



Arts Grant Funding 2026

Guidelines for Applicants

Deadline: 5.30pm (Ireland time), Thursday 13 March 2025

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Getting help with your application

- If you have questions about using the Online Services website, visit the FAQ section on our website: www.artscouncil.ie/FAQs/online-services/
- If you have a technical question about the online application process and your question is not answered in the FAQ section, you can email onlineservices@artscouncil.ie or call the Arts Council on **01 618 0200/01 618 0243**
- If you have a query about your application that is not technical in nature, you should email or phone the arts team to which you are applying for funding: <http://www.artscouncil.ie/Contact-us/Staff-and-adviser-lists/>
- To watch our YouTube guide on making an application, go to <http://www.youtube.com/artscouncildemos>

Applicants with disabilities

The Arts Council makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities to engage with our services.

If you have a disability and need help with submitting your application, please contact us as early as possible before the deadline.

Contact: Disability Access Team

Phone: 01 6180237

Email: Disabilityaccess@artscouncil.ie

1. What you need to know about Arts Grant Funding

The deadline for applications is

5.30pm, Thursday, 13 March 2025

Please prepare and submit your application **well before** the deadline.

This section of the guidelines gives you background information about Arts Grant Funding. It will help you decide if you or your organisation meet the requirements for Arts Grant Funding.

1.1 The purpose of the Arts Grant Funding programme

The purpose of Arts Grants Funding is to ensure there is a breadth of high-quality arts activity and programmes throughout the country by offering flexible support that responds to the needs of those who are making, presenting, and supporting work.

Arts Grant Funding is intended to:

- Support **more than one** distinct arts activity taking place within a fixed period
- **or**
- Provide supports or facilities to artists over a fixed period.

1.2 What are the objectives of the programme?

The focus of Arts Grant Funding is to deliver arts activity and programmes that either:

- Generate high-quality experiences for the public to engage with the arts
- **or**
- Provide excellent services, resources or facilities that support the work of artists or the arts sector.

For example, a proposal might consist of:

- A series of distinct activities that may be related by theme, artform or arts practice, artistic vision, public engagement, and rationale.
- Several distinct projects and activities bound together by a specific focus (e.g. work in an artform or work targeted at a particular audience or community).

- The provision of training, support and/or resources or facilities for artists.
- Programmes that develop or nurture talent.
- The provision of opportunities for diverse audiences and/or particular publics to engage with arts activity.

In these guidelines we will use the term ‘activities’ to cover any elements within a proposal for the provision of resources or facilities as outlined above.

1.3 Who can apply?

Arts Grant Funding is open to:

- Organisations, including companies limited by guarantee (CLG), designated activity companies (DAC), partnerships, etc.
- Individuals. If two or more people want to make a joint application, one of them must act as the named applicant.

Note: if you are applying as an individual, you **must** show that your proposal involves collaboration with other artists and activities that include the delivery of public outcomes and/or outcomes that benefit other artists.

To be eligible to apply, you must be:

- Based or resident in the Republic of Ireland.

We may consider your application if you are based outside the Republic of Ireland. However, your application would have to convince us that your proposal would benefit the arts in the Republic of Ireland.

- Professional practising artists.

Even though you might not earn income continuously or exclusively from your arts practices, you must identify yourselves and be recognised by your peers as professional practising artists.

As part of its [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#), the Arts Council is committed to offering **equality of access, opportunity, and outcomes** to all potential applicants regardless of

- Age
- Civil or family status
- Disability
- Gender
- Membership of the Traveller community
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Socio-economic background.

In this funding scheme the Arts Council particularly welcomes applications that are representative of the diversity of Irish society, including but not limited to any of the characteristics outlined above, and/or initiatives that deliver equitable opportunities or outcomes for those involved.

1.4 Who is the applicant?

The applicant is the person or organisation who will receive any grant offered and who must accept the terms and conditions of that grant.

Any grant we offer will only be paid into a bank account held in the name of the applicant.

All the documents provided must be in the name of the applicant (either an individual artist or arts organisation) – e.g. if you apply for funding under the name Máire de Barra, then all the documents you provide, including bank and tax details, must be in that name. We will not accept variations such as Mary Barry or Barry Studios.

1.5 Who cannot apply?

- You cannot apply if you are an undergraduate student or will be during the period for which this funding is offered

- You cannot apply for costs towards the fees for postgraduate studies or to develop work that is connected to postgraduate studies
- Organisations currently in receipt of funding under the following Arts Council programmes: Strategic Funding, Arts Centre Funding, Partnership Funding – though the involvement of such organisations as partners is welcome
- Members of the Council of National Cultural Institutions (CNCI) directly funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media cannot apply.

Note: If your application for Arts Grant Funding 2026 is successful, you will not be permitted to apply for a Project Award for 2026.

1.6 What is the funding period to which the programme applies?

Funding is available to support activities that will take place within the following timeframes:

a) 12-month period from January 2026 to December 2026

or

b) 24-month period from January 2026 to December 2027

The Arts Council will only consider 24-month funding where applicants provide **significant detail** of their activities/programmes over this period.

Activities being applied for may take place across a full 12 or 24-month period, may occur all at once across a shorter time frame, or may occur intermittently within these time periods.

Note: The Arts Council may offer 12-month funding in response to a 24-month application for funding.

1.7 What kind of activities can I apply for?

Note: please see question 3.2 of the application form in relation to the priorities within your proposal.

You can apply for the following activities:

- Creation, production (including co-production), and presentation of an artwork or event for the benefit of an audience or particular community

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- Provision of arts experiences involving participants or targeted communities
- Development and creation of a piece of work for future performance or distribution, e.g., artwork, script, music composition
- Delivery of activities that support the development of the arts or the work of artists
- Provision of supports, resources, or facilities for artists
- Research (as part of a wider programme of artform development)
- Development costs, e.g., talent, partnership, or audience development
- Skills development and capacity building.

Examples of activities might be:

- Production and presentation of work (live, broadcast, digital), either in one location or in multiple locations with the collaboration of partners
- Artistic experimentation, development, and creation, including artistic laboratory or studio work
- Publishing
- Digital publishing
- Co-production
- Artistic residencies
- Creative activity enabling public engagement and participation
- Artist development or support programme
- Facilities and resources for artists, e.g. studio space, workspace, hot desks, Wi-Fi, meeting rooms, reading space, research facilities, networking, and peer learning opportunities.

Work in an international context

We do not support costs directly related to the touring and dissemination of work abroad. Activities involving international exchange, collaboration, or co-production are eligible provided they clearly show the benefit to people,

artists, or the arts in the Republic of Ireland, and that the overseas partners will contribute to the relevant activity costs.¹

1.8 What activities can I not apply for?

You cannot apply for activities that:

- Do not fit the purpose of the programme
- Are by individual artists and there is no collaborative or partnership element (this is more suited to funding under the Artists' Supports category of our funding framework – e.g., Bursary Award, Project Award).
- Are more suited to another award funded by the Arts Council or operated by other state agencies or funding bodies, such as Culture Ireland
- Will have commenced before 1 January 2026
- Are to raise funds for charity, to take part in a competition, or solely to make a profit
- Have already been assessed by the Arts Council, unless you can demonstrate that you worked on and developed your proposal since last applying **or** if the Council has specifically advised you to redirect your application to this award. Please bear in mind that such advice is not an indication of a successful outcome.

1.9 What costs can I apply for?

All costs must relate directly to the activities within your proposal.

The types of costs you can apply for might include:

- Wages and fees for artistic, creative, and other staff essential to the delivery of the activity* (see note on pay and conditions for artists below)
- Overhead/administrative costs that are **appropriate and in proportion** to the activities proposed, including planning and preparation costs
- Development costs

¹ For further information, please see [the Arts Council's Making Great Art Work: International Arts Policy & Strategy](#).

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- Studio or space costs
- Rehearsal costs
- Making and physical-production costs
- Production, co-production, and distribution costs
- Publishing costs
- Recording or documenting costs
- Hire of equipment, space, or venue if the hire is essential to the delivery of the activity
- Marketing, PR, and public engagement costs
- Accommodation, daily expenses, and travel.

*** Note on pay and conditions for artists**

The Arts Council is committed to improving the pay and conditions of artists. In this context, the Arts Council has published a [policy](#) on the fair and equitable remuneration and contracting of artists. This includes best-practice principles for all those working in the arts to aspire to.

All artists engaged on Arts Council-funded activities must be paid fairly. Anyone seeking funding from the Arts Council must tell us how they will ensure that artists will receive fair pay and conditions and provide details in their budgets. We use this to assess applications and will not offer funding if we consider pay to be too low or below industry standards, or where the terms of engagement are not appropriate. We will monitor compliance through our reporting mechanisms.

As part of your application, you will be asked to set out your approach to ensuring that artists are properly paid and to provide information on the average rates of pay and/or range of fees that you propose to pay to independent, freelance artists and to other arts professionals.

Access costs for artists or participants² with disabilities

We are committed to making our funding schemes and the work we fund accessible to everyone. To meet this goal, we offer financial supports to remove barriers for artists and participants with disabilities. These are known as disability access costs.

We take the description of disability from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, together with Irish legislation and case law. We broadly include all people with disabilities. For example, people with physical, medical, cognitive, intellectual, learning, emotional, or sensory impairments.

There are two types of disability access costs that you may need to consider for your application: personal disability access costs and audience disability access costs.

The Arts Council provides separate funding for personal disability access costs in addition to your core budget. You must fund audience disability access costs from within your core budget.

1. Personal disability access costs

These supports should help you to remove barriers for artists or participants with disabilities who are delivering your proposal. For example:

- You
- The main artists, individuals, groups, or organisations involved in your proposal
- Partners, mentors, or collaborators
- Production staff
- Core staff or key administrative personnel

Examples of supports are, but not limited to, the following:

² The Arts Council defines participants as those who express themselves creatively by taking part in artistic activities.

- An ISL interpreter for a participant or participants
- Services of an access support worker
- Additional rehearsal or studio time.

Note: You can apply for these costs in addition to the maximum amount available for the award.

2. Audience disability access costs

These are costs for making your work accessible to people with disabilities. We want to ensure that more people enjoy high-quality arts experiences and that everyone can access and enjoy the work we fund. Access for disabled audience members should be considered a normal part of your work.

Examples of supports to make your work accessible to your audience may be:

- Having an ISL interpreter for your event or performance
- Using an audio-description service
- Making your website compatible with screen readers
- Producing exhibition materials in other formats such as in Braille or audio.

Note: The Arts Council does not currently provide additional funding for these costs. You must include these costs in your core application budget.

How to apply for disability access costs

If you include disability access costs in your proposal, you must upload a document listing these costs with your supporting material. An optional template is available on the [Arts Grant Funding page](#) on the Arts Council website. You must also show the costs in two separate lines in your application form:

- A line for personal disability access costs
- A line for audience disability access costs.

Note: whether you use your own document or the Arts Council template, the two types of disability access costs must be shown separately.

What if the funding I am offered is less than I requested?

If you are offered funding that is less than you requested, we will discuss with you how you plan to deliver your proposed activity when reviewing the revised budget. We will also discuss an appropriate adjustment to your disability access costs.

How do I draw down my personal disability access costs?

If your application is successful, we will give you information on how to draw down your funding. Personal disability access costs are drawn down separately from your core funding. You may be asked to complete a short report on how you used these funds.

1.10 What costs can I not apply for?

You cannot apply for:

- Costs that do not fit the purpose of the programme
- Ongoing overhead or administrative costs where there is no relationship with the activities for which you are requesting funding
- Capital costs.

1.11 How much can I apply for?

The Arts Council operates under budgetary constraints and the scheme is extremely competitive. We also need to ensure support for a wide range of artforms and arts-practice areas.

The average grant over the previous three rounds of the programme was **€62,000**.

Details of successful applicants under this programme in previous years is available on the Arts Council website in the [Who We've Funded](#) section.

Arts Grant Funding is an open scheme. This means the competitive context, both overall and within each area, cannot be anticipated in advance.

Information on 2025 below is intended to help applicants understand the overall context based on the prior year's outcomes.

This includes:

- The number of **eligible** applications received in each of the arts areas
- How many applications were funded in each arts area.
- The median value of Arts Grant Funding awarded for each artform.

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Artform	Received	Funded	Median Funding Amount
Architecture	4	3	€25,000
Arts Centres	14	9	€51,000
Artists' Support	2	2	€53,000
Arts Participation	16	13	€85,500
Circus	9	7	€40,000
Dance	14	9	€80,000
Festivals	9	7	€86,000
Film	4	1	€113,000
Literature (English)	48	35	€53,000
Literature (Irish)	5	5	€41,064
Music	52	45	€29,328
Opera	3	2	€217,500
Spectacle	2	2	€40,000
Street Performance	1	1	€30,000
Theatre	22	14	€178,000
Traditional Arts	10	9	€67,500
Visual Arts	41	22	€67,500
Children and Young People's Arts (formerly YPCE)	21	16	€117,500

2. What is required to make an application

Please note that items 1–6 below **are required in all cases**.

1. **Application form:** A completed application form.

Supporting material

2. **AAR Template:** A completed Arts Activity Report (AAR) template.

This is a Microsoft Excel template available for 2026 (and for 2026 and 2027 if you are applying for funding across 24 months). This can be downloaded from the [Available funding page](#) of the Arts Council website.

Where possible please combine each of the supporting material types below into single attachments per type, as follows:

3. **Examples of Work:** Provide no less than one and no more than three recent examples of previous work of your organisation or the artists/artistic personnel involved in this application, e.g., a programme; previous published or unpublished writing or publications; sample manuscripts; still or moving images or sound files; reviews; extracts from evaluation or other reports.

Examples of written work should be **no more** than ten pages in length.

Video or sound files should be **no more** than five minutes in length.

Note: you have the option to provide URL links to samples of work if you wish (see [section 4.5](#) below for further details).

Suggested filename: **Examples_of_work_name of applicant_AGF2026**

4. **Budgets:** To ensure that applications can be assessed on a like-for-like basis and that assessors can see the details of how costs have been arrived at, provide a detailed budget for each of the activities within your proposal. We recommend that you use the Individual Activity Budget (IAB) on the [Available Funding page](#) on the Arts Council website. If you choose not to use our template, please refer to the template for the type of information that is useful to include in a detailed budget.

Theatre applicants: To provide the required level of details for assessment, complete the [Theatre Budget Template](#) for each proposed production activity. This template must be used instead of the Individual Activity Budget template.

Note: if you do not provide detailed budgets for **each** of your proposed activities, we will not be able to evaluate the overall feasibility of your application.

Suggested filename: **Detailed_Budgets_ name of applicant_AGF2026**

- 5. Biographies:** Provide short biographies of all **confirmed** key artists and artistic personnel in delivering the proposed programme of work, e.g., producers, programmers, directors, (a paragraph or so will be sufficient). Where artists are not confirmed, you should submit a document outlining how artists will be identified and/or the types of artists/collaborators you have worked with previously.

Suggested filename: **Biographies_ name of applicant_AGF2026**

- 6. Evidence of support:** Provide documentary evidence of **confirmed** support outlining co-production, co-creation, partnership, and financial commitments.* We will consider the level of partnership funding that you have secured (cash or in-kind) when assessing the feasibility of your application. The inclusion of an agreed memorandum of understanding with partners will strengthen your application. You do not need to include 'letters of support' from partners that are not offering cash or in-kind support for co-production, co-creation, partnership, or financial commitments

Where all partnerships are not yet confirmed, demonstrate in your application that your plans are feasible by providing evidence of your track record with regard to co-production and co-creation.

***Note:** you will be required to demonstrate evidence of a formal partnership agreement with any such partners as a condition of funding, should your application be successful.

Suggested filename: **Partnership_evidence_ name of applicant_AGF2026.**

Supporting material — required, if relevant to your application

- **Disability Access Costs:** If your proposal involves enabling artists with access or disability requirements to create work, and/or enabling individuals with access or disability issues to attend or engage with your work, you must provide a short document setting out these costs and how they were arrived at. See [Section 1.9](#) above.

Suggested filename: **Disability_Access_costs_name of applicant_AGF2026**

Supporting material — if relevant to your application

We strongly recommend that you upload the following to support your application if you have referred to them or work with certain groups.

- **Commissioning:** If your proposal involves commissioning artists/creative people, include a copy of your commissioning policy or a brief document setting out your approach. This will describe the steps you will take to deliver a transparent approach to commissioning, and one that ensures quality, equality, and diversity.

Suggested filename: **Commissioning_statement_name of applicant_AGF2026**

7. **Public-engagement plans:** If your proposal includes public engagement activities, include an audience and/or, distribution and/or, engagement plan, as appropriate.

If your proposal has a mix of public engagement activity types, you can provide a combined audience/distribution/engagement plan.

- a) **Audience plan:** if your proposal includes activities involving presenting, performing, exhibiting or publishing work for the public, provide an outline plan as to who the work is aimed at and how they will be reached. We are calling this an audience plan, but it may be known as a marketing plan and may contain elements of an engagement plan also (for example, if the work is targeted at particular communities).

Suggested filename: **Audience_plan_name of applicant_AGF2026**

- b) **Distribution/dissemination plan:** if your proposal involves the presentation or distribution of work (e.g. a publication or exhibition) in more than a single place, provide an outline distribution/dissemination plan. This will describe details of where, when, and how the activities will be presented/curated/distributed, e.g., which arts or other venues, public spaces, shops, libraries,

cinemas. Where relevant, this may cover physical and digital distribution.

Suggested filename: **Distribution_dissemination_plan_name of applicant_AGF2026**

- c) If your proposal includes activities involving the participation of, or the active engagement by, the public or targeted groups (including professional artists), provide an outline engagement plan setting out who will be engaged and the nature of that engagement.

Suggested filename: **Engagement_plan_name of applicant_AGF2026**

For further guidance about the above, see the [Public Engagement page](#) on the Arts Council website.

- 8. Children and young people:** If your proposal involves children and young people, include information about how children and young people will have a voice in decision-making, include this as a section in your engagement plan or as a separate document. For more information, please see the [National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making](#).

Suggested filename: **Children_and_young_people_name of applicant_AGF2026**

- 9. Workspace:** If your proposal involves providing workspace for artists, provide photographic evidence of the potential workspace/physical resources. If you have no space confirmed, provide a description of the specifications of the type of space you are intending to use.

Suggested filename: **Artists_workspaces_name of applicant_AGF2026**

- 10. Animals:** If your proposal involves working with animals, provide a copy of your animal welfare protection policies and procedures. For guidance, see [this document](#) on the Arts Council website.

Suggested filename: **Animal_welfare_name of applicant_AGF2026**

We **will not** accept as part of your application:

- Any extra supporting material you provide that is not listed above
- Any supporting material that is not uploaded as part of your online application
- Any supporting material after the application deadline.

Note: links to streaming platforms may be used to provide samples of work. Stand-alone supporting material such as CVs and letters of support, etc., **must** be uploaded as separate documents with your application. See [section 4](#).

Note: If you do not provide the **required items** and they are relevant to your activities, it may impact the assessment of your application and reduce your chances of receiving funding. For example, if you do not provide a supporting document for Disability Access Costs, we cannot properly assess this part of your application and will not be able to provide funding towards this activity.

For applications involving children and young people under the age of 18

The Arts Council requires all individuals and organisations providing services (e.g. cultural, recreational, educational) to children and young people under 18 years of age to have suitable child protection policies and procedures in place.

When making an application, you **must** indicate in **section 1** of the application form whether your proposal is relevant to this age group.

- If you answer 'Yes' to this question in the application form and your application is successful, as a condition of funding you will be required to confirm and demonstrate that you have suitable child-protection policies and procedures in place.
- If successful, you will be required to complete the Arts Council's Child Protection and Welfare Quality Assurance Self-audit at <https://childprotection.artscouncil.ie/>.

Visit www.tusla.ie for more information on Children First.

For applications involving vulnerable adults

When making an application, you **must** indicate in **section 1** of the application form if your proposal involves work with or for vulnerable persons. By ticking the 'Yes' box, you are indicating that you will work with or present work to this cohort as part of your proposal, and that you acknowledge that you have familiarised yourself with and adhere to the [National Policy & Procedures on Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse*](#).

* Please note that you may be asked to provide more evidence of adherence to these policies should your application be successful.

3. How we assess your application

3.1 Assessment criteria

Applications that are deemed eligible will be passed on for assessment.

Assessment will be based on the following criteria:

Criterion 1: Artistic quality

Here we assess the quality associated with the idea, the proposed arts activity, and the artistic people involved. We will look both at what you propose to do and how you describe those activities. We will look at how you show excellence in terms of ambition, originality, experimentation, innovation, competency, and collaboration in what you propose. We will also take account of the artform or arts-practice context for your proposed arts activity.

- We will take into account the quality and ambition of work that you, your organisation, or any collaborators named within your application have created, made, or produced within the last three years.
- Where your ideas involve the development or creation of artistic works, we will assess how you show excellence in the process of developing, creating, and presenting work.
- Where your ideas involve providing services, resources, and facilities, we will assess how you show the quality of what you propose and the demand from within, and relevance to, your area of art practice.
- In all cases we will assess the artistic track record or potential of the artists and creative people involved as shown in their biographies and the other supporting materials you submit.
- We will assess how the approach you describe to selecting artists and partners will ensure quality, equality, and diversity.

Criterion 2: Outcomes that deliver on the objectives of Arts Grants Funding

Here we assess how the outcomes of what you propose will meet the objectives of the funding programme and, in so doing, contribute to the development of the arts in Ireland.³

³ Please reference the policy priorities within [Making Great Art Work](#), the Arts Council's ten-year strategy, and to artform and arts-practice polices.

In all cases we will assess how you show that the outcomes of what you propose will:

- Provide a supportive environment for a range of artists to develop and create work;

and/or

- Provide opportunities for the public to engage with the arts

and

- Contribute to the ecology of the arts within your area of practice.

Where your proposals involve an engagement with the public – whether at a local, national or international level – we will assess how you show excellence, ambition and innovation in your process and approach to growing and diversifying audiences, including how you hear from the groups you engage with and respond to their interests and experiences.

Finally, we will assess how you plan to evaluate these outcomes.

Responding to the question on equality, diversity, and inclusion

Since launching its [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Policy](#), in 2019, the Arts Council has committed to embedding the policy's principles in respect of **equality of access, opportunities, and outcomes** into everything we do. The Arts Council is particularly keen to support work that embeds equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) principles and practices thoughtfully and proactively.

The Arts Council's EDI policy considers ten protected characteristics. These are: gender, sexual orientation, civil status, family status, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the Traveller community, and socio-economic status.

In the application form, we ask Arts Grant Funding applicants to describe how the planned activities incorporate the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion to deliver equitable opportunities or outcomes for those involved.

This can take many forms – e.g.,

- The project applicant self-identifying as sharing one or more of the protected characteristics outlined in the Arts Council's EDI policy (link above)

- The lead artist(s) involved in the project sharing one or more of the protected characteristics, particularly from under-represented groups.
- The themes or focus of the project being on a specific equality issue or involving working with a particular community of interest that shares one or more of the protected characteristics outlined in our policy.

What details should you provide in the application form?

- Write 'not applicable' if you do not believe the activities proposed in this round will make a specific contribution to the policy.
- It is unlikely that your application will reference each of the ten protected characteristics covered in the policy. Focus on the aspects that are relevant to your arts area and the activities you propose. In assessing the answer to this question, we will be looking at the potential of your activities to address inequities in the arts and the proposed approach.
- Tell us briefly why you believe your proposals have the potential to address inequalities in the arts – e.g., you may have evidence of historical inequalities in a particular arts area; you may be working with partners that have a track record in engaging under-represented communities or artists.
- You may be introducing new processes or ways of working to support access. Tell us how you are making your work accessible, including to those taking part and to audiences with access needs.
- Describe what the change or outcome may look like for the people involved should your project be successful.

Criterion 3: Feasibility

Here we assess your capacity to deliver the proposed activity. We will assess how you have shown:

- The track record of the people involved in managing, administering, and delivering the proposal.
- Your capacity to deliver the proposed programme.
- That all participating artists will get fair pay and conditions (please see the note on pay and conditions for artists in [Section 1.9](#) above).
- That plans to engage or commission artists or other partners are transparent and realistic.

- That identified partners and/or collaborators are committed to what is proposed and the level of confirmed partnership funding or other commitments.
- That the proposed budget is realistic and will be managed appropriately.
- That other sources of income are secure and realistic, and that access to any required non-financial resources is in place.
- That the timetable or schedule is realistic and that technical requirements will be met.
- That audience or public-engagement targets, where relevant, are specific, realistic, and achievable, and that there are solid plans in place to achieve this. This may include audience or participant numbers and/or more qualitative outcomes where relevant.
- That any risks have been identified, and appropriate mitigation is in place.
- Where an applicant has other projects or programmes of work outstanding, this may be considered when assessing the capacity to deliver the proposed activities.

We will use what you say within your application, and what you show through relevant supporting material, to make this assessment.

3.2 Scoring

Assessors will use their professional arts expertise and judgement to score applications against each of the criteria. Their evaluation and score will be based on:

- The information you provide in the application form and supporting material
- Their knowledge of your previous work
- Their knowledge of the general arts landscape
- The artform or arts-practice context in which you are working
- The competitive context for the award.

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The scores to be used are as follows:

Numeric score		Explanation
6	Exceptional	The application addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion comprehensively and in an exemplary manner. There are no shortcomings whatsoever. This score is reserved for the very best elements of applications and will be used very sparingly.
5.5		Between 'Excellent' and 'Exceptional.'
5	Excellent	The application addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion convincingly and successfully. It provides all the information and evidence needed and there are no concerns or areas of weakness.
4.5		Between 'Very good' and 'Excellent.'
4	Very good	The application addresses the criterion very well. It gives clear information on the evidence needed. Any concerns or areas of weakness are minor.
3.5		Between 'Good' and 'Very Good'
3	Good	The application addresses the criterion well, although some improvements could be made. It gives information on nearly all of the evidence needed, although there are some gaps.
2.5	Sufficient	The criterion is addressed well enough to merit consideration for funding, but there are reservations about the level of detail provided or the quality of the response within the overall competitive context.
2.0	Not sufficient	There is either insufficient or no evidence addressing the criterion to merit support.

We will award funding on a competitive basis within an artform or arts-practice area. This means that we will award funding to the highest-scoring applicants until we reach the overall budget allocation within each artform or arts-practice area.

Note: if your proposal scores 2.0 against any of the criteria, it will not be offered funding.

Where your application achieves a higher score, we will try to award funding to meet the requirements of the entirety of your proposal where possible.

However, in some cases we may not be able to support the full ambition of your request. This may be because we believe that some activities are underdeveloped or not compelling within the overall competitive context of the award, or because of the need to ensure a balance of support across artforms and geographic areas.

This means that, while all applicants who achieve a high enough score to merit funding will get funding, the amount of funding will depend on the number of activities within your proposal that we believe merit support and the overall level of demand within your arts area. See question 3.2 in the application form.

We will also consider the relative value for money of your proposal when deciding the level of grant to award.

4. Making your application

The deadline for applications is

5.30pm, Thursday 13 March 2025

Please prepare and submit your application **well before** the deadline.

4.1 Register with the Arts Council's Online Services

All applications **must** be made through the Arts Council's Online Services; applications made in any other way (by post, fax or email) will **not** be accepted.

You **must** have an Online Services account to apply for funding. If you do not already have an Online Services account, sign up by filling out the registration form here: <https://onlineservices.artscouncil.ie/register.aspx>.

Within five working days you will get an email containing your unique ARN (Artist Reference Number) and a password that you can use to sign in to Online Services.

Requirements for using Online Services

Note: you will need to use a computer/laptop to submit your application. Our Online Services website does not work on phones or tablets.

Your computer and Internet browser will need to meet the following requirements to use Online Services successfully:

PC	Windows 7 operating system or a newer version of Windows.
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OLS will work with the latest versions of all browsers – e.g. Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Safari, Mozilla Firefox

Mac	Mac OS X v10.5 Leopard or a newer version of the Mac operating system (macOS).
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OLS will work with the latest versions of all browsers – e.g. Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Safari, Mozilla Firefox

Note: you will also need to have Microsoft Word (Desktop) or OpenOffice Writer installed to complete the application form itself. OpenOffice Writer is free software that can be downloaded from here: www.openoffice.org.

OpenOffice Users

Please refer to our video *Using OpenOffice to download, complete and upload the application form* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iT9XxgmgoEo>

You **must** use OpenOffice Writer version 4.0.1 or earlier. More recent versions of OpenOffice Writer than 4.0.1 have changed how our application forms appear when they are submitted through Online Services.

Important notes for Apple Mac users

- Note the section in the YouTube video (at 1 min. 20 secs; link provided above) that deals with the issue of downloading version 4.0.1 on Macs with the operating system mac OS Mojave or an earlier version installed.
- You cannot download OpenOffice 4.0.1 onto a Mac with the operating system macOS Catalina. If your Mac has this operating system or a newer version installed, you will have to download and use OpenOffice version 4.1.10 or newer.

If you cannot meet, or do not understand, any of these requirements, please contact us for advice as far as possible in advance of the deadline.

Give yourself enough time to complete the application

Become familiar with the Online Services website **well before** the deadline and before you prepare your application.

Make sure to leave yourself enough time to upload your application.

Remember that upload times can be much longer than download times, so it may take you longer than you think to upload your supporting materials.

Technical support

If you need technical support while making an online application, contact us.

- Email: onlineservices@artscouncil.ie
- Phone: 01 618 0200/01 6180243

Please provide a contact phone number and make sure that you are available to receive a return call from us.

We deal with queries on a first-come first-served basis. We recommend that you report any technical issues to us **well in advance** of the deadline.

Please note that there is often a high volume of calls as the deadline approaches.

Technical-support calls received after **2.00pm** on the closing date may not be resolved before the deadline

4.2 Download the application form

1. Log in to Online Services (OLS).
2. On your home page within OLS, click the **'Make an application'** button.
3. On the **'Making an application'** screen, select your organisation's primary contact for this application, and click **'Next'**. The screen **'1. Making an application: Choose a funding programme'** should appear.
4. In section A, do two things.
 - a. From the **'Funding'** drop-down list, select your funding programme.
 - b. In the **'Your reference'** field, type a unique reference for your application. This will help you identify your application on your home page.
5. In section B, click the buttons to download the guidance notes and application form.

To complete your application form, you **must** have the correct software.

- Microsoft Word (Desktop) and Microsoft Excel
- or
- OpenOffice Writer and OpenOffice Calc, which you can download from www.openoffice.org.

Remember, you fill in the application form on your computer and then upload it through Online Services.

4.3 Fill in the application form

Once you have downloaded the application form, follow the guidance within the form as to how to complete it. Note our policy on artists' pay, as referred to in [section 1.9](#) above.

A note on max. character/word count: your answers to each question will be subject to a maximum character count (including spaces). It is okay to write shorter answers if you cover the points you need to in your response.

4.4 Complete the AAR template

Please see [section 5](#) below of these guidelines, for details on how to complete the AAR template.

4.5 Prepare the supporting material required for the application

See [section 2](#) above: **What is required to make an application?**

You **must** upload supporting material with your application and financial report. If you do not upload supporting material, your application is incomplete and we will not assess it.

If you have supporting material that is not in an electronic format, you will need to scan it so that you can upload it.

The total combined limit for all supporting material uploaded with a single application is **40MB**.

Acceptable file formats

These are the acceptable file formats for your supporting material.

File type	File extension
text files	.rtf, .doc, .docx, .txt
image files	.jpg, .gif, .tiff, .png
sound files	.wav, .mp3, .m4a
video files	.avi, .mov, .mp4
spreadsheets	.xls, .xlsx
Adobe PDF files	.pdf

Note: characters not allowed in the file names: ." * : < > ? / \ .

For example, Online Services won't accept these file names:

- Engagement_plan.name of applicant_AGF2026
- Distribution/dissemination_plan_name of applicant_AGF2026

Note: if you have completed your application form as a **.docx** file, and you are confident that your application form is filled in correctly (including typing inside the grey fields) but online services displays a message saying 'Cannot upload form', please try saving it as a **.doc** file and uploading it again.

Submitting URL links

Note: links to streaming platforms may be used to provide samples of work. Stand-alone supporting material such as CVs and letters of support, etc., **must** be uploaded as separate documents with your application.

You may provide links to material hosted on YouTube (www.youtube.com) or other file-sharing sites (e.g. Vimeo, SoundCloud) instead of uploading the material directly. To do this, copy the URL (the full address of where your material is hosted) into a Microsoft Word (Desktop)/OpenOffice Writer or PDF document and upload it as a web link-supporting document.

Please note that we will not accept links to the following sources:

- File-sharing sites – e.g. Google Drive, OneDrive
- Social-media platforms – e.g. Meta, Instagram
- Your personal website

Note: Assessors will only view materials in the URL links that you provide. It is important that you check that any links in the document work **and** they bring the viewer to the correct source to be able to access and view your supporting material.

Please do not flag your material as 'private' as it will not be accessible for the assessment. For example, on YouTube change your settings to 'unlisted' if you do not wish the application supporting material on your channel to be publicly viewable.

4.6 Review the application checklist

Use the checklist in the application form to review your application materials. If you have all the items on the checklist, you are ready to upload and submit your application.

4.7 Make your application online

Once you have completed your application form, filled in the online AAR, and gathered your supporting materials, you can submit your completed application.

To do this, log in to Online Services and follow the instructions on screen to complete your application online.

5. How to complete the AAR template

The AAR template is a spreadsheet that captures your detailed financial, audience and staff figures, as well as summary information about the activities that you plan to undertake in 2026.

The AAR process has been introduced for three reasons:

- As part of our commitment to get better at monitoring the outcomes and impacts of our investments as a tool for advocacy, advice, policy development and case-making.
- As a means of assessing and tracking applicants' work in a consistent and systematic manner.
- To act as the basis for funding agreements with grant recipients.

Note: you must upload your AAR template as a Microsoft Excel or OpenOffice Calc file. Do not convert it to a pdf file.

complete the AAR template as follows:

Part 1	Overhead expenditure and income
Core expenditure	<p>This is any overhead or administration costs you may have that are not <u>directly attributable</u> to the arts activities that you propose to undertake.</p> <p>This is so you can provide us with an overview of your organisation's operating model if you wish. You should not include in this section any costs for which you are looking for funding.</p> <p>Note: Do not list the same overhead or administration costs at the core level and also at the activity level.</p>
Income not directly related to activities proposed	<p>This is income not directly resulting from, or attributable to, specific activities.</p> <p>Examples: local authority grant income that is not being directly used against a specific activity; income from sponsorship or fundraising that is not directed towards a specific activity; rental income or income from fees for services provided.</p>

If you do not have any Core expenditure or income, you can leave this part of the AAR blank.

Part 2.1

Activity detail

A. Activity name

The name of your activity – this is the name you gave each activity in section 3, tables A (and B if you are applying for 24 months) of your application form.

B. Artform

Select the **primary** or main artform for the activity from the drop-down menu (or select ‘more than one artform’ if more than one artform is involved).

C. Activity type

Choose the activity type from the drop-down menu that **most closely** represents the activity that you are undertaking. These are:

- **Ticketed performance or event:** a performance to which tickets are sold or distributed (this includes a free event if there is a booking process)
- **Non-ticketed performance or event:** any event (e.g. street performance, parade, outdoor show) where people do not need to purchase a ticket to attend
- **Book/publication:** a book, such as a novel or poetry collection, or a publication, such as a periodical or journal, whether physical or online
- **Production and/or distribution of artefact:** e.g. the creation of a series of prints, or other art objects that might be sold or otherwise distributed
- **Broadcast/online/digital distribution of work:** the broadcast or distribution of a work online or digitally – e.g. a musical performance, online artwork, the online publication of a magazine or journal

- **Exhibition:** a visual-art exhibition, including gallery installations of sculpture, art film, sound installations, etc.
- **Participatory, education, or outreach activity:** any activity where people are involved in artistic production by making, doing, or creating something, or contributing ideas to a work of art, regardless of their skill level, or *taking part* in workshops or other similar activities
- **New-work development activity:** any activity where the purpose is the development of a new piece of work – e.g. the dramaturgical process for a new play, the editing process for a new book
- **Research/archiving/digitisation:** any activity where the main purpose is research or the archiving or digitisation of materials relating to arts practices
- **Artist-focused/artform development activity:** any activity where the main focus is on supporting artists/creative people and helping to develop their practice or their work, or ancillary events such as information clinics, seminars or conferences aimed at professional artists

D. Primary target of activity

Choose the primary target from the drop-down menu that **most closely** represents the target group for the activity that you are undertaking. These are:

- **General audiences** – mainly, though not exclusively, individuals of 18 years of age and over who attend or engage of their own volition, not as part of a targeted group or community of interest

-
- **Families** – work intended for parents/guardians and children alike
 - **Children up to 15 years of age** – those who are more likely to attend as part of a school or other organised group, or to be brought by parents or guardians, but for whom the work is aimed exclusively
 - **Young people 16–23 years of age** – e.g. Leaving Cert students, college students, youth groups
 - **Particular communities** – where the primary target of an activity is a specific group or community of interest – e.g. older people, people with disabilities, people from certain geographic areas (urban and rural, especially remote), members of minority communities, people who experience socio-economic disadvantage status (by social class, education, income)
 - **Practising artists or arts professionals** – e.g. a resource organisation focused on supporting professional development or serving a community of artists
-

Part 2.2	Financial detail
E. Total cost	The total direct cost to your organisation of undertaking the activity.
F. Earned income	Any income earned from ticket sales, box-office or sales income from books or other artefacts.
G. Income from other sources	Any income from sources other than sales – e.g. sponsorship, fundraising or grant income from sources other than the Arts Council.

H. Outcome/subsidy required	This is a sum that will be calculated automatically and is the difference between the cost of the activity and any income against it.
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Part 2.3	Audience/engagement/employment/event numbers
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I. Audience/engagement number – paying	For the purposes of data gathering, 'Engagement' is taken to mean four things:
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J. Audience/engagement number – free	
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- **Audience** members, readers, listeners, viewers, attenders, visitors, or others *engaging* with art and arts events (e.g. recitals, book sales, concerts, plays, dance performances, art exhibitions, literary events)
 - Members of the public ***participating*** in the making or creation of art or in arts-related workshops, classes, or events (e.g. post-show discussions, public Q&As).
 - People ***volunteering*** to work on or at an event – e.g. an arts festival or as front-of-house staff at a local arts centre (**note:** this is different from *participants* in arts events, where they are actively involved in the creation, making, or presenting of work)
 - Artists, arts professionals, or other practitioners ***taking part*** in workshops, classes, or other developmental activity.
-

In all the above cases, individuals are either paying or not paying to attend/engage with the art. **They are not being paid.**

Need further help compiling your engagement numbers? Additional guidance on completing this section of the application form is available on our website at <http://www.artscouncil.ie/public-engagement>.

K. Artists employed: number

The number of artists employed, contracted, or commissioned directly in the delivery of an activity. Give the number as a single figure, regardless of the duration of each individual's engagement. So, an actor employed over eight weeks, or a curator engaged across six months would still be an artist-employed figure of '1' each against the activity for which they are employed.

Note: if you are co-producing or hosting work and you do not know the number of artists directly employed, you can leave this section blank.

L. Others employed: number

Professionals employed, contracted, or commissioned in a non-arts capacity directly to deliver an activity – e.g. administration or technical personnel, facilitators, marketing, or finance professionals.

M. No. of performances/objects/events/days open

This is to help us to understand how many opportunities the intended beneficiaries of your proposed activities have to engage with each activity – i.e.

the number of individual performances of a play or dance piece; the number of books printed; the number of art objects created; or the number of workshops, classes or other events held. In the case of visual arts, it is taken to mean the **number of days** that an exhibition is open to the public.

Note on overhead and administration costs

As stated above in [Section 1.9](#), any overhead and administration costs need to be appropriate and in proportion to the activities you propose in your application. Arts Grant Funding is not intended to support ongoing salary or other overhead costs that are not related to these activities.

You are asked to account for costs that relate to any permanently employed artists or other professionals within individual activity budgets (e.g. if the artistic director of an organisation is directing a play, or the director of a gallery is curating an exhibition) if you are seeking support towards those costs.

Note on listing activities

The total number of activities allowed within the AAR template is **twenty**. If you have more than twenty individual activities, rather than providing details of **every** individual activity or event, you should **group** your proposed activities by artform or by type.

For example:

- Performing-arts activities (e.g. theatre, dance, circus)
- Visual-arts activities
- Music activities
- Literature activities
- Activities or events for children/young people
- Local community/amateur activities
- Development activities

6. How your application is processed

We follow the steps below to consider applications, decide on them, and contact applicants. This helps us make sure that our system for making decisions is open, fair, and transparent.

-
- 1 After you submit your application, you should receive two emails:
 - The first will be sent immediately and will acknowledge your application.
 - The second should arrive a few minutes later. It will contain your application number, which we will use in all correspondence about your application.

Note: these emails only mean that our online system recognises that you have submitted an application. They **do not** mean that your application is eligible to go forward for assessment.

If you **do not** receive the email with your application number, contact onlineservices@artscouncil.ie

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- 2 Once we have received your application, we will check to make sure it is eligible for Arts Grant Funding.
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- 3 If we decide your application is not eligible, either because it does not meet the purpose for the award or because you have not fully satisfied the requirements for Arts Grant Funding, we will write to tell you that your application is ineligible and will not be assessed.
-
- 4 Your application will be scored and assessments written based on the criteria in [section 3](#) of these guidelines.
-
- 5 Draft assessment and scores go through a moderation process overseen by an independent moderator to ensure a consistency of approach to assessment and scoring.
-
- 6 We will prepare recommendations for the Arts Council Executive (for applications requesting less than €50,000) and for the Council (for applications requesting €50,000 or above).
-
- 7 The Council and the Executive will review and discuss the recommendations and make final decisions on funding amounts based on the budget and the overall arts context.
-

Note: to meet its overall strategic priorities, the Council (or the Arts Council Executive for applications requesting less than €50,000) may decide to alter or to overturn the recommendation of staff. In that context, it is possible that Council or the Arts Council Executive may decide to award less than the recommended amount or to not fund at all. In such cases, changes to staff recommendations will be documented and communicated.

- 8** We will send you a letter about our decision. If your application has been successful, we will include information on what you should do next.
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