ARTS COUNCIL NATIONAL LOTTERY PROJECT GRANTS

Libraries projects

Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants is our open-access programme for arts, museums and libraries projects.

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Storyhouse - Children's library (3)
Photo © Mark Carline

This information sheet relates to Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants. See our website for more information about Project Grants.

In this sheet, we will talk about the following.

Libraries and National Lottery Project Grants

This guidance is aimed at libraries considering applying to National Lottery Project Grants, either as a lead applicant or a project partner.

We believe that England's network of public libraries provides a vital resource for the development of creativity and the promotion of culture across this country. They are the country's most widespread and well-used cultural spaces, sitting at the heart of communities and often providing the first point of access to cultural activity. They help to build stronger, happier communities, support social prescribing, develop readers and promote digital literacy.

Libraries reach audiences from all backgrounds and of all ages, and provide meeting places, maker spaces, and focal points for creative and cultural activity within local communities, in conjunction with their delivery of four **Universal Library Offers**; Reading, Health and Wellbeing, Digital and Information, and Culture and Creativity.

> **Libraries can apply to National Lottery Project Grants for a wide range of activities that support, enhance and enrich libraries' work, and develop the role of libraries as cultural providers in their communities.**

What you can apply for

All libraries

All libraries can apply to National Lottery Project Grants for new creative and cultural projects that focus on any of the disciplines that come under the Arts Council's remit: literature, visual arts, theatre, music, dance, and combined arts. Our case studies page gives some examples of projects we have funded in libraries:

Local authority library services ('public libraries')

In addition, local authority library services (as defined by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964) can apply to National Lottery Project Grants for new activities that help them to deliver any of the **four Universal Library Offers** in a developmental way, including projects that do not focus on any of the disciplines in our remit, listed above.

Local authority library services can include libraries that are owned and run by the authority, mutual or other structures that are commissioned by the authority, community managed libraries or any other library provision. They must contribute to the authority's statutory provision under the 1964 Act.

If you're applying as a public library service, we'll ask you in the Eligibility Questionnaire to tell us which of the Universal Library Offers your activity will help you deliver.

The Universal Library Offers are:

- Reading
- Culture and Creativity
- Information and Digital
- Health and Wellbeing

> **Projects focused on the Universal Library Offers must still meet the wider National Lottery Project Grants criteria. These are outlined in the How to Apply guidance.**

When we make decisions on what projects we support, we are guided by a range of balancing considerations that include our spending in areas where there are low levels of engagement with cultural activity, and how activities align with our Equality Objectives. Please see the How to Apply guidance for more detail on how we make decisions on what we support.

For more information about the Universal Library Offers, visit the Libraries Connected website.

Non-public libraries

Libraries that are not run by local authorities (for example, private or university libraries, or independent community libraries that are not part of the statutory provision of a local authority) cannot apply for projects that solely deliver against the Information and Digital or Health and Wellbeing Universal Offers. They are able to apply for projects that focus on any of the disciplines that come under the Arts Council's remit: literature, visual arts, theatre, music, dance, and combined arts. These projects may contain some digital or health and wellbeing outcomes, but the main aims and outcomes of the projects must be creative and/or cultural.

> **If you are unsure whether your library or library service is eligible to apply for projects that deliver against the Information and Digital or Health and Wellbeing Universal Library Offers, contact our Customer Services team.**

Individuals cannot apply for projects involving libraries that deliver against the Information and Digital or Health and Wellbeing Universal Offers. They are able to apply for projects that focus on any of the disciplines that come under the Arts Council's remit: literature, visual arts, theatre, music, dance, and combined arts.

What you cannot apply for

We cannot fund:

- activities that do not engage the public

- ongoing overhead costs that are already paid for by other income (for example, local authority income)

- activities that are not time-limited

- activities related to delivering statutory education, or formal further or higher education

- activities or costs that are considered to be a library service's statutory core provision which a library service receives funding through the local authority to deliver, such as premises and core staffing costs, or provision of core book stock.

National Lottery Project Grants supports projects that are additional to what an organisation delivers with its usual funding.

Universal Library Offers

Reading

Reading projects encourage people to read for pleasure, support literacy and create excitement about reading.

Reading projects may not always contain artistic or creative aims and outcomes.

> Only public libraries can apply for projects that solely deliver against the Reading Universal Library Offer, and which have no artistic or creative aims and outcomes. All libraries, organisations and individuals can apply for projects that deliver reading projects using our supported artforms, focussing on reading for pleasure ('Creative Reading'). See our Literature information sheet for more details:

Libraries can apply for the development and delivery of projects that increase access to reading for pleasure for individuals and communities.

We are particularly interested in projects that encourage new or reluctant readers, or that offer opportunities for broadening the choices of existing readers to enjoy types of literature they may not have previously considered.

What projects might include:

- reading group activity
- events
- workshops
- residencies
- promotions
- additional activities to enhance or extend existing reading programmes (such as The Summer Reading Challenge)

Culture and Creativity

Culture and Creativity projects provide arts and culture experiences in local settings to stimulate, provoke and entertain, to spark curiosity and imagination, and to encourage participation and the development of new skills.

Culture and Creativity projects are likely to contain artistic or creative aims and outcomes.

> All types of library can apply for Culture and Creativity projects. For libraries which are not public libraries, these projects must focus on any of the artforms that come under the Arts Council's remit: literature, visual arts, theatre, music, dance, and combined arts.

What projects might include:

- storytelling

- performance (dance, theatre, concerts, etc)

- creative writing workshops

- exhibitions

- poetry readings and spoken word

- artists in residence

- digital installations, activities or projects using VR, AR or mixed reality

- festivals

- community-created festivals

- cookery or food related cultural activity

- oral or local history projects

Information and Digital

Information and Digital projects focus on libraries providing quality information and digital support, as well as working with innovative technology.

> Only public libraries can apply for projects that deliver against the Information and Digital Universal Library Offer but which do not contain artistic or creative aims and outcomes.

What projects might include:

- loaning devices (for example, iPads) to increase interaction with isolated service users

- working with robotics and virtual reality

- makerspaces

- online training resources

- science and coding-based work or digital/interactive gaming clubs

- archives and research techniques

- job club related activity

- promoting and supporting equality of access to online resources and services

- promoting debate and the growth of active/engaged citizenship

Health and Wellbeing

Health and Wellbeing projects focus on promoting healthy living, combatting loneliness, and reducing health-related socio-economic inequalities.

> Only public libraries can apply for projects that deliver against the Health and Wellbeing Universal Library Offer but which do not contain artistic or creative aims and outcomes.

What projects might include:

- activities that support particular groups of the community, such as those with dementia or mental health service users

- sensory experiences for people with special educational needs

- support and guidance projects that focus on specific areas of interest for a community, such as healthy eating or drugs and alcohol advice

- yoga, t'ai chi, and other activities that support healthy living

- social prescribing activities and resources

- bibliotherapy or self-help support activities

- hobby clubs for different user groups (e.g. board games, film clubs, crochet)

Things to consider

For detailed guidance on how to complete your application, see our How to Apply guidance. Here are some other things to think about when planning your application:

- How will you demonstrate the likely quality of the activity? How will you ensure that it is a high-quality experience for people taking part? For example, which artists, creative practitioners, or specialists will you be working with and why?

- Can you make a strong case for the activity being additional to what the library would routinely offer, or increasing the scope or adding extra value to an existing activity, or seeking new participants or audiences for it? We would expect to see applications for projects that include innovation, development, and the extension of existing work.

- Have you considered access, inclusivity and diversity? We commissioned John Vincent (of The Network) to explore this in detail, and his 2018 report Libraries Welcome Everyone is full of good examples of inclusive work reaching diverse audiences up and down the country.

- Do you have partnerships in place to help you deliver your project to a high standard, if appropriate? Libraries are well placed to work with local groups, NPOs, Higher Education sector, Bridge organisations, and schools. Our report Higher Education and Public Libraries: Partnerships Research might help you think about whether this could benefit your project.

- Do you have any match funding for your project? Funding from other sources can help us to see that other groups and organisations are committed to the delivery of your project and believe in what it is trying to achieve.

- We recognise the importance of libraries as venues for touring projects. See our Touring information sheet for more details on how touring projects can apply to Project Grants.

- While Project Grants cannot support libraries' core building costs (for example, maintenance and insurance), we are able to consider applications for costs that are additional, for example a project to enhance and equip a performance space. See our Capital projects information sheet for more details.

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