

ARTS COUNCIL NATIONAL LOTTERY PROJECT GRANTS

Festivals and carnival art projects

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

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Nottingham Mela Network

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This information sheet relates to Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants. See [our website](#) for more information about Project Grants.

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Festivals and carnival arts

Festivals and carnival arts describe a range of activities that come under our combined arts discipline. Festivals and carnivals usually involve activity made up of different art forms and can involve one or both types of activity, covering one or more of our supported artforms, such as;

- music
- dance
- visual and live performance arts
- theatre
- literature
- other combined arts

Carnival arts may be part of a wider festival, or an activity in their own right. This information sheet explains the difference between the two as well as what kinds of activity we can and cannot support.

We welcome applications from individuals, groups and organisations towards both festivals and carnival arts activities.

Festivals

Festivals in England are a vital aspect of our cultural life, and usually involve a programme of different artists, sometimes across different artforms. For example; a live music festival may also include live literature, visual arts or circus arts.

Festivals have experienced increased audiences and significant growth in recent years, particularly in ticketed events. Free, local events also offer opportunities for a wide range of audiences, including those who do not usually engage with arts and culture.

What you can apply for

We welcome applications from individuals and groups to fund the creative content and participation aspects of festival programmes. We also fund projects that support audiences to access and engage with artistic and cultural programmes.

We are keen to support the festival sector to develop the quality of its artistic work, and to support artists' development.

Types of Festival activity that we can fund include:

- artistic programmes at annual or regular festival events (see the Repeat activities ongoing overheads and salaries' [information sheet](#))
- commissioning and co-commissioning artists between festivals
- artistic collaborations and on-going professional development for artists to create new and innovative work and develop their skills via residencies, mentoring, training, apprenticeships
- stage and site-specific programmes in various art forms, such as visual arts, music, theatre, dance, spoken word. This can include a mixture of professional artists' work or emerging and established artists, performers and community groups
- visiting international artists and work, as long as there are clear benefits to audiences or participants in England. We encourage a balance of programming with UK artists to support emerging and established talent to help create a sustainable and thriving arts sector in England
- workshop activity on the day, demonstrations, have a go activities, and activities aimed at children and families
- touring projects – touring to other festivals and events regionally or nationally, or stage work, performances and commissioned artistic work touring to other similar events
- one off opportunities to deliver arts and cultural festivals and events to commemorate historical anniversaries and celebrate significant events
- smaller scale local festivals with high quality artistic work and engagement activities

- projects with hard to reach or least engaged communities, who may not access the arts in traditional buildings/locations
- support programmes for the development of producers and programmers working within festival environments

What we are unlikely to fund

There are some aspects of festival projects which are not arts focused or which are not priorities for our funding. As such, we are unlikely to fund:

- applications which primarily support logistics, infrastructure, event staffing and management costs
- projects that do not involve high quality arts experiences

Carnival arts

Carnival describes public celebrations that people can take part in, for example, a parade or a street party. Carnivals often include their own specific styles of artistic activity, usually involving music, dance, costumes, and masks. There are various forms of Carnival, associated with different cultural and ethnic traditions. Carnival projects usually involve planning and delivering activities that people can take part in, as well as live performances.

Carnivals can also sometimes be part of a wider festival of combined arts.

What you can apply for

We are particularly keen to support the carnival sector to develop professional-quality work, and to make volunteer and amateur work more artistically strong.

Types of carnival project that we can fund include:

- events people can take part in and related creative workshops before performances, such as Mas camp workshops, master classes and residencies by high quality artists or organisations
- high quality design and creation of original costumes, artistic title banners and props for carnival parades. We are keen to support innovative use of materials and design in costume work
- dance and choreography, such as developing skills and styles, or creating new work for the season
- music activities, such as creating new pieces or exploring instrumental arrangements, lyrics, marches and anthems for the season (including calypso, samba, soca, steel pan, street music, and sounds systems)
- helping carnival artists to develop their practice and work through collaborations, residencies, mentoring, training, apprenticeships, and continuing professional development
- parades, carnival floats, carts, and tableaux installations (including masquerade and parade skills)
- stage programmes, such as music, theatre, dance, spoken word, and animated costumes
- work created by professional, emerging, or established artists, performers, community groups, troupes, or bands
- visiting international artists and work (as long as there are clear benefits to audiences or participants in England). We encourage a balance of international and UK artists, to support a thriving carnival sector in England
- workshops on performance and event days, demonstrations, and have-a-go activities
- touring activity, for example troupes, floats, and carts that tour to other events, parades, and carnivals regionally or nationally
- stage work, performances, and commissioned artistic work (such as new music or dance pieces) touring to other, similar events

If you are planning to tour your Carnival project, read our '[Touring activity' information sheet](#).

What we are unlikely to fund

There are some aspects of Carnival projects which are not arts focused or, while forming an important part of carnival and folk traditions, are activities that are not priorities for our funding. As a result, we are unlikely to fund some celebratory activities unless the artistic focus and content are made clear in the application.

These activities include:

- J'ouvert - smearing paint, mud, chocolate or oil on the bodies of participants
- dabbers and pyrotechnics – unless there is clear artistic content such as design input from a lighting artist or visual artist
- indigenous folk art activity such as souling, soulcaking and mumming
- liming, t-shirt bands, party bands, and dutty mas

What we are unable to fund

There are some elements of carnival arts projects which we are not be able to fund.

These include:

- non-original costume work or purchase – we can only support the design and creation of original costumes
- buying uniforms, such as band uniforms, cadet clothing or cheerleading outfits
- advertising banners - commercial sponsor banners
- beauty pageants

Participatory carnival arts workshops

Workshops in the months before carnival events often include mas making, dance, choreography, music composition, and performance rehearsals. For example, workshops that encourage the passing on of traditional mas making skills such as wire-bending, costume construction, calypso and spoken word skills, steel pan, or other crafts and techniques.

If you already regularly run participatory workshops, you can apply to this programme for support to develop the quality of your regular work. For example, you may wish to employ a professional carnival artist, choreographer, or musician in a residency.

Tell us who the target participants are for your workshops and how you will attract them. If you are working with children and vulnerable adults, make sure you have appropriate safeguards in place to protect them. For example, if the workshop facilitators are working with young people or vulnerable adults, they must have the relevant DBS checks in place.

Tell us about how the activity will benefit the people taking part in the workshop - think about how you can involve participants in the project and allow them to help plan the project, and shape the themes or designs.

Think about how you will showcase what is produced in the workshops (for example, tell us if participants will showcase their skills and costumes at a carnival or outdoor celebratory event).

Volunteers

We know that many amateur mas makers and carnival participants have years of experience creating good quality, community-based work. Carnival is reliant on such volunteers to create work and share skills and traditions.

In your budget, include any support in kind from volunteers who will give their time for free, or any other goods and services that you would otherwise have to pay for (such as equipment, space, and services). Tell us who is giving the support in kind, what it is, and an estimate of its value.

Completing your application

Our application form is made up of four sections: quality, public engagement, finance, and managing your project. For more information about these criteria, see our [How to apply guidance](#).

Before you apply, think about:

- the theme you have chosen for costumes, music, or choreography, and how and why you picked that theme. How will you use the theme in the design of your events?
- the track record of any workshop facilitators, and their experience of delivering carnival arts workshops in community settings. This will give us confidence that there will be a high-quality experience for workshop participants and that the resulting costumes, choreography, performances, or music will also be of a high quality
- giving yourself plenty of time to apply for any seasonal carnival projects, and submitting your application at least three to four months before the start of your project
- speaking to your local authority when planning your project – they may be able to offer advice or support
- speaking to other artists or carnival groups about their success in delivering funded projects. Hearing about others' experiences can be helpful, and you may find someone you could collaborate with in future
- the environmental impact. We encourage the projects we fund to be environmentally sustainable. Within carnival arts this can include reductions in the use of vehicles in parades, or encouraging audiences and participants to use public transport.

Further information

[Julie's Bicycle](#)

[Voluntary Arts](#)

[The National Council for Voluntary Organisations](#)

[Funding Central](#)

Festivals

[The Independent Street Arts Network \(ISAN\)](#) works to support and develop the UK outdoor arts sector. ISAN provides a range of services and resources for festivals and events, and producers and artists working outdoors.

[The Audience Agency's](#) Without Walls touring network report

[Attitude is Everything](#) work to improve deaf and disabled people's access to live music. Find their State of Access Report 2016 and Charter of Best Practice Toolkit at

[Mintel's](#) report is the most up to date to give headline figures on attendance – showing the live music and festival sector as the 'star performer in leisure industry audience growth'

[The UK Music / Visit Britain](#) report has a focus on the value of tourists to the UK attracted by festivals / music.

Data from the [Festival awards](#) on trends amongst festival attendees are here in their 2014 report:

[The Association of Independent festivals](#) produced a year 6 report which may be useful.

[The British Arts Festivals Association](#) is a membership organisation founded in December 1969, covering a wide span of arts and science festivals in the UK.

Carnival arts

The following organisations may be able to offer additional support or advice:

[UK Centre for Carnival Arts \(UKCCA\)](#)

[Carnival Village Trust, London](#)

[The New Carnival Company- Isle of Wight](#)

[East Midlands Caribbean Carnival Arts Network](#)

[Brouhaha International- Liverpool](#)

[Mahogany Carnival](#)

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