

Libraries Opportunities for Everyone Innovation Fund

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the aims and objectives of the fund?

The principal objective of the fund is to enable library services to trial innovative projects that will benefit disadvantaged people and places in England.

To deliver this objective the fund has two aims:

1. To provide library users and communities with opportunities to remove or reduce their experience of disadvantage
2. To enable library services to develop innovative practice that meets the needs of people and places experiencing disadvantage

These projects will be delivered within the frameworks offered by the [Society of Chief Librarians' five Universal Offers](#) and the seven outcomes in [Libraries Taskforce's 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 to 2021.'](#)

How much funding is available?

£3,900,000 of Grant in Aid funding is available for activity ending no later than 31 March 2018, of which £1,300,000 is allocated for capital (asset) activity and £2,600,000 for resource (project activity).

How much funding can I apply for and how long can the project last?

Applicants can apply for between £50,000 and £250,000 for projects which start no earlier than 1 April 2017 and end no later than 31 March 2018.

Who can apply to this fund?

The lead applicant **must** be a local authority library service in England. This definition includes organisations that have been commissioned to deliver the whole library service on behalf of local authorities, such as trusts, staff-led public service mutuals, community mutuals, and Community Interest Companies.

Will you accept multiple bids from the lead applicant?

No - the lead applicant can only submit one application as a lead applicant. However a library service can submit one bid as a lead applicant and be a consortium member on other bids. It must be clear from the applications that the applicant has the staff and capacity to work on multiple bids if they are successful.

Will you accept consortium bids?

Yes - consortium bids will be accepted providing that the lead applicant is a local authority library service and that a Partnership Agreement will be signed with all partners.

Can partners be involved in project proposals?

Yes – we welcome applications from library services working in partnership with a variety of other organisations where the benefit of this approach can be clearly demonstrated. There is no restriction on the type of partner organisations that can be involved (examples may include community groups, cultural organisations, charities and community-run libraries) but the lead applicant must be a local authority library service.

What activity is eligible?

You can apply for capital (asset) projects and resource (project activity). We will also accept applications that involve both capital (asset) and resource (project activity). Please see the [guidance](#) for examples of type of activity we can fund.

Can I apply for staffing costs related to the proposed activity?

Yes - we will consider supporting some time limited overheads that are directly related to delivering your project (such as costs for additional staff time or utilities) and that are proportionate to the scale of activity applied for. However please note that you **cannot apply** for general running costs and ongoing overheads. These include those relating to salaries, equipment or buildings (such as rent, insurance and maintenance costs).

What activity cannot be funded?

We cannot fund:

- activities that do not benefit or engage people in England (in the short or long term)
- 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

What type of capital activity can I apply for?

We define capital expenditure as money spent on the purchase, improvement, restoration, construction or creation of an asset, including expenses or costs that are directly attributable to delivering the capital project. Please see the [guidance](#) for examples of allowable and ineligible capital expenditure.

What is your definition of innovative activity?

Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed activity is new and innovative for the library service/s involved. Projects must be distinct from existing activity by applicants and partners. Innovative activity might include, but is not limited to:

- Entirely new activity that benefits the service and/or the sector
- New models of partnership working
- New methodologies in community engagement
- New ways of sharing knowledge and skills
- Trying proven ways of working in new locations or with new audiences
- Developing current activity to deliver new and extended project outcomes

What is your definition of disadvantage?

The fund will support projects benefiting disadvantaged people and places that local authority library services serve. All library services in England conduct activity that potentially impacts on disadvantage; all are therefore eligible to apply.

Applicants should describe (with evidence) why the audience for their proposed activity is disadvantaged within the geographical and demographic context of where the applicant/s deliver their services. Applications should demonstrate that the proposed activity is grounded in the local (or regional or national) context and responsive to the community needs of the library services involved. Evidence should also be provided showing how benefits to the identified audiences will be monitored and success will be measured.

I have a question about the fund – who should I contact?

Your first port of call for enquiries about the fund is our [Customer Services](#) team.

Can I speak to my Arts Council Relationship Manager about my application? Yes – Relationship Managers can help with clarification questions about the guidance and application process but they cannot offer any advice or feedback on a full application.

What other support can I access to help with my application?

Briefing events will take place on the following dates and locations:

Birmingham

6th December (pm) – Library of Birmingham

Session time 14:00 – 16:00

Manchester

9th December (am) – Manchester Central Library

Session time 10:00-12:00

London

13th December (pm) – The British Library

Session time 14:00- 16:00

The briefings will give further detail on the fund and offer the opportunity to ask questions. Full details on the briefing events and how to register are available on our [website](#).

I can't attend the briefing events – will I be able to access the information presented?

The presentation from the briefing events will be made available on our [website](#) after the last briefing at the latest. Full information on the programme is also available in the [guidance](#). You can also seek support via [Customer Services](#) or your Relationship Manager.

Will I be able to make enquiries about the programme over the Christmas period?

Applicants should be aware that Arts Council will be closed from Friday 23rd December 2016 until Tuesday 3rd January 2017. We will be offering an automated reply service during this time but applicants are encouraged to read the guidance and seek any advice you need before Friday 23rd December to ensure you can access the support they need in time to inform your application.

When is the deadline for applications?

The online application portal closes at midday on Friday 6th January 2017.

Do I need to find match funding to apply to the programme?

Yes – we require a minimum of 10% match funding, which can be both in the form of cash and in-kind support.

Can other Arts Council funding be used as match funding for this programme?

No - Arts Council funding from other programmes can only be used for the purposes for which the funding was originally granted.

What if I can't obtain the procurement quotes before the application portal closes?

You can provide estimates, including examples from the current market, in order

to demonstrate that the budget is realistic and achievable for the proposed activity. If your activity is successful, a condition may be added to your funding offer asking for confirmed quotes.

My organisation is a newly formed ‘spun-out’ library service - what happens if I can’t supply the mandatory previous year’s financial statement?

You may use financial statements from when the service was part of the local authority.

What is state aid?

‘State aid is any advantage granted by public authorities through state resources on a selective basis to any organisations that could potentially distort competition and trade in the European Union (EU)’ (Gov.uk). Local authorities must ensure that use of the grant and all associated procurement processes and contractual terms used in connection with the project are compatible with the State Aid Rules and requirements. This should include, but not be limited to, ensuring any contract and/or any changes permitted to or in connection with any contract do not give rise to any breach of the State Aid Rules. Further information regarding State Aid Rules can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/state-aid>. We recommend that you talk to your Finance department.

Can we include image attachments along with the application?

Only those attachments listed in the [guidance](#) should be included with the application form. These are the only documents that will be considered in the assessment of your application. The budget and cashflow mandatory attachments should both be completed using the Arts Council templates provided, which are available from the [website](#).