



Covid Recovery Programme for Arts Organisations

**THE PROGRAMME WILL BE OPEN FROM FRIDAY 7 JANUARY
2022**

CLOSING DATE 12 noon on Friday 28 JANUARY 2022

**WE WILL AIM TO COMMUNICATE DECISIONS
By END OF MARCH 2022**

We will only accept online applications

**Please Note:
The maximum award available is £50,000¹**

**Please read these Guidance Notes and FAQs before
completing and submitting your Application Form**

¹ In exceptional circumstances, the Arts Council will consider requests for a larger award. In this case, you must contact the Arts Council prior to submitting an application. Where an organisation fails to consult with the Arts Council in advance of submitting an application for a greater amount, the £50,000 funding limit shall apply.

INTRODUCTION

The Executive and the Minister for Communities, Deirdre Hargey MLA, have provided Covid recovery funding for arts organisations and a range of other not-for-profit organisations.

The aim of the Covid Recovery Programme for Arts Organisations **is to reduce or remove operating deficits in eligible organisations, which have arisen in the 2021/22 financial year because of the Covid pandemic.**

To achieve this the Covid Recovery Programme for Arts Organisations will support eligible organisations which have been negatively affected by the pandemic in the financial year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and which have a financial operating deficit during that period which is attributable in full or in part to Covid.

We will open for applications at 2pm on Friday 7 January 2022. We will close for completed applications at 12noon on Friday 28 January 2022.

Available Funding

The maximum amount of funding available to an eligible organisation under this Programme is £50,000.

Exceptionally, a greater amount of funding may be available to eligible organisations that can demonstrate that the **deficit attributable to Covid** in the financial year is greater than £50,000 and that the organisation requires funding in excess of that sum to stabilise financially.

In the event that the proposed awards exceed available funding, those organisations with the largest² operating deficits will get priority.

Organisations applying for more than £50,000 must make contact with the Arts Council before doing so.

² Deficit expressed as a percentage of income in the financial year 2021/22.

Where an organisation fails to consult with the Arts Council in advance of submitting an application for a greater amount, the £50,000 funding limit shall apply.

In meeting need this Programme is also consistent with the three major themes of the Arts Council strategy

The Programme is also consistent with the three Outcomes of the Programme for Government, as identified for the arts sector.

ORGANISATION PROGRAMME DETAILS

Policy Objective

To help organisations recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

Funding Priority

The funding priority of the Programme is to remove or reduce operating deficits for the period **1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.**

As stated above, in the event that the proposed awards exceed available funding, those organisations with the largest operating deficits will get priority.

ELIGIBILITY

WHO CAN APPLY

Applications are welcome from:

- Constituted organisations/companies whose primary purpose relates to the categories below and which carry out the majority of their work in Northern Ireland.
- Arts, cultural and community venues' main use must be for one of the categories below.
- Arts, culture and community organisations whose primary role is to create, present or support one (or more) of these categories:
 - Dance
 - Drama
 - Literature
 - Music and Opera
 - Traditional Arts
 - Visual Arts
 - Performing arts and theatre
 - Festivals and cultural events
 - Participatory Arts
 - Circus, Street Theatre and Carnival
 - Comedy
 - Cross Art form
 - Community Arts
 - Craft

Please use the Eligibility Checklist on our website to determine if it is appropriate that you apply to the Covid Recovery Programme for Arts Organisations. The Eligibility Checklist is available [here](#).

WHO CANNOT SUBMIT AN APPLICATION?

- Applicants who have operating deficits of **less than £10,000** – please use the Financial Overview Template (Annex A) to determine level of deficit and your eligibility to apply to this Programme. ***Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions for more detail.***
- Applicants whose projected deficit is **less than** your pre-Covid deficit – please use the Financial Overview Template (Annex A) to determine level of deficit and your eligibility to apply to this Programme.
- Individuals including sole traders
- Commercial (profit distributing) organisations
- Broadcasters (excluding community service broadcasters)
- Central Government Departments
- Applicants who are applying to the Covid Recovery Programmes for sport, languages, heritage, charities and social enterprises funded by the Department for Communities
- Local Councils
- Creative Industries in the following segments:
 - Advertising and Marketing
 - Architecture
 - Independent Cinema
 - IT, Software and Computer Services
 - Museums and Libraries
 - Product Design, Fashion Design, and Graphic Design;
 - TV, Video, Photography, Film, and Radio;

PROGRAMME CRITERIA

Applications to the Programme must meet the Programme's criteria relating to 'Organisational Purpose' and 'Financial Viability' as detailed below:

1. Organisational purpose

- Evidence that the organisation's primary role is to create, present or support one (or more) of the defined categories.
- Evidence of the organisation's contribution to public good.

2. Financial viability based on presentation of financial information

- Financial accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020
- Financial accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021
- Management accounts for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 November 2021 (or most recent if available)
- Projected management accounts up to 31 March 2022
- Reserves Policy Statement
- Bank statements from 1 April 2021 to 30 November 2021
- Details of your operating deficit from 1 April 2021 to 30 November 2021 and projected operating deficit from 1 December 2021 to 31 March 2022 because of Covid.
- Any other evidence deemed appropriate to make a reasoned assessment of entitlement, e.g. such as loans

HOW MANY APPLICATIONS CAN YOU SUBMIT?

You may submit only **one** application.

WHAT CAN YOU REQUEST?

Eligible costs

You may only apply for your operating deficits for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

AVAILABLE FUNDING

The maximum amount of funding normally available to an eligible organisation under this Programme is £50,000.

Only exceptionally should the request for funding under the programme exceed £50,000 the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate how the organisation meets one or more of the 'exceptional circumstances' criteria for a higher award:

Exceptional Circumstances

- a. Your organisation is in financial difficulty, with a risk of (a) closure or (b) loss of jobs or (c) loss of services which would impact on community health or wellbeing.
- b. Your organisation is of significant strategic importance to the sector or locality and without financial support survival is threatened, and that your loss could cause longer-term damage to sectoral growth and development.
- c. Where it is prudent to accept a single application on behalf of a number of smaller charitable entities that are an integral part of a larger established organisation, and where financial need is greater than £50,000.

Before large amounts of public funding may be committed, an application for more than £50,000 will be subject to a wider assessment to determine viability, financial resilience, and strategic importance within a balanced sector and explore whether other financial levers are available to the organisation

On behalf of Arts Council NI, the Department for Communities may arrange to provide additional financial expertise to ensure sectoral consistency for larger awards.

Where an organisation fails to consult with the Arts Council in advance of submitting an application for a greater amount, the £50,000 funding limit shall apply.

CALCULATION OF GRANT AMOUNT

The amount of grant payable will be anticipated deficit in the financial year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, but only to the extent to which that deficit is attributable to the Covid pandemic. The financial overview template at **Annex A** must be used to calculate this figure.

- Comparative financial data for the pre-COVID year is required as well as the current financial year 2021-22.
- Organisations shall record their operating deficit on 30 November 2021.
- Evaluating previous operating experience, along with the application of best endeavour, applicants shall make evidence-based financial projections for the four months from 1 December 2021 to 31 March 2022.
- Organisations will need to provide 2019-20 financial data for comparison pre COVID-19
- Where an organisation did not exist for a full year pre COVID-19, calculations will be on the 2021-22 financial data supplied, taking account as appropriate of any partial year figures for 2019-20.
- In making their projections of future income and expenditure, applicants must assume that the relevant Covid related restrictions in force on the day of application remain in place until 31 March 2022.
- Two Office Bearers (trustees, Board Members, Management Committee members, Governors or Directors as appropriate) shall certify the information as complete and accurate.
- The organisation must confirm its final outturn deficit position as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and where the difference between your projected and actual deficit is more than 10%, you must provide a written explanation.
- **The organisation must retain all evidence used to support the claim for operating deficits until March 2025. The Department reserves the right to carry out post payment audits to validate the accuracy of the information provided.**

The Department for Communities & the Arts Council acknowledge the challenges in making accurate financial outturn projections covering the four months of the year. However, people who hold positions of responsibility—within sectoral organisations and their professional advisors must exercise best judgement based on previous operating experience, taking appropriate account of normal seasonal trends that could improve or deteriorate finances.

TREATMENT OF RESERVES

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland defines reserves as the unspent resources or income of an organisation. These may or may not be governed by an explicit reserves policy.

The Department for Communities recognises that it is prudent for organisations to build up and maintain a level of reserves appropriate to the circumstances of the organisation. The Department's policy is to recognise and encourage good governance such as the creation of appropriate reserves. For that reason, the cost of replenishing reserves run down to fund a Covid-related deficit will be eligible for support under this Programme **up to the level equivalent to six months turnover** for the organisation or the organisation's reserves held at 1 April 2021, **whichever is less**.

This means that the maximum grant available to your organisation will normally be limited to the amount which would restore six months of reserves. It also normally means that if your organisation has projected reserves at 31 March 2022 in excess of six months turnover you should not expect to receive a grant.

If you believe that your organisation has a valid need for holding reserves greater than six months turnover, you must include the reason for this need in your funding application.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Only exceptionally should the value of an award under the programme exceed £50,000. In such circumstances, the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate how the organisation meets the above criteria under which a higher award will be considered.

WHAT YOU CANNOT APPLY FOR

- Deficits not directly linked to Covid-19
- Loss of income, such as ticketing receipts and cancelled events
- Costs already covered by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, other funders or Government COVID-19 schemes ' Please note that we will check and you will be asked to sign an anti-fraud statement in your application
- Costs you will incur after 31 March 2022
- Expenditure that could be deemed to contravene Government's COVID health restrictions regulations and guidance.

MAKING AN APPLICATION

You must apply using our online system. We will not accept applications in hard copy or by email. You will find a link to the Covid Recovery Programme for Arts Organisations on our website.

- Online applications may be edited, saved, and returned up to the closing date.
- You must submit all mandatory enclosures associated with the application at the same time as your application, i.e. they must be uploaded to your online application prior to its submission. If you realise after submitting your online application that you have not included all the mandatory enclosures you must resubmit a new application with all the relevant mandatory enclosures included before the application deadline of **12noon on Friday 28 January 2022**. We cannot accept additional material by any other method or after the deadline. These enclosures are listed on the Attachments page within the online application and are detailed below.
- **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 12 noon precisely on the closing date, **Friday 28 January 2022**.**
- If your complete application is not **fully** uploaded when the system closes, your application will not be accepted.

- If you submit your application by the closing deadline, you will receive an automated email advising that your application has been successfully submitted to the system.
- **If you do not receive this email, your application has not been submitted.**

Please remember that it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to ensure that we receive the application form and uploaded enclosures by the closing time and date.

SUBMISSION AND RETENTION OF DOCUMENTATION

You must include certain key financial and other documentation with your application. Any application, which does not include all of the mandatory enclosures, will not be considered.

MANDATORY ENCLOSURES

The mandatory enclosures are detailed below. These are the documents which you **MUST** provide in conjunction with your application. Some of these must be uploaded to your online application via the Attachments page; others must be uploaded to the Government Funding Database.

NB: If you are currently not registered with the Government Funding Database, please submit **ALL** enclosures detailed below with your online application form. Please note that in the event of an award, you will be required to register with the Government Funding Database.

Please note failure to upload the mandatory information with your application will render your application ineligible.

Mandatory Enclosure	Submit with	Guidance on Enclosure
Constitution and/or Memorandum and Articles of Association (if not uploaded to the Government Funders Database)	Online Application	Please note: The name of your organisation as given in your constitution document should be the same name as that given in the application, and on your organisation's bank account, details of which we will request if you receive an award.
Financial accounts for the years ended 31 March 2020 (if not uploaded to the Government Funders Database)	Online Application	Applicants are required to upload a copy of their organisation's Audited/Certified Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 to the Government Funding Database or provide a copy with their application form.
Financial accounts for the years ended 31 March 2021 (if not uploaded to the Government Funders Database)	Online Application	Applicants are required to upload a copy of their organisation's Audited/Certified Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 to the Government Funding Database or provide a copy with their application form.
Management accounts	Online Application	<p>We require a set of management accounts covering the period 1 April 2021 to 30 November 2021 (or most recent if available)</p> <p>We require financial and management accounts to assess the overall financial wellbeing of your organisation and to judge whether there is a need for Arts Council funding.</p>
Projected management accounts	Online Application	We require management accounts detailing projections for the period 1 December 2021 to 31 March 2022
Financial Overview Template (Annex A)	Online Application	<p>This will provide details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) your organisation's financial position from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 and (ii) your organisation's financial position from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. <p>A template is available which you must upload with your online application.</p> <p>Further instruction on its completion are detailed on the template.</p>

Mandatory Enclosure (cont'd)	Submit with	Guidance on Enclosure
Reserves Policy Statement	Online Application	This should explain the reserves policy which applies to your organisation
Bank statements	Online Application	Applicants should provide bank statements for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 November 2021
Details of actual and projected deficits	Online Application	This will include details of your operating deficit from 1 April 2021 to 30 November 2021 and projected operating deficit from 1 December 2021 to 31 March 2022 because of Covid.
Any other evidence deemed appropriate to make a reasoned assessment of entitlement.	Online Application	This may include any other financial information to evidence deficit incurred due to the impact of Covid-19.

Please keep in mind the following important points:

- You must upload **all** the necessary enclosures prior to submitting your online application. If any enclosures are missing, your application will be ineligible.
- All mandatory enclosures must be in **Word, Excel or pdf format**. We cannot accept documents in other formats.
- **The total size of all your uploaded documents should not exceed 25 Mb.**
- You must upload **all** the necessary enclosures prior to submitting your online application. **If any enclosures are missing, your application will be ineligible.**
- If you upload an enclosure in a format which we do not accept or which is corrupted or which we cannot open, the enclosure will be considered missing and your application will be ineligible.
- Do not compress files into one zip file. Files must be uploaded as individual documents.
- **All data must be PC compatible.** If non-PC compatible data is supplied, your application will not be assessed. For example, if using a MAC, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that any enclosures uploaded to the online application are PC compatible.
- The submission of weblinks or website addresses in lieu of enclosure documents is not acceptable and will result in your application being made ineligible.

After you submit your application, the Arts Council WILL NOT seek any missing documentation. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that ALL mandatory enclosures are submitted with your application form. Failure to submit ALL mandatory enclosures will render your application ineligible.

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.

AFTER YOU SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

- The Arts Council will undertake an eligibility check on your application form and either issue an acknowledgement receipt of the application **or** notice of ineligibility.

ASSESSMENT AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Assessment

- Applications will be assessed by the Arts Council against the Programme's priority (page 3) to determine the level of the award required, with applications scored as '**Met**' or '**Unmet**' against track record in the sector and public benefit.
- If your application is not funded, the Council (and where applicable) in conjunction with the Department will provide you with reasons for this.
- If you are not happy with the way we have handled your application, you can access a copy of our complaints procedure on our website. Please note you can only complain if you believe we have not followed our published process when dealing with your application. You cannot use the complaints procedure to appeal against the decision.

Decision Making

- All applications will be judged on merit, regardless of any previous relationship with the Arts Council or the Department for Communities.
- We will make decisions based on the information supplied within your application form.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Declaration

Applicants can apply only to one funding organisation under this Programme and are required to declare and certify that this is the case on the application form.

Applicants are also required to declare that they do not know of other available sources of financial support, including external support or support from related organisations, which would enable them to manage recovery from Covid without recourse to public funds.

Publicity

Full listings of all the grants we award are published on our website. You will be required to acknowledge Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Department for Communities funding in all your publicity. Failure to credit the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Department for Communities 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.

The nature of this fund relies on the integrity of the applications. Please ensure you answer all questions fully, clearly and honestly. If you answer a question with inaccurate information, we may need to reclaim funding at a later date or take other action if we suspect fraud.

Fraud Prevention Information collected through the application process will be shared with fraud prevention agencies who will use it to prevent fraud and money laundering and to verify identity. Further information on how your information might be used is set out in our Privacy Policy below.

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 paper files, and accessed only by our staff; appointed auditors and individuals or organisations that may help us assess or monitor grants.

The United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UK-GDPR) is the UK's data privacy law that governs the processing of personal data from individuals inside the UK. You have a right under this law to access the data held on you by Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

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. You must agree an Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations policy statement as part of your application form.

Applying online / Email Notifications

Applications to the Covid Recovery Programme for Arts Organisations 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 the 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.

Annex A - Financial Template to Calculate Award Amount

Income/Receipts Calculation A³⁴

	Pre COVID Financial Position 01/04/2019 - 30/11/2019	Pre COVID Financial Position 01/12/2019 - 31/03/2020	Actual Financial Position 01/04/2021 - 30/11/2021	Projected Financial Position 01/12/2021 - 31/3/2022	Explain the key differences between the periods
Confirmed grant income	£	£	£	£	
Donations/ Fundraising	£	£	£	£	
Trading/ Earned income including contracts	£	£	£	£	
COVID 19 grant funding including furloughed staff income	Not relevant for this period		£	Not relevant for this period	
Rebates and repayments					
Miscellaneous (this should be 10% or less than the total)	£	£	£	£	
Other (tell us what this is)	£	£	£	£	
Total	£	£	£	£	

³ Organisations operating cash accounting should use their receipts and payments figures to complete the template. =

⁴ Where the organisation did not exist for a full year pre-COVID, include any partial year figures for 2019-20 with appropriate notes.

Expenditure Calculation B

	Pre COVID Financial Position 01/04/2019 - 30/11/2019	Pre COVID Financial Position 01/12/2019 - 31/03/2020	Actual Financial Position 01/04/2021 - 30/11/2021	Projected Financial Position 01/12/2021 - 31/3/2022	Explain the key differences between the periods
Staff Costs including salaries, employer costs, travel and staff training costs	£	£	£	£	
Redundancy Payments	£	£	£	£	
Rent and Overheads including heat, light, water, insurance, rates	£	£	£	£	
Operational Costs Including grant related expenditure, service delivery costs, postage, printing, telephone, TV licence					
Cleaning and Maintenance					
Charges and Fees including bank charges, subscriptions					
Other (provide details)					
Total	£	£	£	£	

Financial Need Calculations (Difference between A - B)

	Pre COVID Financial Result 01/04/2019 - 30/11/2019	Pre COVID Financial Result 01/12/2019 - 31/03/2020	Actual Financial Result 01/04/2021 - 30/11/2021	Projected Financial Result 01/12/202 - 31/3/2022
Total Need	£	£	£	£
Difference between Calculation A & Calculation B				
% of total need in relation to your annual turnover pre Covid	£		£	

Confirm the Grant that you need to reduce or eliminate the COVID related operating deficit. This will be the deterioration of your 2021-22 financial result from your 2019-20 financial result from the calculation above, up to a maximum of your 2021-22 deficit.

Covid-related Operating Deficit for 2021-22

--

The value of reserves in your Balance Sheet at 1 April 2021	£
The projected value of reserves in your Balance Sheet at 31 March 2022	£

If you have more than 6 months unrestricted reserves at the 31 March 2022, you should not expect to receive any funding.

Please add any relevant notes here that you wish the assessor to take into account:

--