



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.

As we all adapt to the changing circumstances brought about by the Covid 19 crisis and the impact of a long period of closure. Museums will need to adapt and respond to the challenges that the “new normal” will bring. This grant programme aims to support museums in changing and developing their practice in a way that will help museum connect with their audiences in new and safe ways.

Many museums are opening their doors to visitors once again and looking to gain a new relevance to their communities and visitors. Some will be focusing on digital ways to connect with audiences until they can make reopening viable. Many will forge a blended approach to engagement to meet the diversity of needs and offer an accessible and inclusive service. For all our museums, the period of adjustment will bring fresh challenges but also opportunities. The emphasis will be on adapting existing or developing new ways to connect with audiences and to make the experience inspiring, engaging and above all safe for users.

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 while restrictions are still in place due to COVID-19. Applicants must follow the NI Executive’s guidelines for re-opening:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/communities/dfc-culture-heritage-destinations-phased-return-guide.pdf>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/guidance-professionals-and-organisations>

Digital connections will remain important to enable wide access for museum users and to keep them safe therefore the grant will also support programming or activities to enable digital connection with audiences and to facilitate working with remote participants and visitors.

The fund will contribute towards the costs of essential adaptations, equipment, and training.

The Museums Connect Grant, whether your museum is open or closed, will support you adapting existing or developing 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
- Enhancing your online offering
- Equipment or materials to enable new ways of working and adapt to the “new normal”
- PPE for staff and volunteers in line with the NI Executive’s Guidance
- Cleaning equipment and products
- Screens and barriers
- Signage
- Contactless payment technology
- Independent Health & Safety Assessments which comply with government guidelines
- Other equipment and materials necessary to comply with government guidelines
- Computer software (but not ongoing costs)/hardware/equipment
- Training for staff and volunteers

What the fund does not cover

The fund will support essential requirements to re-open in compliance with government guidelines.

The fund will not cover:

- Staff time
- Conservation of museum collections
- New displays, exhibitions, and interpretation
- 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:

- Your project **will enable** your museum to connect with its audiences
- The items requested are **essential** to re-open your museum safely and in accordance with government guidelines (*please explain why you believe they are essential*)

- You have referenced government guidelines and other relevant information to inform the adaptations or changes you are planning (*specify the relevant guidance*)
- The equipment or quantities of items you are requesting are appropriate (*how did you determine the quantities; what are your annual visitor numbers*)

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 slobhan.stevenson@nimc.co.uk

How will we evaluate your application?

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

Assessment Scoring	Marks Available
Q3. What are your outcomes for this funded activity?	35
Q4. Please outline how your project meets the priorities of the Museums Connect Grant	35
Q5. Please tell us what difference this funding would make to your museum in the short-term?	10
Q6. What are your museum's priorities for re-establishing operations after Covid-19? How have you identified these priorities and how does the funded activity support these?	20
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**. No match funding is required, but 10% of your overall cost would be appreciated. **The Museum Connect Grant cannot cover VAT.**

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 Friday 27th August**

Late applications will not be considered

Round 2	
Mon 2nd Aug	Grant Programme Opens
Friday 27th Aug	Application Deadline
Wed 15 th Sept	Notification of successful applicants

It is anticipated that subject to available funding there may one further rounds of grant funding available. **IF** further rounds are possible, the expected timetable for application is provided for information below.

Please note: Organisations who received funding in Round 1 of the Museums Connect Grants are not eligible to apply to subsequent rounds.

Round 3	
Monday 27 th Sept	Grant Programme Opens
Friday 22 nd Oct	Application Deadline
Wed 17 th Nov	Notification of successful applicants

How to apply

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

Application by email.

Contact

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