Professional Network Grants
Guidance for applicants

(with Art Fund)
### 1. About

This programme provides funding to support Subject Specialist Networks (SSNs) and other professional networks to develop and share knowledge, skills and resources relating to collections specialisms, professional development and public engagement.

This guidance will help you consider whether this funding programme suits your needs and provides further information regarding eligibility and how to submit a strong application.

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2. Before you apply

Aims

The overall aim of this fund is to encourage the wide sharing of expertise, skills and knowledge across the museums and galleries sector, through SSNs and other curatorial networks, for the benefit of collections and audiences.

The grants are designed to be ‘light-touch’ and responsive to need. We want to help established or emerging networks:

– capitalise on opportunities to develop and expand their activities
– develop and share knowledge and skills relating to subject-specialisms, professional skills and public engagement
– collaborate with each other and with museum audiences
– innovate, test new ideas and share their findings
– create tangible public outcomes

Who we’ll support

This fund is designed to support SSNs and other curatorial and professional networks.

‘Professional networks’ are defined as communities of museum and arts professionals which share interests in curatorial specialisms, collections and/or exhibition-based practices.

Networks can be established or emerging, but must have a mission statement and/or clear long term objectives.

Networks must be not-for-profit and be formally constituted, or identify a formally constituted organisation that is willing to act as the recipient of funds. Funds cannot be paid to individuals.
What we’ll fund

We are looking for creative activities that will impact the knowledge and skills of a network’s members, their sector colleagues and institutions, and the wider public.

Examples might include:

- workshops, seminars and conferences that document and highlight new research into a collection
- toolkits, case studies and dynamic resources that enable museums to better use and interpret their collections for a wide public, or curators to function within their roles
- collaborative cataloguing projects that focus on significant collections, making them more accessible
- collaborative research projects to realise new collections displays/exhibitions
- development opportunities that improve specialist knowledge and professional skills, and so help influence and benefit public programmes
- advice, training or mentoring to support new routes into the curatorial sector, or to encourage curators to act as advocates for their institutions, collections and subject specialisms
- learning programmes that equip curators to engage the public and communities more closely with collections or curatorial practice
- digital projects that enable networks to be more effective at sharing expertise so that a wider range of curators and museums can benefit
- testing and exploring new/pilot networks

We cannot fund:

- long-term running costs for established networks, including core staff costs
- costs relating to ongoing overheads, including equipment
- travel and attendance at network events (please refer to Art Fund’s Jonathan Ruffer curatorial grants if assistance is required for these costs)
- projects which are already supported by other funding (i.e. duplicating). This does not apply to cases where support is required as part of a funding package, or to complement or extend existing projects
Funding range

There is a total of £150,000 available annually through the scheme. There are two categories of grant: small grants, for requests up to £5,000, and large grants, for requests of between £5,000 and £15,000. We can consider applications for 100% of project funding, or those submitted as part of a wider funding package. The level of funding required will influence the aims and scope of what is delivered. For examples of eligible activity please see What we’ll fund, p3.

Small grants (up to £5,000)

We would anticipate these applications being, in the main, for more discrete projects which test new ideas and new ways of working. We would anticipate that proposed activities would be completed within 18 months of the grant being awarded. We do not expect that all projects at this level will have an immediate public benefit, but your application should consider how the project might contribute to such future activities.

There are no fixed deadlines for applications in this category. We ask that you allow at least six weeks between submitting your application and the time by which you need a decision.

Large grants (£5,000-£15,000)

We would expect these applications to be from already established networks, but welcome all creative and ambitious projects involving partnership working and would expect in most instances that our support would result in tangible outcomes for the benefit of the public. We would expect projects at this level to reach completion within two years of the date the grant is awarded.

Applications at this level will be considered at a committee meeting. These take place three times a year, with deadlines falling in March, June and September. Please contact the Programmes team for more information on 0207 225 4865 or programmes@artfund.org

We can accept up to two small grant applications and one large grant application per network in each calendar year. If networks wish to apply and have already received a grant where the project is ongoing, they should contact the Programmes team to discuss.
3. Your application

Application process

Please do get in touch with the Programmes team at Art Fund to discuss your potential project before submitting an application. We will be able to give advice on eligibility, timescales and deadlines for applications. All applicants should contact Emma Coleman, programmes manager, on 020 7225 4822 or ecoleman@artfund.org

You can apply for a grant using our online application system. For application forms and to apply, log in to My Art Fund or create an account.

You must be registered as a professional user. If you already have a My Art Fund account but are not registered as a professional user, you can add your professional details when logged in.

If you encounter any difficulties registering or require the application form in an alternative format, please get in touch.

Completing the application form

In the application form you will be asked to:

– describe the network, its aims, ambitions and how it is constituted and funded

– provide details of the proposed project or activity, noting the importance and impact on your network and its members and potential audiences, and explaining how it meets the aims of the scheme

– detail which other funding sources you have explored

– provide details of how the grant will be spent, including an indicative but realistic timeframe and a full budget breakdown

– summarise the project’s aims and desired outcomes

– provide any additional supporting documents that may have been requested during your initial conversation with us e.g. letters of support from partner networks
4. What happens next

All applications are assessed in the first instance by an Art Fund programme manager. They will provide initial feedback and identify any areas of the application in need of further development before the application is progressed.

If your application is successful we will inform you immediately following the decision process. We will then issue our offer paperwork to your network or nominated body. The offer paperwork includes:

- offer letter
- agreement to terms and conditions
- a schedule of the proposed activities, including key project dates and aims and desired outcomes

The first 90% of the grant can be claimed upfront following the submission of an invoice together with a signed copy of the offer letter (keep the other copy for your own records).

The final 10% of the grant can be claimed once the activities have been undertaken and you have submitted a report. This report should assess the funded activities, reflecting on the aims and desired outcomes set forth in your application. In addition, we require a financial statement and a copy of the receipt(s) for any single expenditure exceeding £500.

Please note that no portion of the funding can be paid directly to individuals, all funds must be paid to a formally constituted organisation with non-profit status.
5. Terms and conditions

If your application is successful, an appropriately authorised person within the network will be required to sign an agreement which will set out the terms and conditions of our grant offer. These terms and conditions are summarised below:

1. the grant must be used solely for the project/activities and cannot be put towards any other purpose;

2. the grant will be paid in accordance with an agreed schedule and subject to the provision by you of certain information including invoices, a financial statement setting out how the grant has been utilised and an evaluation report;

3. the grant will be paid to the bank account of the network or identified proxy;

4. each of us will obtain the other’s prior written approval in advance of publication of any publicity materials relating to the project/activities. However, we at our absolute discretion may publicise details of the grant offer in any way we think fit;

5. you must ensure that the support of Art Fund is acknowledged and credited as specified by us on all materials related to the project/activities. You must also obtain our approval in advance of the publication of any display or print materials related to the project/activities. Successful applicants will be provided with our branding and crediting guidelines;

6. you will be required to link any websites owned or operated by you which provide information about the project/activities to Art Fund’s home page. However, such links must not be used to falsely portray any endorsement or affiliation between you and Art Fund;

7. you will be expected to work with us in good faith to promote the project/activities;

8. you must not use our name or logo in any way which causes either of us any negative publicity or damages our reputation;

9. your rights and obligations under the agreement must not be transferred in whole or in part in any manner without our prior written approval;

10. if your financial statement indicates that you have not spent the full amount of the grant, we may withhold all or part of the grant or demand repayment of grant monies already paid. We may also require you to provide receipts evidencing any expenditure claimed;

11. neither of us will be liable or responsible to the other for failure to fulfil our obligations under the agreement caused by events beyond our control. In these circumstances, the affected party’s obligations under the agreement will be suspended for the duration of the event but both of us will work together during this period to find a way to enable that party to carry out its obligations under the agreement; and

12. we may demand repayment of all or part of the grant at our absolute discretion if you fail to comply with or contravene any of the terms and conditions of the agreement.