by email or by fax.

Online applications may be edited, saved and returned to at any time until you submit. You **MUST** submit **ALL** mandatory enclosures associated with the application at the same time, i.e. at the point at which you submit your online application. The enclosures are listed within the online application and in the FAQs document.

The online application allows you to upload and attach the necessary enclosures to your application. **You must upload the following 2 mandatory enclosures** (and if you know which artists/facilitators/tutors/technical staff you intend to hire to deliver your project, **you must also upload their CVs**. See overleaf.)

- **Legal constitution** of the applicant organisation (this could also be a Memorandum and Articles of Association).
- **Detailed project budget** to include both income and expenditure associated with the proposed project.

The project budget must be balanced, i.e. there is no shortfall. If your total project cost is more than you have asked from us, please provide details of income (confirmed and anticipated).

You will be required to provide us with a breakdown of each activity (budget heading). You should provide a breakdown of any activity which costs over £1,000, eg artists fees, £1,500 – 5 artists at £300 each.

Further detail regarding our requirements is available in the FAQs document. A template project budget is available on our website.

IF you know which artists/facilitators/tutors/technical staff you intend to hire to deliver your project, you must also upload the following:

- CVs for the artists/facilitators/tutors - or technical staff you propose to employ as part of the project.

If you do not know who you intend to employ, and do not name or supply CVs for project staff, this may impact the overall decision on your application as the assessor will not be able to determine the quality of the project personnel.

Applicants must read the FAQs on the Small Grants Programme webpage for more detail on these enclosures. All such documents must be in Word, Excel or pdf format. We cannot accept documents in other formats. Total size of documents should not exceed 25 Mb.

All of the information you provide will be held on computer. This information will be used for the administration of applications and grants, for producing statistics and information on successful applicants. Remember to keep a copy of the completed form and enclosures for your own records.

When should you apply?

Decision meetings are normally held on a monthly basis, with the exception of August.

- You should apply at least two months before the start of your event (**applications which start within two months of the application date will not be accepted**)
- We will aim to make a decision within two months of receiving your application – however, we cannot guarantee this and therefore you must not rely on receiving an outcome within that timeframe.

First time applicants

If applying to the Arts Council's Small Grants Programme for the first time, we would request that you contact the relevant Artform Officer to discuss your proposal. Staff contact details are available from our website - [Arts Council of Northern Ireland Contact Us \(opens in new window\)](#)

After you submit an application

- The Arts Council will acknowledge receipt of the application.
- You will receive a Monitoring Form which will be published to your application account. You will receive an email advising you that the monitoring form is available for completion once it has been published to your account. You **must** complete and return the Monitoring Form by the timeframe specified as part of the application process. Failure to do so may affect eligibility.

- The Arts Council will undertake an eligibility check on your application. In the event of missing information, your application will be deemed as ineligible and will not proceed to assessment.
- The Arts Council will provide you with a unique reference number and the name of the Arts Development Officer who will be responsible for the application.
- All applications will be assessed by an Arts Development Officer against the criteria as listed below. Assessing Officers will consider applications using their professional judgement, based on the information provided within the application, knowledge of your organisation's track record (including management of any previous awards) where relevant, and knowledge of the wider arts landscape.

How we will make our decision

Assessment and decision-making process

- Applications are initially assessed against the following:
 - **Artistic Practice:** including quality of production, artists
 - **Public Benefit:** including under-represented local authority area and contribution to the growth of arts in the community
 - **Financial Viability:** including grant compliance history; value for money; partnership funding
 - **Project Management:** including appropriate planning and management
- In assessing your application, the assessor may also consider potential displacement of current ACNI-funded activity or duplication of activity in a region.
- Applications are moderated at a meeting attended by all assessing officers, chaired by a Director or the Head of Participatory Arts. This meeting will make decisions on applications.
- Decision meetings are normally held on a monthly basis with the exception of August.
- The Small Grants Programme budget is limited and so it is not always possible to fund all applications recommended by officers. Applications are scored via the assessment process and those achieving the highest scores will receive funding.
- The Arts Council will contact you with the final decision by letter issued via email.
- Successful applicants will be issued with a contract outlining the conditions attached to the award and the purposes for which the award can be used.
- If your application is rejected, the Council will provide you with detailed reasons for the rejection.

If you receive an award

Letter of offer

Following the decision, Arts Council will issue successful applicants with a contract outlining the conditions attached to the award and the specific purposes for which the award can be used.

- **You will not be able to start your project until you have met certain conditions of grant and received a letter of commencement from the Arts Council. You should take this into account when planning your proposal.**
- It is important that you read the letter of offer and enclosed conditions carefully before signing and returning it. The letter of offer will set out what you may spend the grant on and by what date the proposal must be completed.
- If after reading the letter of offer and enclosed conditions and you decide to accept the Arts Council's offer, please note the following:
 - Electronic signatures are acceptable on MS Word or PDF letter of offer documentation.
 - The Arts Council will also accept scanned copies of signed letters of offer.
 - However, photographs of signed letters of offer are not acceptable.
- Any artists, facilitators or staff hired to deliver the funded project must be formally contracted to do so, and your letter of offer will require submission of these contracts as evidence that the project has been appropriately managed.
- **If there are any changes to your project from the original application, you must inform the Arts Council immediately in writing before incurring any proposal expenditure.** If you don't tell us about changes you may have to repay the award, and this will affect decisions on any future applications you might make.

How payments will be made

Arts Council will make payments using BACS transfer only. You will need to complete and return the BACS form issued with your letter of offer.

Payments are normally made in two stages of 90% and 10%.

- The first payment of 90% will be made upon satisfactory receipt of documentation as set out in the letter of offer.
- The final payment of 10% will be made upon satisfactory receipt of End of Project Report, a full I&E account breaking down all project costs and other relevant documentation as stipulated in your LOO.

National Lottery funded projects are not permitted to generate a profit. In the event that your project realises a profit, Arts Council will not release all or some of the final payment and may also seek part or full recovery of the first payment made. This will be dependent on the profit realised.

Post-project monitoring

At the conclusion of your project, you will have to submit an End of Project Report and provide a final income and expenditure account for the project, in addition to evidencing the appropriate use of Arts Council and National Lottery branding throughout the course of project delivery.

Post-project monitoring – verification visits

Your project may also be subject to a Verification Visit. This will ensure that the project grant has been spent in accordance with your letter of offer and that all processes (eg. procurement, recruitment, processing of payments within your organisation) related to project delivery comply with LOO conditions and your own stated financial procedures. It is therefore important that you retain all the project documentation to evidence this.

Children / young people / adults at risk

Organisations that work with children, young people and adults at risk need to ensure that their safeguarding systems and procedures adhere to best practice. Please see the information below to consider in relation to your own organisation's procedures and note that you must agree a protection policy statement as part of your application form.

It is a requirement of our funding that any organisation which comes into contact with children, young people and adults at risk, either directly through its programmes or indirectly through its services, must commit to a Safeguarding Policy which must have been formally agreed by your organisation.

If your Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are older than three years, please review and update them to ensure your policy and procedures are in line with best practice and legislation relating to protection issues. If you are successful in obtaining a grant, the Arts Council may, as part of its monitoring processes, ask to see these documents during the incoming year.

Applicants are legally responsible for ensuring that the correct Safeguarding Systems and Processes are in place and must be registered with Access NI or Registered with an Umbrella Body in order to obtain Access NI checks for posts/roles that are in regulated activity. If your organisation is not registered in either case above, you MUST provide a statement detailing why this is the case here.

ACNI would strongly advise that you contact Access NI or Volunteer Now to discuss why you believe you do not require Registration to obtain Access NI checks in relation to your proposed project.

Equality of opportunity

It is a requirement of our funding that your organisation commits to equality of opportunity and good relations duty.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has a statutory duty under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between all Section 75 groups and you will note that you must agree an Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations policy statement as part of your application form.

Other information

Publicity

Full listings of all the grants we award are published in our Annual Report and on our website. You will be required to acknowledge Arts Council of Northern Ireland funding in all your publicity. Failure to credit the Arts Council of Northern Ireland will affect payment of your grant.

Openness and accountability

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 any information held by us (which will include your application) is potentially accessible by the public.

Information supplied by you will be held in manual files and on a computer-based grants management system. Reports from the information you supply and from comments made on your application by staff members and external assessors, where relevant, are also on both manual and computer-based systems. The information you supply will be made available to those assessing any grant applications you make.

By submitting your application you waive any right to raise any type of proceedings against the Arts Council of Northern Ireland as a consequence of, or in contemplation of, any disclosure of the contents of your application in response to an information request made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Data protection

Data held on our grants management system is used for all of the following purposes: statistical reporting, application assessing, accounting purposes and for contacting you.

The details of your grant will be public information (see Openness and Accountability). However, any personal details will be held within our grants management system and our electronic files, and accessed only by our staff, appointed auditors and individuals or organisations that may help us assess or monitor grants.

You have a right under the Data Protection Act 2018 to access the data held on you by Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

We view your signature on your application form as acceptance of the use of your data as outlined above.

Applying online/email notifications

Applications to the Small Grants Programme will only be accepted online.

The online application system has been tested and is sending out relevant notifications. We are, however, aware that some applicants to online grants programmes may experience issues such as the account holder not receiving links to reset passwords, not receiving notifications of when applications are edited and saved, nor when applications have been submitted. These issues

relate to those account holders with email addresses from the following email providers – btinternet, yahoo and virgin – and customised email addresses.

The potential issues lie with those email providers and are beyond the control of Arts Council; if encountered they need to be addressed by the relevant email provider.

Should you be affected by a problem which cannot be resolved with an email provider, we would strongly recommend that accounts are set up using Gmail or Outlook email addresses. Where applicants may have previous accounts with other email addresses, we will be able to transfer historical information to new accounts if required.

In addition, to avoid the blocking of any application-related emails or information, you should ensure that the addresses mail@grantapplication.com and mailuk@grantapplication.com will not be blocked by your email or firewall programmes.