

This guide has been designed to support the process of establishing where to start when seeking funding for arts and cultural activity. There is a breadth of public and private financial support available to artists and creative organisations in Leicester and across the UK. This guide is intended to help you identify which route to funding is most suitable for your project. To discuss a project with the arts team please see contact details on page 4.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Writing a summary of your project proposal is the first step to identifying sources of project funding. Establish what you are doing, where you are doing it, and who will be involved. Understanding the output, engagement, and logistics of your project, will enable you to calculate the project costs effectively and identify relevant funders.

ARTFORM

What is the area of focus for your project?

The artform and focus of your project will influence which funding schemes are most suitable and relevant for you to apply to. Research which funders support your area of work, see which projects have been successfully granted funding. With an understanding of the strategic aims of different funding organisations you can establish which potential funders are in tune with the aims and goals of your project.

When completing funding applications highlight how your project aligns with existing cultural strategy to increase opportunities to attract support.

Consider the following areas of focus:

new work created | culture | innovation | provides opportunities to other artists/producers
education | new audience | community engagement | skills development | start-ups | digital
development | national reach | international reputation | addresses a gap or cultural need

LOCATION

Where will your project take place?

Local funding schemes will often be designed to support arts and cultural activity that takes place within a specific area and that supports and engages local people. Seek out funding schemes that operate locally to see if your project fulfils a local priority or initiative. Leicester City Council's Cultural Ambition Fund (CAF), is a small arts development scheme that can financially support heritage, arts or cultural activities in Leicester. For more information on CAF see the Arts and Culture [website](#).

Consider if there are local businesses that may be interested in sponsoring your project or providing support in-kind. Maximise opportunities to galvanize local relationships; building a strong local network can increase the scope of your activity and provide opportunities to share publicity and promote your work.

PEOPLE

Who will engage with your project?

There will be different aspects to the way in which people will be involved with your project. You may be engaging artists, makers, facilitators, or technical support in the delivery of your work. Consider who are the participants or audience of your work; whether they are viewing your work in an exhibition, taking part in a workshop or attending a showcase event, the people that your project will reach are key to unlocking engagement funding from national grant schemes and platforms.

For example, Arts Council England has a mission to enable everyone to experience arts and culture that enriches their lives. To reach this mission ACE funding schemes will support work that actively seeks to reach groups who are less likely to engage with arts and culture. ACE will also favour projects that offer something new for audiences that already have some experience of arts and culture.

Establishing clear project outcomes, with evidence of how your work will benefit participants, will enable you to research the specific schemes that support the people that your project engages, maximising opportunities to secure funding.

“Funders will want reassurance that creative organisations have thought carefully about potential self-financing – for example, from its supporters, development fees, advances, commissions and royalties – before looking for external backing.”

Creative industries

Routes to Finance A guide to sources of funding and investment for arts, cultural and creative organisations

PROJECT FINANCE

Assess existing and potential revenue streams for your project

Funders and investors will expect an organisation to be very clear about its sources of income and its revenue drivers. If you are expecting someone else to financially support your work, it is necessary to demonstrate your own financial contribution and/or the commitment of other partners' contribution to the project. Grant schemes will often ask for 'match funding', where you must demonstrate a specified percentage of secured finance before they will release grant funding.

What are your current and past sources of income? What has been successful?

There may be an income stream integrated within your project activity such as ticket sales, or you may be able to offer a system of membership or subscription. If your project involves a final show or exhibition, you could consider different models to raise finance, for example offering *freemium* and premium tickets that allow audience members a tiered experience dependent on the price they pay.

For digital projects consider opportunities for revenue via audience reach / share in advertising-led businesses, including music royalties.

Only once you have established a base line for match funding should you consider approaching potential funders and investors in your area of the creative sector. For a list of national funding platforms please see page 4 of this guide.

FUNDING VIA THE CROWD

Who among the people you engage with your work would be willing to contribute?

Crowdfunding can be a fast way to raise finance with no upfront fees, particularly if you have an established dedicated following. Pitching arts activity via online platforms is an effective way to increase support and can provide a valuable channel for marketing your project. Crowdfunded projects can also provide the opportunity to finance scratch performances or beta testing for potentially larger projects; these are effective ways to generate support, whilst simultaneously gathering audience feedback, peer review and expert guidance on how to develop and progress your work.

Leicester City Council manage a dedicated crowdfunding platform at www.spacehive.com. For additional crowdfunding platforms please see page 4 of this guide.

National Public Investment Schemes

Arts Council England

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/>

Arts Council England champions, develop and invests in activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, publishing to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections.

Creative England

<https://www.creativeengland.co.uk/>

Creative England invests in talented people and creative ideas, supporting the country's richly diverse games, TV, film and digital media industries, with direct investment, loans and business mentoring.

Crafts Council

<https://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/maker-support>

The Crafts Council work with a wide range of experts to provide maker support, including funding information and creative business advice.

NESTA Arts Impact Fund

<https://www.artsculturefinance.org/>

NESTA manages the Cultural Impact Development Fund and the The Arts & Culture Impact Fund. These two platforms provide unsecured small (£25k) and large (£500k+) repayable finance to socially driven arts and cultural organisations.

Innovate UK

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-funding-innovation>

Innovate UK is an innovation agency managed by Central Government, providing networking, collaboration and funding opportunities for business-led innovation and R&D.

British Film Institute (BFI)

<https://www.bfi.org.uk/supporting-uk-film/film-fund>

The BFI is the UK's lead organisation for film, representing the cultural, creative and economic priorities of UK film as part of a comprehensive and coherent strategy.

Local Public Investment

[Leicester Space Hive](#)

[LCC Cultural Ambition Fund](#)

[LCC Ward Community Grant](#)

[Leicestershire County Council Grants](#)

[East Midlands Funding Forum](#)

[Arts Council - Midlands](#)

Crowdfunding

<https://www.kickstarter.com/discover/countries/GB>

<https://www.indiegogo.com/>

<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/>

<http://www.angelcofund.co.uk/> (equity based)

<https://www.crowdcube.com/> (equity based)

<https://www.fundingcircle.com/uk/> (peer to peer)

Fundraising Advice

<https://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/home/>
