



Information sheet



Grants for the arts – Libraries fund

This information sheet is for prospective applicants to the Grants for the arts Libraries fund, who will be applying from 1 July 2013. Please also read our 'How to apply guidance' before you submit your application. Download it from our website or contact us for a copy (enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk, 0845 300 6200). This information sheet complements the 'How to apply guidance', but does not replace it. If you wish to speak to a regional Relationship Manager before applying, you can contact them via our Enquiries team on 0845 300 6200.

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1 Background

On 1 October 2011 Arts Council England took over responsibility for supporting and developing libraries as part of the functions we inherited from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. Arts Council England's vision for libraries is that they inspire and empower people to lead active lives, enriched through cultural experience, and we have been working with the sector to explore ways we might support this.

As part of this vision we want to support public libraries to work in collaboration with the arts sector, to bring together each sector's complementary strengths to increase participation in arts and cultural activities.

Public library services are in a unique position to develop activities that engage their communities in an active and meaningful way, and their offer to their communities can be enhanced and enriched by the rich creative and cultural experiences that high quality arts activity can provide. Equally, the arts sector is able to learn from public libraries' wealth of knowledge about reaching their communities.

We envisage public library staff working alongside artists and arts organisations in their shared communities to develop a rich, wide-ranging arts and cultural offer that will extend audience reach and participation in both arts and library activities.

2 The programme

The Grants for the arts Libraries fund has been established to support public library-led projects that stimulate partnerships between libraries and artists and arts organisations, and which encourage communities to participate actively in artistic and cultural activities.

The Libraries fund is part of the Arts Council's Grants for the arts funding programme. It has a budget of £6 million to be allocated to activities between September 2012 and March 2015, and is accessible exclusively to projects led by public libraries in partnership with arts organisations.



Applications will be considered within the published Grants for the arts decision making framework, which looks at quality, public engagement, management and finance (please see the 'How to apply' online guidance or booklet for more information). Within this, we will place an emphasis on the specific outcomes we are hoping to encourage:

- **stimulating ambitious, innovative partnerships between libraries and arts organisations**
- **achieving artistic outcomes that enable communities to actively participate in artistic and cultural activities**

Applications can be for between £1,000 and £100,000 and can cover activities lasting up to three years. In special circumstances we can accept applications for grants over £100,000 for more major projects. You can apply only if you receive a letter from us agreeing to this beforehand. You must send this letter with your application.

3 Who can apply?

The lead applicant for applications to the Libraries Fund **must** be a public library, public library authority, network of public library authorities, or organisation managing a public library authority as defined under the Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964.

Other library structures (community libraries outside statutory provision, academic libraries, private libraries, for example) are not eligible to apply to this designated fund as a lead applicant. They may be a partner in an activity, as long as the lead applicant is a public library or library authority.

This is because the funds allocated to this programme are designated for supporting public libraries specifically.

Other types of library are still eligible to apply for support to Grants for the arts, though any grants made would not be from the Libraries fund, and they may



still find this guidance helpful in putting together an application for Grants for the arts.

Artists or arts organisations cannot apply as the lead applicant to this specific fund, but can continue to apply to Grants for the arts.

4 What we can and cannot consider funding

This fund is designed to support arts activities, i.e. time-limited arts projects with their own artistic aims and outcomes. We can consider funding a wide range of arts activities that support, enhance and enrich public libraries' core work, and develop libraries' role as a cultural provider in their communities.

Activity must be additional to public libraries' core work. We cannot fund work that a library service receives funding through the local authority to deliver.

We cannot fund non arts-related work through Grants for the arts. This is because Grants for the arts distributes lottery funds, and its licence to do so is currently restricted to arts activity.

We can consider funding activities involving any of the artforms that come under the Arts Council's remit: theatre, music, dance, literature, visual arts, and combined arts. We can consider funding a broad variety of activities, for example: festivals, exhibitions, workshop programmes, residencies, digital projects, performances, and so on.

Currently, the majority of applications we receive from library services or involving libraries mainly relate to literature and/or reader development activity. While applications for these types of activities will be welcome through the designated Libraries fund, we would also particularly welcome applications that involve artists and arts organisations working in other artforms, or across different artforms.

We would encourage prospective library service applicants to consider the variety of different roles that public libraries could play within a project, for example: a host for a residency, a commissioner of new work, curator of festival activity or exhibition, reading development organisation, or venue (or network of venues).

If you are unsure whether the activity you wish to apply for is eligible for support, please contact our Enquiries team on 0845 300 6200 or enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk.

5 Developing an application

There is a range of support available to library services as they develop their activities and the partnerships to support and deliver them.

We would encourage library applicants to contact the Relationship Manager in their region, who can advise on how to make contact with artists and arts organisations and on best practice for working in partnership with the arts sector.

We also publish a number of case studies of previous successful activity delivered by libraries, artists and arts organisations that demonstrate good practice, which may be helpful to applicants developing their own applications. These case studies can be found on our [website](#).

6 When and how to apply

The Grants for the arts Libraries fund is currently open for applications. Applications are made via the online Grants for the arts application portal, accessible from the Arts Council website, www.artscouncil.org.uk.

Grants for the arts (and the Libraries fund within it) is a continuous rolling programme with no deadlines. Applications can be made at any time.



We aim to reach a decision on applications for £15,000 or less within six weeks from submission, and on applications for more than £15,000 within 12 weeks. In peak periods when we are receiving a high volume of applications, it is possible that it may take us longer to reach a decision. If we are not able to meet our standard turnaround times we will notify applicants by email.

7 Eligibility

All applications to the Libraries fund will undergo a check for eligibility before being considered for funding.

The standard eligibility criteria for Grants for the arts apply to all applications to the Libraries Fund. Please see the 'How to apply' online guidance for a full list of the eligibility criteria (<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-for-funding/grants-for-the-arts/how-to-apply/>).

Key eligibility points for public library applicants to note include:

- we can only fund arts-related activities
- we expect at least 10 per cent of the total cost of the activity to come from other sources (see below on partnership funding)
- we cannot fund activities retrospectively (that is, we are unable to fund activities, including buying goods or services, which take place or start before we are able to reach a decision about your application)
- we can only fund activities that engage the public
- we cannot fund ongoing overhead costs that are already paid for by other income (eg local authority income)

In addition, the Grants for the arts Libraries fund is only open to public libraries, library authorities, network of public library authorities, or organisation managing a public library authority as defined under the Public Libraries & Museums Act 1964. If any other type of organisation is listed as the lead applicant on an application to the Libraries fund, it will not be eligible for consideration.

8 Your project title

Applications to the Grants for the arts Libraries fund are made through the online portal, and we need to be able to identify them easily when they are submitted.

In the section of the online application form called 'Description of the activity', we ask: *'What is the name or working title of the activity you are applying to do?'*

Libraries applicants should give the name of their activity, followed by the suffix (Libraries fund), e.g.:

<i>Artist in residence project at Newtown Libraries (Libraries fund)</i>
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9 Completing your application

Applications to the Libraries Fund are made via the Grants for the arts online application portal. The online application form includes a number of questions about your activity and your organisation and a budget section.

There is detailed advice about filling in the application form in the 'How to apply' online guidance or booklet, but there are some specific issues that Libraries applicants should consider in detail when making an application:

Level of detail

Grants for the arts is an evidence-based process and applications should not rely on any assumed knowledge. The more information that an applicant can give us that evidences that the activity is well planned, will have good artistic outcomes, is financially sound and will engage people successfully (plans, the reasoning behind decisions made, timelines for the activity, target audiences, marketing plans), the better. Supporting documents can be uploaded with your application (a maximum of one document if you are applying for £15,000

or less, and a maximum of three documents if you are applying for more than £15,000), but the application form should contain all the main information about your project.

Even provisional plans are helpful to allow us to see an applicant's thinking, for example a draft programme for a festival. See our ['Understanding how we appraise your application'](#) information sheet on our website to get a sense of the level of information we need to complete our decision making process.

Artistic quality

With their wider cultural and community offers, library services may be more familiar with articulating the educational, social or wellbeing-related outcomes of a project than its artistic outcomes.

Grants for the arts funds can only be used to support arts activity, and we would ask Libraries fund applicants to think carefully about the specific artistic aims and outcomes of their proposed activity, and how they will articulate these in their application. We appreciate that library-led arts projects may often also deliver against other agendas (health, wellbeing, literacy, and so on) but can only consider funding activities where the aims and outcomes are mainly artistic, and are described clearly in the application.

What do we mean by artistic aims and outcomes?

We want to see that the main aims of the activity are clearly related to artistic development. This could be demonstrated, for example, through:

- delivering a programme of work that will allow audiences/participants to experience high-quality artistic work (a festival programme, an exhibition, or series of events for example. This could also include activity such as reading promotion programmes that provide a framework for participants to experience literary work. Please see section 11 below for more information on [Reading activities](#));
- providing opportunities for participants in an activity to develop their own artistic skills and/or produce their own artistic work (for example through taking part in workshop activity);

- offering artistic development opportunities to artists through activities such as residencies or commissioning new work;
- providing opportunities for using the arts in new contexts.

We will look at how you propose to realise your artistic aims in a high quality way to achieve strong artistic outcomes for audiences or participants.

For example, we want to know why an applicant has selected the artists or organisations they've chosen to work with; this might be related to their expertise in working with a specific group of people, or the high artistic quality of their work.

We look for evidence that a project will deliver an excellent quality of experience for participants. This is about showing that the needs of the target audience have been considered, and that the artistic experience they will have is good quality in context. This might be participatory work, for example, or work in a community context led by artists or experienced creative facilitators.

For libraries applicants unfamiliar with how we consider the quality of projects, it may be helpful to refer to our information sheet called '[Understanding how we appraise your application](#)', available on the Guidance sheets section of our website

Example

Bristol City Council received £9,100 towards the 'Yardstick' project, a partnership between Bristol, Bath and East Somerset Libraries that aimed to showcase African and African Caribbean writing, and to develop the skills of local writers from diverse backgrounds. The project included a programme of five author talks from professional literary writers (novelists and poets), and one workshop with a high profile author. The writers that the applicants had chosen to work with all had strong artistic track records. The application clearly articulated its artistic aim to develop and broaden engagement with high quality, diverse literary work, and to encourage participation in creative writing activity by new writers from diverse backgrounds. Key artistic outcomes for participants in the workshop activity included the opportunity for new and emerging writers of diverse backgrounds to work closely with a professional writer to develop their creative writing skills.

Partnership working

Partnership working is particularly key to achieving the desired outcomes of the Libraries fund. We will be looking to see that any proposed activity is supported by appropriate partnerships, as we are aiming to stimulate mutually beneficial partnerships between arts organisations and libraries to achieve strong outcomes for both sectors.

We will be looking to see that strong partnerships are in place to support the development and delivery of the activity, and that the roles and responsibilities of all partners are clearly defined. We want to see evidence that partnerships have been carefully considered, and that all parties are committed to the project. You could include evidence of this with your application, for example letters of support from partner artists/arts organisations.

Arts sector partners might be fully involved with the initial development of the project right from concept stage, for example, or might lead on specific aspects of an activity (audience development or artistic programming, for example) in which they are specialists.

Partners might be individuals or organisations. They might be locally based or might have a more national remit. For advice on best practice around working in partnership, contact a relationship manager via our enquiries team on 0845 300 6200 or enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk.

The application form includes a dedicated section where you can tell us about your partners.



Example

Cartwheel Arts, an experienced participatory arts organisation based in Rochdale, received £60,000 towards their Tell Us Another One community literature project, designed to engage the culturally diverse local communities of Rochdale, Bury and Oldham. Incorporating monthly 'Story Groups' for adults in libraries across the three boroughs, showcase performances and a quarterly publication, this project is a strong example of what can be achieved when organisations pool funding, resources and expertise (in this case Arts Council England through the Grants for the arts scheme, the Big Lottery Fund, Bury, Oldham and Rochdale councils and their library staff, and Cartwheel Arts' participatory arts expertise and strong links with North-based writers). Cartwheel Arts and participating libraries were able to run a richer programme than would have been possible if they had been working alone.

(Please note that this project was funded through our wider Grants for the arts programme, so Cartwheel Arts were able to act as the main applicant for the project.)

Engagement

One of public library services' great strengths is their knowledge of the needs of their communities, and their experience in reaching and engaging those diverse communities. Encouraging active participation in arts activities is key to the desired outcomes of this fund, which aims to support activities that connect libraries, communities and arts organisations. We believe that by bringing together the strengths of the public library and arts sectors through collaboration, we can enhance communities' experience of both the arts and of libraries.

Library applicants should ensure that they sufficiently articulate the engagement aspect of their activities. Applicants should consider, for example:

- the target audiences for the activity
- how have communities been involved in the planning of the activity?
- the participant experience – how will participants have an excellent artistic experience?
- how will the activity have a legacy for participants?
- audience development – is an activity designed to engage new or specific audiences (hard-to-reach groups, for example)?
- how will the activity be marketed?

Example

Stellar Libraries received £86,000 for support towards its new pan-London City Read initiative, piloting in 2012 and 2013 in partnership with all 33 of London's library authorities. One book is selected as the basis for a city-wide programme of events, initiatives and commissions, all designed to encourage different audience sectors to engage with the text in different ways. 2012's text was *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens. Their application was particularly strong in demonstrating the range of different ways that audiences could engage with the programme, what their experience would be, and how new audiences who do not usually engage with the arts could be reached utilising each participating library authority's local expertise.

(Please note that this project was funded through our wider Grants for the arts programme, so Stellar Libraries were able to act as the main applicant for the project.)

10 Budget

There is guidance on completing a project budget in the ['Example budgets'](#) information sheet.

Grants for the arts requires applicants to demonstrate that a minimum of 10 per cent of the overall budget has been supplied by sources other than the Arts Council. This is often called 'match funding' or 'partnership funding'. This can be made up of cash support, in kind support, or a mixture of the two.

Usually, we would expect local authority applicants to show higher levels of match funding than the minimum 10 per cent. We appreciate that library services may not always be in a strong position to secure high levels of external cash support and we use discretion when applying this guidance.

However, library applicants should consider the types of in-kind support available to them, and how they might effectively represent this in their budget. In-kind support is goods or services that an applicant would usually have to pay for and is a legitimate project expense, but one that has been secured for free. This might be venue hire or marketing support time, for example.



11 Further guidance on specific types of activity

11.1 Reading activities

Libraries can apply for the development and delivery of projects that support access to reading for pleasure for individuals and communities. Projects might include reading group activity, events, workshops, residencies and promotions. They might also help readers to enjoy and engage with a diverse range of literature. When we are considering applications for reading development activity for quality, we prioritise projects that promote the reading of literary fiction, poetry and work in translation.

Libraries can apply for more generic reading development work as well as that targeting specific audiences, such as children and young people or communities requiring access support, e.g. emergent readers or those not yet comfortable with reading for pleasure.

It is important to note that our grants must be allocated to arts activity. Applications for reading development activity must tell us how the activity will lead to **more people reading literary work for pleasure**, either immediately or in the longer term.

While improved literacy is a clear positive outcome of this type of project, we need to see the artistic aims and outcomes of the project – focused on literary work – to be able to consider it for funding.

A project might be designed to offer an accessible ‘way in’ to reading with a longer-term aim to build emergent readers up to enjoying literary work, for example. Applicants need to articulate this pathway approach and their reasoning clearly, if this is the case.

Reading-related projects focusing solely on non-fiction may struggle to score well against Grants for the arts criteria.



Example

Poetry on Loan, an association formed by the West Midlands' 14 library authorities to promote the reading and writing of contemporary poetry through the public library network, received £37,694 towards two years of activity. The project included strong plans for running poetry workshops; setting up Poet Laureate and Young Poet Laureate schemes; commissioning new work from regional poets; promoting contemporary poetry to new readers; presenting live poetry events; and training library staff to promote contemporary poetry confidently. The application focused very clearly on its aim to strengthen engagement with high quality contemporary poetry, and included lots of opportunities for participants to engage on different levels. The artists that Poetry on Loan had chosen to work with had very strong artistic backgrounds.

11.2 Work with, by or for children and young people

Library services may apply to the Libraries fund for activity focusing on engaging children and young people. We would encourage applicants to read our guidance sheet on [Children & Young People and Learning](#) that outlines some principles of best practice, and to contact their regional 'bridge' organisation where appropriate.

The Arts Council funds a network of 10 'bridge' organisations (as part of the national portfolio) that use their experience and expertise to connect schools and communities with national portfolio organisations and others in the cultural sector, including libraries and museums. Library services can contact a relationship manager via our enquiries team on 0845 300 6200 to find out more about working with their regional bridge organisation. More information and a list of bridge organisations can be found [here](#).

There are also many arts organisations that specialise in working with children and young people. You may wish to contact a relationship manager to discuss ways you might make links with these organisations to develop projects.

Example

Dv8 Training Ltd received £33,750 to deliver a series of spoken word workshops for 75 young people across six London boroughs. The workshops were delivered by Artists in Residence placed in libraries in each borough, aiming to engage with hard-to-reach young people and local communities. Dv8 worked in partnership with the National Portfolio-funded organisation Small Green Shoots, who are a sector facilitation organisation with a specialist focus on reaching young people. Outcomes for the young people taking part included the opportunity to work closely with poets and musicians, and to develop and perform their own artistic work.

(Please note that this project was funded through our wider Grants for the arts programme, so Dv8 Training were able to act as the main applicant for the project.)

11.3 Digital activity

Libraries might wish to consider making an application for projects with a digital focus. This might be an activity that supports and enhances the distribution or reach of the arts, or a creative project that makes use of digital technology.

We view projects with a digital focus against the same criteria as all other applications, with an emphasis on the project's impact for the wider arts sector and audiences. Even if a digital project is technologically innovative, it is important that applicants also clearly demonstrate the artistic quality of the proposed activity.

The digital sector is constantly developing both technologically and artistically. Applicants should demonstrate that they have thoroughly researched the area their project is happening in (social networking or smartphone applications, for example), current arts-related provision in that area, if appropriate, and how their project develops what is already available.

Applicants should also show that they are working in collaboration with appropriate project partners.

11.4 Heritage-related activity

Public libraries often have strong links with their communities' heritage, with some holding historical collections and resources or co-located with museum and archive organisations. Grants for the arts prioritises contemporary artistic practice and developing the work of, and



engagement with the work of, living artists. This is because our lottery funding is allocated to spending on arts activity, and there are other lottery distributing bodies that fund heritage-focused projects.

However, we do encourage activities that make links between contemporary art and heritage material, for example, museum collections, local history collections, oral history collections, and so on.

For example:

- new artistic commissions, residencies, workshop programmes and other arts activities responding to historical material or collections
- exhibitions showing contemporary art alongside historic work
- acquiring new contemporary work which has a strong dialogue with historic collections

If you are unsure whether the activity you wish to apply for is eligible for support, please contact our enquiries team on 0845 300 6200 or enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk.

Example

An example from the museums and archives sector helps to demonstrate our approach to funding heritage-related projects. untoldLondon received £9,200 towards the Write Queer London project, which aimed to uncover the hidden LGBT significance of items in the collections of a range of museums and institutions (British Library, Islington Museum, Museum of London, and the London Metropolitan Archive), then use these items as a catalyst for writer-led creative writing workshops that the public could attend for free to develop their own creative work. A literary competition on the untoldLondon theme was held, and new works of poetry were commissioned from the workshop facilitators. Very high quality writers of fiction, poetry and drama were engaged to deliver the workshops, which were supported by curator talks.

12 Application checklist

- are you a public library/library authority/organisation managing a public library authority?
- have you read all of the 'How to apply' guidance?
- have you filled in all the sections of the application form?
- have you used the suffix (Libraries fund) in the name of your activity?

13 Contact us

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