NORTHERN IRELAND MUSEUMS COUNCIL

Art Fund_

Museums Connect Grant – Guidance Notes

About the Museums Connect Grant

The Museums Connect Grant programme is funded by the Art Fund and the NI Museums Council and aims to support museums in changing and developing their practice in a way that will help them connect with their audiences in new and safe ways.

The priority of this grant programme is to support the on-going recovery and reset from the pandemic for accredited local museums in Northern Ireland. The grant can provide support for organisational resilience, helping museums to engage with and meet the needs and expectations of existing and new audiences; develop a sustainable offer for the future; increase digital capabilities; support volunteers including recruitment, training, and development; create and adapt programmes and services post-Covid.

Many museums have opened their doors again following the Covid 19 pandemic, and are looking to gain a new relevance to their communities and visitors. Many are forging a blended approach of in person and digital engagement to meet the diversity of needs and offer an accessible and inclusive service. This period of adjustment has brought fresh challenges to the sector, but also opportunities. The emphasis of this grant programme will be on adapting existing approaches or developing new ways for local museums to connect with audiences, and to underpin a visitor experience that is in-spiring, engaging and safe.

The fund may be used by museums that are keen to extend their practice and programming. This could be in in areas of audience development, such as becoming dementia friendly, promoting inter-generational practice, holding a takeover day, providing autism friendly resources, or in many other ways. Projects that involve co-curation or co-creation to reconnect with audiences will also be wel-comed. Museums who have recently had access audits and developed access action plans may con-sider using this grant to implement actions to support better visitor access to their collections, there-fore improving connection.

For museums that remain closed, the Museums Connect Grant can support the costs of re-opening in a way that ensures the safety and confidence of staff, volunteers, and visitors. The fund will contribute towards the costs of essential adaptations, equipment, and training related to recovery and reset post reopening. Digital connections remain important to enable wide access for museum users and to keep them safe. This fund can also support programming or activities to enable digital connection with audiences and to facilitate working with remote participants and visitors.

The Museums Connect Grant can support the adaption of existing approaches, or development of new ways to connect or re-engage audiences.

What the fund can cover

It is recognised there is a cost to:

- Opening safely and maintaining a re-opened venue
- Positioning your programming to meet the needs of returning visitors
- Connecting with audiences through adapted practice

This can cover (but is not limited to):

- Adapting existing, or developing new ways to connect with your audiences
- New displays, exhibitions, and interpretation that will have a co-curation or co-creation aspect
- Enhancing your online offering
- Equipment or materials to enable new ways of working and adapt to the "new normal"
- Signage
- Contactless payment technology
- Computer software (but not ongoing costs)/hardware/equipment
- Training for staff and volunteers

What the fund does not cover

The fund will not cover:

- Staff time
- Conservation of museum collections
- A project already supported by NIMC
- New displays, exhibitions, and interpretation that do not have a co-curation or co-creation aspect
- Cost for any activity or expenditure that has already taken place; or a project that has already started
- Organisational debt

Museums Connect Grant Priorities

This fund prioritises applications which clearly demonstrate that:

- The funding will contribute to re-opening your museum safely and sustainably

and/or

- Your project will enable your museum to connect with new or existing audiences in creative or innovative ways

The responsibility lies with the applicant to clearly demonstrate how their application meets the priorities.

Before you apply

It is advisable that you contact us before you make an application.

Please contact devofficer@nimc.co.uk

How will we evaluate your application?

There are four questions in your application that will assessed and scored.

Assessment Scoring	Marks Available
Q3. Project description. Please outline the planned project. You should cover who, what, where, when and why in terms of project involvement and delivery.	15
Q4. What are the planned outcomes for this funded activity?	35
Q5. Please outline how your project meets the priorities of the Museums Connect Grant	35
Q6. How will you measure the impact and success of the funded activity?	15
TOTAL	100

Who can apply to this fund?

Eligible organisations must be both:

- Accredited local museums in Northern Ireland
- Museum Members of the NI Museums Council

Who cannot apply?

- Non-accredited museums

Awards

Accredited museums can apply for up to **£2,000. The Museums Connect Grant cannot cover VAT that can be reclaimed.**

All costs must be identified clearly.

Northern Ireland Museums Council may offer to fund a portion of the costs requested.

Timelines and Deadlines

Applications to this Round should be submitted by **4.00pm Thursday 28th July 2022.**

Late applications will not be considered

Thursday 23rd June	Grant Programme Opens
Thursday 28th July	Application Deadline
Thursday 26th Aug	Notification of successful applicants

How to apply

Please complete the Application Form and email it to: info@nimc.co.uk

Application by email. Signatures must not be typed but must be scans or photos of original signatures.

Contact

For further information or any queries please contact devofficer@nimc.co.uk