



**Collecting for the Future  
Supported by Esmé Mitchell Trust**

**GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS  
2025-2026**

## About

This fund is supported by the **Esmé Mitchell Trust** and enables accredited museums to apply for up to £1,000 towards the purchase of cultural and artistic objects in partnership with museum users and communities.

## Before you apply

- Check that you are an eligible museum
- Discuss your proposed application with Eva Lynch [eva.lynch@nimc.co.uk](mailto:eva.lynch@nimc.co.uk)

## Am I Eligible?

The NIMC Playful Museums Festival Grant Programme is open to UK Accreditation Scheme Accredited (Full or Provisional) non-National museums in Northern Ireland who are currently members of NIMC.

NIMC supports non-Accredited museums and collections by providing training, advice and guidance. You should be a member to access these services. To join, please visit [www.nimc.co.uk](http://www.nimc.co.uk).

## How Much Can I Apply For?

You can apply for up to £1,000 and secure 100% of the total purchase cost if it is less than £1000; or you may use £1000 towards the purchase of an object of higher value.

**PLEASE NOTE:** £1000 cannot be used to pay VAT charges.

**You must make your purchase and claim your award within two months of the award being made.**

## When to apply

This is a rolling three-year programme which is due to come to an end in March 2028. We will let you know our decision **within 10 working days** of receiving your application.

## Assessment Criteria

You must be able to show that the acquisition:

- Falls within your museum's Collection Development Policy;
- Represents the culture and artistic achievements and experiences of this place thereby enriching and strengthening your collections;
- Illustrates strategic collecting in partnership with museum users and communities; and
- Will be made accessible to the public

Each criterion will have a score of 25%. It is recognised that purchases may not meet these Assessment Criteria in equal measure, but preference will be given to those with multiple impacts.

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate how they will meet the Assessment Criteria in the Application Form.

### What we will not fund

- Commissioning of new items
- Items that will not be accessioned as part of the Museum's permanent collection
- Delivery expenses
- Equipment
- Framing or mounting
- Loans
- Museum time or administration costs
- Purchases started or made prior to an NIMC grant offer
- Reproductions or facsimiles
- Valuations

### Conditions of the Award

Award Recipients must:

- Use the award for the approved purchases only
- Inform us immediately if you are unable to spend all or part of the fund
- Written confirmation of your VAT status i.e., whether or not the grant recipient is registered with HMRC and can/cannot reclaim VAT on expenditure relating to this project.
- Written confirmation that the grant recipient has an up-to-date safeguarding policy that has been approved by its governing body.
- Submit final claims within **two months** of project completion with **all** relevant supporting paperwork
- Provide NIMC with text (250 words max) about your purchase that can be used to share information and promote it on the NIMC website
- Provide NIMC with high resolution images of your purchase that may be used for publication by NIMC
- Complete the Project Completion Form
- Agree to take part in an Evaluation of the funding programme
- Acknowledge the support of NIMC and the Esmé Mitchell Trust on exhibition panels and labels, in print and social media using the line "Purchased with support from the NI Museums Council and Esmé Mitchell Trust" and logo.

### Submitting your application

You must complete the application form in full and send it **by email to** [info@nimc.co.uk](mailto:info@nimc.co.uk)

### What will happen next?

- We will acknowledge your application by e-mail within three working days.
- We will write an assessment of the application, based on the fund criteria.
- We may contact you to discuss the project in more detail during the course of our assessment.
- The assessment will be considered by the NIMC Chair.

- We will tell you by email of the decision as soon as possible after the NIMC Chair approves.
- If a grant offer is made, you must return a signed 'offer acceptance' 5 working days after receiving your decision email. NIMC cannot guarantee to honour offers where your acceptance has been received after this date.

### Feedback and Complaints

The Northern Ireland Museums Council is committed to providing a high quality of service. If you are dissatisfied with the service we provide, we would like to hear from you. However, we would also like to hear about things you think we have done well and how you think we could improve our services. To view our complaints procedure please contact

[info@nimc.co.uk](mailto:info@nimc.co.uk)