

Elevate Fund

Guidance for applicants

Below is an outline summary of key information. Please see [**Section three**](#) for full eligibility criteria.

Summary of key information	
What is the focus of the fund?	<p>The aim of the Elevate fund is to strengthen the resilience of arts organisations which are not in receipt of National portfolio funding in the period 2015-18 but which demonstrate that they make a significant contribution to the Creative case for diversity.</p> <p>It supports our aim of increasing the diversity of our National portfolio in future investment rounds and building the capacity of organisations to deliver their artistic mission, develop new partnerships and increase levels of contributed and earned income.</p> <p>Applications should demonstrate a track record of developing culturally specific work which advances equality between groups of persons who share particular protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act 2010, and/or encourages involvement and participation in the arts by members of underrepresented groups (defined by reference to such protected characteristics).</p>

Who can apply?	Arts organisations not in receipt of National portfolio funding during the period 2015-18
Who cannot apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National portfolio organisations • Major partner museums • Individuals • Music Education Hubs • Local Authorities • Museums • Libraries • Organisations based outside of England • Organisations that have already submitted another application to the Elevate fund
When is the deadline for Expressions of Interest?	5pm on Thursday 28 January 2016
When is the outcome of Expressions of Interest?	Emails will be sent to all applicants by 5pm on Monday 8 February 2016
When is the deadline for applications?	5pm on Thursday 7 April 2016
How much can be applied for per application?	Between £100,000 – £150,000
When must the activity take place?	<p>Activities must start no earlier than 1 September 2016</p> <p>Funded activities must end no later than 30 September 2019</p>
Minimum match funding from other sources	<p>10 per cent of total project budget</p> <p>At least 10 per cent of the total cost of</p>

	the activity to come from sources other than the Arts Council of which at least 5 per cent should be cash match funding.
When will we make our decision?	We will aim to notify applicants of our decision no later than 31 July 2016

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Section one – introduction

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the Elevate programme. This guidance gives you information on how to apply for funding.

Elevate has been developed in response to an equality analysis we undertook of our national investment process in 2014 which highlighted the low number of new applications received from Black and minority ethnic and disability-led organisations. The Elevate fund aims to increase the diversity of our portfolio in future investment processes, focusing in particular on these aspects of diversity, and to increase applications across our strategic funding programmes.

The Elevate fund will support organisations to develop their resilience by putting in place effective management and governance structures to support the delivery of their artistic mission, to develop partnerships with National portfolio organisations and to generate increased levels of contributed and earned income.

We want to support organisations that can demonstrate how they contribute to the Creative case for diversity. Diversity is defined broadly by Arts Council England as set out below. The Elevate fund will support organisations which seek to advance equality between those sharing different protected characteristics, in particular, organisations which seek to advance equality for Black and minority ethnic and disabled persons, through their artistic programme.

Advancing equality may consist in creating opportunities for Black and minority ethnic and/or disabled people, and for those from other groups whose participation in the arts is disproportionately low; to become more involved across all aspects of the arts sector as artists, part of the workforce and audience members.

We believe that our national diversity is one of our great resources and we expect that the work that we fund will reflect this and will be alive to the opportunities that diversity offers.

Arts Council England strives to comply with the public Sector Equality Duty and to promote equality in relation to the characteristics protected by the [Equality Act](#)

[2010](#). We are also committed to promoting equality across differing socioeconomic groups.

By diversity we mean the multitude of ethnicities, faiths and socioeconomic classes which reflect contemporary England. Our concept of diversity includes disabled people, older people and people of all genders and sexual orientations. It also recognises the breadth of England's regions, from the most rural to the inner city.

Our arts-driven concept of diversity as opportunity represents a shift in perspective, from regarding the imperative towards diversity as a prescriptive aspect of equality legislation to understanding its creative potential and the ways in which it can promote long-term organisational resilience. We call this the [Creative case for diversity](#). In preparing their application, applicants should find opportunities to tell us how their work will support this progressive and positive perspective.

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections.

Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2015 and 2018 we plan to invest £1.1 billion of public money from government and an estimated £700 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country.

On behalf of the Department for Education, we are investing over £75 million between 2015 and 2016 in a network of 123 music education hubs across England.

For more information about the Arts Council visit www.artscouncil.org.uk

About Arts Council England's strategic funds 2015-18

Our Strategic funds help us to target particular challenges, opportunities or gaps, creating the environment for further development to take place in the arts and culture sector. Ultimately, they help us meet the goals set out in our strategy, [*Great art and culture for everyone*](#). Our goals, for reference, are as follows:

Goal 1: Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries

Goal 2: Everyone has the opportunity to experience and be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries

Goal 3: The arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable

Goal 4: The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled

Goal 5: Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries

All of these goals are important, but we expect successful applicants to the Elevate fund to make a strong case under Goal 3: The arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable, while also demonstrating a track record of contributing to Goal 1: Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries.

Section two – purpose of the Elevate fund

Aims and outcomes

The aim of the Elevate fund is to support organisations which can demonstrate how they contribute to the Creative case for diversity to become more resilient and adaptive to their external environment. By resilient we mean having the vision and capacity as an organisation to anticipate and adapt to economic, environmental and social change by seizing opportunities, identifying and mitigating risks, and deploying resources effectively in order to continue delivering quality work in line with the organisation's mission.

We want to support organisations with a track record of presenting high quality arts activity that addresses both the disadvantage faced by and the underrepresentation in the arts of Black and minority ethnic and/or disabled people.

The Elevate fund was set up in response to the equality analysis of our national investment process of 2014 in order to increase future applications for National portfolio funding from organisations that better reflect the diversity of contemporary society across their artistic programme, leadership, workforce and audiences.

We want to support these organisations to become more resilient and to realise their full artistic potential to enable us to diversify our future portfolio. We also want to encourage greater partnerships between these organisations and existing National portfolio organisations. These partnerships should extend programming opportunities for collaboration and networks for applicant organisations and strengthen existing National portfolio organisations' contribution to the Creative case for diversity.

The central aims of the fund are:

- to strengthen the resilience of organisations which seek to advance equality between those sharing different protected characteristics, in particular, equality for Black and minority ethnic and disabled persons. Advancing equality may consist in creating opportunities for Black and minority ethnic and disabled people, and for those from other groups whose participation in the arts is disproportionately low;

- to further enable contribution to the Creative case for diversity, enriching the arts for artists and audiences;
- to increase both the number and quality of applications to future National portfolio investment rounds and strategic funding programmes that better reflect the diversity of contemporary society;
- to support organisations to broker partnerships with National portfolio organisations to advance the artistic mission of partners and help them respond to the challenges of diversifying their programme, audiences, leadership and workforce; and
- to encourage a culture of collaborative working and partnership development that strengthens resilience through developing new sources of contributed and earned income

How much funding is available?

A total budget of up to £2.1 million is available through the Elevate fund. Applicants can apply for between £100,000 and £150,000 for activities to be delivered over a period of up to three years.

Geographical focus

The Arts Council intends to ensure that a minimum of 75 per cent of all Lottery funding is spent outside London for the 2015-18 period. However for this fund we also recognise the relatively high concentration of diverse led organisations and artists from a diverse background in London.

Section three – eligibility

Please read the eligibility requirements for the fund carefully. If you do not meet any of these requirements we will be unable to consider your application for funding.

Who can apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arts organisations not in receipt of National portfolio funding during the period 2015-18
Who cannot apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National portfolio organisations• Major Partner Museums• Individuals• Music Education Hubs• Local Authorities• Museums• Libraries• Organisations based outside of England• Organisations that have already submitted another application to the Elevate fund
What activity can be supported?	<p>Examples of the type of activity that can be supported include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appointment of new staff posts or the extension of current part-time posts• Training and development for staff and board members• Investment in activity which aims to diversify and increase levels of contributed and earned income• Partnership development with National portfolio organisations
What activity cannot be funded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activities that are not related to the arts• Activities that do not benefit or engage people in England (in the short or long term) or that do not help artists and arts organisations in England to carry out their work

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities (including buying goods or services) that have started, been bought, ordered or contracted before we make a decision about your application. This is because we cannot fund activity retrospectively • Costs that are already paid for by other income including your own funds or any other funding
How much can be applied for per application?	Between £100,000 and £150,000
How much match funding from sources other than ACE is required?	<p>10 per cent of total project budget</p> <p>At least 10 per cent of the total cost of the activity to come from sources other than the Arts Council of which at least 5 per cent should be cash match funding.</p>
Delivery timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities must start no earlier than 1 September 2016 • Funded activities must end no later than 30 September 2019 <p>Activities can be any length up to three years.</p>

Consortia and partnership agreements

We will accept applications for funding from organisations working as a consortium. One organisation must act as the lead organisation and submit the application.

All partners within the consortium must show a firm commitment to joint working.

Your application must show the benefits and rationale of working as a consortium. If we decide to fund your project we will enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the lead organisation. This organisation must accept our terms and conditions of grant and will be solely accountable to us for all monitoring information, how all the money is spent and for the full and successful delivery of the project.

One of our standard terms and conditions of grant is that the organisation we enter into a grant agreement with cannot subcontract any of the project to other organisations without our prior agreement in writing. So if we award a grant, before the project can start, we must approve a partnership agreement between the lead organisation and the other partners involved in the project.

There is further guidance about [Partnership agreements](#) on our website.

Section four – what you will be expected to deliver

We welcome applications that will make a contribution to achieving the aims and outcomes outlined in [Section two](#) above.

The proposal should include/demonstrate:

- How you plan to develop the resilience of your organisation
- How your organisation contributes to the Creative case for diversity
- How your programme of activity seeks to advance equality between groups of persons sharing different characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010, and/or encourages involvement and participation in the arts by members of such groups which are underrepresented in the arts
- Plans to diversify and increase levels of contributed and/or earned income
- Plans to develop partnerships with National portfolio organisations

Section five – how to apply

Expression of Interest stage

If you believe you have a proposal that meets all of the [eligibility criteria](#) and the criteria described within the [Meeting the Brief section](#), please tell us about it by completing the online [Expression of Interest](#) form, which will give you the opportunity to describe your outline proposal in no more than 400 words. Within your submission you should tell us the anticipated overall project cost and the amount you would like to request from us if you are invited to apply. The online Expression of Interest form will open at **12pm (midday) on Thursday 14 January 2016**. Expressions of Interest must be submitted by **5pm on Thursday 28 January 2016**.

If we think that your proposal could make a significant contribution to [the Aims and Outcomes of this Strategic Fund](#), we will inform you of our decision by email by **Monday 8 February 2016**. If you are invited to make an application you will have **8 WEEKS** in which to develop your full application and the mandatory supporting documents required, as detailed in this guidance document.

If we decide not to invite you to apply we will also inform you by email **by 8 February 2016**. We are unable to give feedback or engage in a discussion about why your proposal is not being taken forward at this time. You are unable to resubmit the same proposal to the **Elevate fund** in any future funding round.

Making an application

When to apply

The online application form will open on **12pm (midday) on Thursday 11 February 2016**. Applications must be submitted by **5pm on Thursday 7 April 2016**. Applications submitted after this time will not be considered.

Application process

1. Read this guidance carefully and contact us

This guidance gives you information on how to apply and answers some

common questions. If you have any further questions you can contact our Customer Services team at enquiries@arts council.org.uk

2. Prepare and submit your proposal

You must apply through our [online application portal](#) using the **Standard application** form:

- i. Once you have logged in (or created a new user account if you have not used the online portal before) you will see the Welcome screen. On this screen, select '*Standard application*' from the dropdown list:

Select the programme you wish to apply to:

Start Application

- ii. When you press 'Start Application', you will be taken to the Eligibility Check section where you should select the name of this fund from the dropdown list:

Eligibility Check

Eligibility questions - Section 1

The following questions are to check your application against some basic criteria.

* Which strategic programme are you applying for?

- iii. When you have completed the Eligibility Check you will be taken to the full application form which includes questions about you (or your organisation) and the activity you are applying for, and a section called 'Response to the brief' which gives you space to provide a full proposal for your activity. There is also a section where you can

upload the mandatory attachments that we need, and any other supporting information.

iv. Proposal

The proposal can be a maximum of 6,500 words, divided into three sections: 'Meeting the brief' (3,000 words), 'Governance and management of activity' (2,000 words) and 'Financial viability' (1,500 words). You do not need to use the full word count if you do not feel it is necessary. Use the criteria/prompts in Section Six of this guidance to help you structure your proposal.

Introduction
Organisation details
Main contact details
Basic details
Meeting our goals
Response to the brief
Attachments
Activity beneficiaries
Monitoring information
Declaration
Submit the form

v. Attachments

You must upload the following mandatory attachments on the 'Attachments' screen:

Detailed budget	A detailed budget for the activity showing proposed income and expenditure (as an Excel sheet or similar)
Invitation to apply	The email we sent inviting you to apply
Work plan	A work plan for the proposed project, including milestones and key review dates
Financial statements	Financial statements for your previous financial year, prepared to the relevant legal standard for an organisation of your size and status
Management accounts	Your latest management accounts
Governance	Your governance documents

documents	
List of partner organisations with contact details	If applying as a consortium/in partnership with other organisations, a list of all partner organisations [in the consortium] giving their organisation names, address information and contact details for a main contact person
<i>You may also upload the following optional attachments</i>	
	Up to three other relevant attachments. These must each be a maximum of five pages in length

The combined limit on file size for all the attachments taken together is **10 megabytes**.

We will use the information you give us in your application form and any attachments to decide whether we will offer you a grant. If your application does not contain the information we need in the format we ask for it to be in, we might not be able to consider your application. After you have read this guidance, if you have any further questions please contact us.

Assistance with your application

We are committed to being open and accessible, and want to make the Elevate fund application process accessible to everyone.

If you experience any barriers within the application process or require help to make an application, our enquiries team can be contacted by:

- Telephone on: 0845 300 6200
- Text phone: +44(0) 161 934 4428
- Email: enquiries@arts council.org.uk

After you submit your application

You will receive an acknowledgement email confirming that we have received your application. This will be sent to the email address which you used to log into the portal. The email will include a PDF copy of your application for your reference.

We will conduct an eligibility check within 10 working days of the deadline for applications. If your application is not eligible, this means that we cannot process it any further and it will not be considered for funding. If your application is not eligible we will write to you to let you know, and will explain our decision.

Section six – how we will make our decision

We will aim to notify applicants of our decision no later than 31 July 2016.

We will check your application to ensure that you have provided all the information we have requested.

We will make our decision based on the information you provide in your application, any further information that we request and, where relevant, data and information from the Charity Commission and Companies House websites relating to your constitution and audited accounts from the past two years.

Each criterion ('Meeting the brief', 'Governance and management of the activity', and 'Financial viability') will be assessed using a five-point word scoring:

- **Not met**
The application does not meet the criteria
- **Potential**
The application does not meet the criteria but shows potential to do so
- **Met**
The application meets the criteria
- **Met (strong)**
The application meets the criteria and shows strong qualities
- **Met (outstanding)**
The application meets the criteria and shows outstanding qualities

On the basis of these ratings we will recommend whether an application is suitable for funding. Applications that do not achieve at least 'met' under all three criteria will not be recommended for funding.

We will assess each application against the following criteria, using the assessment prompts below:

Criteria
Meeting the brief Word count: up to 3,000 words • Clear and convincing plans to deliver on the fund's aims and outcomes and

achieve all the objectives outlined in [what you will be expected to deliver](#), as described in this guidance

- Demonstrate a track record of contributing to the Creative case for diversity
- Details of any proposed partnerships with National portfolio organisations
- Robust plans for resourcing the activity effectively
- Details of any proposed outcomes and measures of success
- Activity that builds on and does not duplicate activity funded by other Arts Council grants

Management of the activity

Word count: up to 2,000 words

- Clear and convincing plans to deliver the requirements described in the guidance
- Demonstration of skill and capacity to deliver the proposed programme
- Strong strategic fit with the applicant's other activity
- Appropriate governance arrangements in place and/or planned, including how partners are engaged
- How the diversity of the workforce, leadership and board reflects the diversity of contemporary society across England
- Demonstrates how equality and accessibility will be addressed
- How the applicant will monitor and evaluate the impact of the activity

Financial viability

Word count: up to 1,500 words

- Financial viability of the applicant and of the project
- Demonstration of appropriateness of proposed budget
- Evidence of organisational buy-in by applicant and project partners, as cash investment and/or in-kind support
- Evidence of how the applicant is looking to diversify and increase levels of contributed and earned income in the future

In assessing the application we will also consider these balancing criteria:

1. relative strength of the application compared to other applications received
2. balanced portfolio by art form and geography

These balancing criteria will be used in addition to the main criteria to ensure a good spread of funded projects according to each balancing criterion, and to differentiate between a number of proposals that are considered strong.

Decision making

Once we have scored your application we will make our decision. To do this we will consider how strongly your activity scored against our criteria, any balancing criteria we have outlined above, and will also consider your activity alongside other applications to the fund.

Complaints procedure

If you are not happy with the way we have dealt with your application, please contact us and we will discuss this with you. If you are still unhappy, you can ask us for a copy of our complaints procedure.

Details can be found in [Making a complaint](#), which is available on our website, www.artscouncil.org.uk, or by contacting our enquiries team by email to enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk or by phoning 0845 300 6200.

Please note that you can only complain if you believe we have not followed our published procedures when assessing your application. You cannot appeal against the decision.

Section seven – Freedom of Information Act

The Arts Council is committed to being as open as possible. We believe that the public has a right to know how we spend public funds and how we make our funding decisions.

We are also listed as a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. By law, we may have to provide your application documents and information about our assessment to any member of the public who asks for them under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We may not release those parts of the documents which are covered by one or more of the exemptions under the Act. Please see the Freedom of Information website at www.ico.gov.uk for information about freedom of information generally and the exemptions.

We will not release any information about applications during the assessment period, as this may interfere with the decision-making process.

Contact us

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