

ARTS COUNCIL OF NORTHERN IRELAND

ANNUAL FUNDING PROGRAMME 2018/19

GUIDANCE NOTES

**PLEASE READ THESE NOTES CAREFULLY
AS THERE ARE A NUMBER OF CHANGES TO
THE PROGRAMME**

Deadline for receipt of applications:
4.00 pm on THURSDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2017

Guidance Notes and relevant application form are available on request in large print format, disk and audio tape and also on the Arts Council's website: <http://www.artscouncil-ni.org>

The arts sector is, once again, facing a financially challenging year so please read these notes carefully before filling in the application form. It should be noted that all grants made under this programme are only guaranteed on the basis that the Arts Council continues to receive sufficient Exchequer funds from the Department for Communities and, in the case of Lottery funding, from the Department for Culture, Media & Sport.

The notes provide general information on who can apply and the criteria which attach to the programme. It also tells you how your application will be assessed, how long it will take, how payments will be made and what you will be asked to do if you are awarded a grant.

INTRODUCTION

The Arts Council's Annual Funding Programme has been independently reviewed by the Strategic Investment Board to ensure strategic alignment with the draft Programme for Government (PfG) 2016-2021 and the Minister's emerging Strategy for Culture and Arts (2016-26).

The report verified that AFP funded organizations and partners can help the Arts Council to deliver effectively against the PfG.

The Arts Council will monitor and report to the Department for Communities on the outcomes from the AFP to ensure strategic alignment broader government strategy and that of the Department for Communities as well as the Arts Council's own 5-year plan.

The over-riding aim of the Arts Council's Annual Funding Programme is to support Northern Ireland's arts infrastructure through grants to organisations in all artforms and practices for their **core and programming** costs.

Organisations receiving support must demonstrate that they require a year-round resource and should apply for their complete programme for the year.

All applications should fit within the objectives stated in the Council's five year plan and within its artform policies. Both the five year plan *Ambitions for the Arts* and the artform policies are available on the website www.artscouncil-ni.org and you should read these before completing the application form.

This programme is not designed for organisations planning short term or fixed term projects, or single or one-off annual events. The Arts Council has a number of other programmes through which it assists these types of projects. You should consult with Arts Council staff about these alternative programmes: *Small Grants Programme*; *Lottery Project Funding programme*.

Individuals should consult with Arts Council staff about the Arts Council's *Support for Individual Artists Programme*.

SECTION 1

How will the 2018/19 Annual Funding Programme work?

The programme is divided into 2 distinct elements – core and programming. All applicants must complete both elements of the application and it is anticipated that clients will receive funding from both Exchequer and Lottery sources.

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|------|--------------------------|---|
| (i) | Core costs | These costs will be met from Exchequer funds |
| (ii) | Programming costs | These costs will be met from Lottery funds |

If awarded there can be no movement between the core and programming elements.

SECTION 2

Who can apply?

- Non-profit distributing organisations which can demonstrate they require a year-round resource to deliver the programme
- Commercial organisations can only apply for support if the proposed programme is primarily for the benefit of the public and where there are plans to re-invest any surplus into a similar programme.
- **ALL** organisations must have received at least £10,000 in one of the last three financial years from the Arts Council (2017/18, 2016/17 or 2015/16).

Who cannot apply?

- Local Authorities
- Statutory bodies for activities which fall within their statutory remit
- Individuals
- Broadcasters
- Central Government Departments
- Organisations which have not received at least £10,000 in one of the last three financial years.

What can you apply for?

You may apply for one-year funding only. You can decide what you think is an appropriate sum to apply for. However, if you already receive annual funding from us, please be advised that we do not expect to be funding you more than you received in 2017/18. Some organisations may find that their grant remains the same; some may find it is reduced and we may be unable to fund some organisations.

In exceptional circumstances we may consider uplifts to funding, where the scale of ambition increases proportionately and if there is evidence that our additional investment will lever additional match funding. If you decide to apply for more money, make sure your plans are scalable so we can see the impact of various levels of funding.

Please be aware that if you are awarded more money, other applicants will receive less.

Core costs:

Administrative salaries
Rent and Rates
Light and Heat
Maintenance, security, etc.
Telephone and Fax
Printing, postage, stationery
Financial costs
Insurance

Programming costs: eg.

Artists' costs
Volunteer expenses
Audience Development plans
Publicity/Marketing (excluding catering/merchandising)
Transportation
Travel, Accommodation, Subsistence
Equipment/Materials
Access/participation plans

Premium Payment

Within the overall grant a payment of up to £3,000 each year is available for successful applicants who can clearly demonstrate that additional costs, such as sign language provision, translation and carers' costs are associated with the delivery of their project to defined categories under Section 75 of The Northern Ireland Act 1998.

How you can apply

You may only apply online. We will not accept applications in hard copy or by email.

Online applications may be edited, saved and returned up to the closing date. You can return both parts of the application separately **but you MUST submit ALL** documents associated with each part of the application at the same time.

All 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.

Please ensure that you leave sufficient time to upload all documents to the system as there can be long delays as the closing deadline approaches and the system will shut down at 4.00 pm on the closing date. If your complete application is not uploaded when the system closes your application will not be accepted.

It is your responsibility to ensure that we receive the application form and documents by the closing time and date.

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.

Reducing Bureaucracy (This section does not apply to applicants based outside Northern Ireland)

As part of Government's Reducing Bureaucracy programme you are required to upload a number of master documents to the Government Funding Database. Some organisations in receipt of Arts Council Exchequer funds are already registered with this database and have a Unique Reference Number; others will be required to register prior to the application being assessed. Once uploaded these documents will exist for all applications you make to any Government Department and you will not be required to submit them with individual applications, including future applications to the Arts Council.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the most recent documents are uploaded to the site.

If you are not currently on the Database you will be required to register at <https://govfundingpublic.nics.gov.uk/> .

Full instructions for uploading documents are available on the Arts Council's website at the bottom of this webpage: <http://artscouncil-ni.org/funding/scheme/annual-funding-programme> .

SECTION 3: CRITERIA FOR DECISION MAKING

Through this programme we wish to support organisations that help meet our strategic objectives (see the Arts Council's strategic plan - <http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/Ambitions-for-the-Arts-5-Year-Strategy.pdf> . The following criteria have been designed to underpin many of those objectives. We will assess your programme against these.

It is very important that you think carefully about how your programme satisfies the criteria and use the application form to demonstrate this. Your programme **must meet all criteria**. Each criterion will be assessed against a set of descriptors available on the website <http://artscouncil-ni.org/funding/scheme/annual-funding-programme> Please read these carefully to ensure you address the descriptors in your project description.

Criterion 1 - Quality of Artistic Activity:

This criterion will be assessed using the information provided in the detailed project description

Criterion 2 - Public Benefit: This criterion will be assessed using the information provided in the detailed project description and in question 1.3 of the programming application.

Criterion 3 - Quality of Management and Financial Probity/Viability: This criterion will be assessed from our previous knowledge of the organisation, its minutes, strategic and business plans, mandatory documents and responses to Section 3 in the core costs application form.

If you require assistance with any aspect of the application, please contact the relevant Arts Development Officer in the first instance.

Detailed Project Description

In your detailed project description we will be looking for evidence of

- The artistic programme, highlighting significant events
- Programme partnerships
- Intended audiences and how you will engage them

Within this document **do not** repeat any information that is contained within the application form itself or within the detailed budget

- If you apply for £1,000,000 or more your detailed project description should be no more than 10,000 words. Any additional words will be discounted.
- If you are applying for between £200,000 and £999,999 your detailed project description should be no more than 8,000 words. Any additional words will be discounted
- If you are applying for between £100,000 and £199,999 your detailed project description should be no more than 6,000 words. Any additional words will be discounted
- If you are applying for between £50,000 and £99,999 your detailed project description should be no more than 4,000 words. Any additional words will be discounted
- If you are applying for between £25,000 and £49,999 your detailed project description should be no more than 2,000 words. Any additional words will be discounted
- If you are applying for less than £25,000 your detailed project description should be no more than 1,000 words. Any additional words will be discounted

SECTION 4: ASSESSMENT AND DECISION-MAKING

Each application passes through a series of moderation stages before being presented to the Board of the Arts Council for final decision.

Ambitions for the Arts

We will look across the complete range of applications received and consider how they best help the Arts Council to deliver its strategic plan and artform policies, and specifically how they contribute to our ambitions to:

- Make excellent art accessible to all

- Deliver benefits to our community
- Build partnerships

Moderation 1

Each application is assessed against the 3 main criteria receiving a ranking of High, Medium or Low using a set of descriptors relevant to each artform/practice. These descriptors are published on the website at <http://www.artscouncil-ni.org>. All applications must receive at least 3 Medium rankings against the 3 main criteria to proceed to next stage.

Moderation 2

In the second stage of our process we will decide how well each applicant fits into a balanced portfolio of funded organisations. In doing this, we will look at a range of areas and consider if we are achieving an appropriate spread of investment across the arts.

We will use a set of balancing criteria to provide a framework against which we will make an informed, but discretionary, judgment about how each organisation contributes to a portfolio of annually funded organisations. These are set out below:

- A. Range of artforms:** we want to support a range of artforms and a diversity of artistic practices. Artists and arts organisations often work across and between different artforms. However, we group the organisations we fund into a number of artform areas in order to help us consider how we are investing in different parts of the sector: architecture, community arts, circus, carnival, craft, dance, drama, festivals, literature, music, opera, traditional arts, venues, visual arts, voluntary health, disability and youth.
- B. Geographical spread:** we will take into account the need to support work by a range of funded organisations across the whole of Northern Ireland. We will consider how some organisations work intensively within their own local authority area and how some have a reach and impact beyond. Others may tour widely. We will take into account the potential reach of the Annual Funding Programme as a whole and we will be particularly interested in how organisations plan to reach areas with low arts engagement.
- C. Size and type:** we want to invest in an appropriate mix of sizes and types of organisation. This includes, for example, considering an appropriate balance of community based organisations, arts venues, umbrella bodies, touring companies, and other types of organisations. We will consider the potential of organisations to merge with similar bodies to achieve efficiencies and avoid duplication of provision.
- D. Risk:** we will take into account the level of financial risk to our investment across the Annual Funding programme

Moderation 3

Taking into account the outcomes of Moderation 2, this meeting will make financial recommendations, based on the detail of the submitted budgets and in light of resources available.

Final Decision

All financial recommendations will be considered by the Board of the Council which makes the final decision, subject to the Council knowing its 2018/19 budget at that stage.

SECTION 5: PROCESS

- We will acknowledge receipt of the application form.
- The application will be assigned to an Arts Development Officer who, along with an Assistant Arts Development Officer, will be responsible for the assessment process. This process will be based on the information contained in the application form and enclosures, as well as your organisation's performance in the current and previous financial years.
- You may be contacted for additional information following the initial checking of the application.
- Officer assessments will be subject to the moderation process described above.
- Moderation meetings are attended by all assessing officers, Directors and the Chief Executive. Board members also attend in the role of observer.
- The application will be presented to the Board of the Council for a final decision in Feb/March 2018.
- You will be contacted in writing with our final decision. If your application is rejected, we will provide you with detailed reasons for the rejection.

Is the decision final?

We operate a review procedure. If you are of the view that a funding decision is flawed on the basis that we failed to follow our own procedures or that our procedures were deficient, you can formally request a review of the funding decision.

SECTION 6: HOW WILL PAYMENT BE MADE?

Organisations will receive payment of the award in stages. A percentage of the award will be withheld until the programme is completed and an End of Year Report has been received (see Post-Decision Monitoring).

SECTION 7: POST-DECISION REQUIREMENTS, MONITORING and EVALUATION

During the life of the award you will be required to meet regularly with, and provide reports to, your Arts Development Officer. At the end of the year you will have to submit reports as part of the Annual Funding Survey, in a standard format. You can complete this survey on-line via the Arts Council website.

Monitoring

The aims of the monitoring process are to:

- Set and agree targets to be achieved by you in return for funding from the Arts Council;
- Gather sufficient information to determine whether or not the objectives and targets have been met by you;
- Use the information to make decisions as to whether to continue funding you and at what level;
- Use the information to make the case for the arts to Government.

The objectives and targets will differ between arts sectors and individual organisations. However, there are a number of elements in all organisations which are so significant they will be monitored in all cases.

- Delivery of objectives/targets as outlined in the application form
- Quality of product and/or activity
- Organisational Governance
- Financial Management

Arts Council officers or independent artistic assessors, appointed by the Arts Council, will attend events/projects during the year to assess the quality of your organisation's work. Independent assessors' reports will be made available to your organisation.