**NATIONAL LOTTERY PROJECT GRANTS
INFORMATION SHEET**

Library Projects and Universal Library Offers

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

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What's Inside

This Information Sheet provides **additional information** for your National Lottery Project Grants application.

Make sure that you have also read the main **Guidance for applicants**. See our website for more information about Project Grants.

In this information sheet, we will talk about the following:

Libraries and National Lottery Project Grants

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.

We welcome applications from libraries, either as a lead applicant or a project partner, for wide range of activities that support, enhance and enrich libraries' work and develop the role of libraries and cultural providers in their communities.

Public libraries can apply for our Universal Library Offers Time limited priority which sits within National Lottery Project Grants. This is aimed at enabling public libraries with their delivery of the **four Universal Library Offers**: Reading, Health and Wellbeing, Digital and Information, and Culture and Creativity.

This information sheet will provide guidance for all types of libraries looking to apply to Project Grants, as well as information on how Public Libraries can apply under the [Universal Library Offer Time limited priority](#) within Project Grants.

What you can apply for

All libraries

All libraries can apply to Project Grants for new creative and cultural projects that focus on any of the disciplines that we support: literature, visual arts, theatre, music, dance, and combined arts.

Public libraries (Local authority library services)

In addition, local authority library services (as defined by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964) can apply to Project Grants for Universal Library Offers activity through our **Universal Library Offer Time limited priority**. This includes projects that do not focus on any of the disciplines that we support.

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.

See our 'Universal Library Offers Time limited priority' section of this guidance.

Public Libraries who are Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs)

There are specific rules about what organisations that are National Portfolio Organisations can access Project Grants to do, and how much they can apply for. These are set out in our 'Funded Organisations and Project Grants' information sheet.

There are some exceptions to this for Public Library NPOs. Under their NPO funding agreement, Public Library NPOs are supported to deliver activities supporting the Culture and Creativity ULO and/or the Reading ULO where reading is a creative activity.

They **can** also apply to Project Grants (for any amount) to deliver activities against the other ULOs, which would usually sit outside the Project Grants remit. This is because Public Library NPOs are not supported to deliver against these ULOs through their NPO funding agreement.

These are:

- **Reading ULO where reading is not a creative act** – for example, bibliotherapy, health and wellbeing, self-help reading projects.
- **Information and Digital**
- **Health and Well-being**

Library NPOs need to contact their Relationship Manager if they want to apply for projects that focus on these ULOs so we can make the application form available on Grantium.

See the [Universal Library Offer Time limited priority](#) section of this sheet for more information.

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.

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.

They can apply for projects that focus on any of our supported disciplines. 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.

Libraries projects, the Project Grants criteria and Let's Create

Through National Lottery Project Grants, we fund projects that reach and engage people and communities in England with high quality culture and creativity. By 'culture' we mean lots of different types of activity related to the disciplines and organisations that Arts Council England supports, and this includes Libraries. A full list of the disciplines we support is in our [Guidance for applicants](#).

Through Project Grants and through our Strategy, Let's Create, we want our funding to make a difference. We explain this difference through three Outcomes. As part of the Project Grants application form, you'll be asked to select what your project focuses on. This helps us to decide which of the Outcomes your project will make a difference towards. For example, your project may be particularly key in achieving Outcome 2 'Cultural Communities'; this is about working in a way that is focused on a specific place or community. However, depending on the type of activity, your Libraries project could make a difference across any of our Outcomes. Don't worry if you're not sure – we'll check we agree with the option you've selected when we look at your application.

You can find out more about our Project Grants criteria and how we make decisions in the [Guidance for applicants](#).

What you cannot apply for

We cannot normally fund:

- activities that do not engage people and communities

- 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

- applications with a non-culture and creativity focus from any organisation other than a public library

- 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 (ULO) Time limited priority

This section of the information sheet relates specifically to the Universal Library Offers (ULO) Time limited priority within Project Grants.

From time to time, we ask for specific types of applications through Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants to help us achieve our strategy **Let's Create.** These are called Time limited priorities.

From November 2023 we have a Time limited priority around the Universal Library Offers. This priority will run for at least two years.

This means that we want to encourage applications around work that delivers on the ULOs, and to support Public Libraries to develop good applications by giving targeted advice. Setting this as a priority means that we can prioritise good applications that deliver ULO activity in the mix of our decision making. (See the 'How we make decisions' section of the Guidance for applicants for more detail.)

The opportunity to respond to any priority is part of Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants and is not a separate programme. Any application must meet the criteria for Project Grants, as well as respond to the specific characteristics of the priority.

Who can respond to this priority?

This priority is open to local authority library services (as defined by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964).

Public Libraries who are also NPOs are subject to the restrictions noted above.

We'll ask you in the Eligibility Questionnaire to tell us if you're applying to the Universal Library Offers priority.

In your application, you should be clear about which of the Universal Library Offers you're applying against. You can apply to deliver one or more of the offers.

Projects that respond to the Universal Library Offers Time limited priority must still meet the wider National Lottery Project Grants criteria. Please read our Guidance for applicants.

What are the Universal Library Offers?

The Universal Library Offers are:

- Reading
- Culture and Creativity
- Information and Digital
- Health and well-being

Reading

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

If you're applying for a Reading project as part of the Universal Library Offers then your project may not always contain creative or cultural aims and outcomes.

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).

Please note: all libraries, organisations and individuals can apply for reading projects which focus on reading for pleasure 'creative reading'. For more details you can see our Literature information sheet under Types of projects in our [Guidance Library](#).

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 creative or cultural aims and outcomes.

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.

For this type of activity your project may not always contain any creative or cultural 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.

For this type of activity your project may not always contain creative or cultural 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).

Key things to remember

Here are some other things to think about when planning your application:

- Can you make a strong case for the activity being additional to what the library would routinely offer? This might be through:

    o increasing the scope or adding extra value to an existing activity
    o seeking new participants or audiences
    o innovative ways of doing things
    o development work

- Have you considered inclusivity and relevance? See our resources section for more information.

- Do you have appropriate partnerships in place to help you deliver your project?
    - For example, Libraries are well placed to work with local groups, National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs), the Higher Education sector and schools.

- 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 strand information sheet for more details.

- 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. For more details see our Building projects information sheet under Types of projects in our Guidance library.

Resources

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

When considering access, inclusion and diversity, you may find it useful to refer to the following report by John Vincent from the Network. 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.
https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/libraries-welcome-everyone-six-stories-diversity-and-inclusion-libraries-england

Contact us

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Phone: 0161 934 4317
Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk
Website: artscouncil.org.uk
Post: Arts Council England
               The Hive, 49 Lever Street
               Manchester
               M1 1FN

You can also Live Chat with our customer services team by clicking the icon our Project Grants page on our website.