



Commissioning Round 2025

Guidance for Applicants

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Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Overview

- **Arts and cultural organisations based in England** are invited to apply for funding for a digital creative project of **between £5,000 and £16,000 inc. VAT** (maximum funding for audio-only projects is £8,000 inc. VAT).
- **Museums, libraries, community organisations and local councils** are eligible to apply, providing the proposed project is **culturally focused**.
- This is an opportunity to develop and deliver a creative project for **online or in-person** audiences, using digital elements that your organisation has perhaps not worked with before.
- Your project might be a **video or audio** piece, or an **interactive or immersive experience**. We welcome work that uses technology or platforms in innovative ways that may provide new insights and case studies for the cultural sector.
- Applications **cannot consist only of digital marketing activity**. They must focus on **providing a creative or cultural experience**. However, marketing costs should be included in your budget.
- In addition to funding, if your application is successful, we will work with you to address areas where you may need help e.g., digital production, digital accessibility, content distribution, audience development and online rights.
- We are committed to selecting a range of projects that **reflect the diversity of England**. We particularly welcome applications from **diverse-led** and **disabled-led organisations** and from organisations based **outside London**, in particular those based in Arts Council England's [Levelling Up for Culture Places](#)
- You can [apply online here](#). We also accept applications in other formats. If you need help applying, we can pay for access support.
- The deadline for applications is **5pm Thursday 29th May 2025**.
- We will let you know if your application is successful by **Friday 27th June 2025**.
- We are looking for projects that can be published by the end of **March 2026**.

For more information, please read the detailed guidance below.

How to apply

[Apply online here](#): you can save a draft and return to make changes later.

You can also download a **copy of the application questions** from our [resources page](#) to review them before you complete your application online.

The application deadline is **5pm Thursday 29th May 2025**.

We can provide **access support** to help you apply. This includes providing this guidance in different formats, arranging help to complete the application form or supporting you to apply in different ways. We also have a small budget for applicants to arrange their own access support. To discuss your needs please email commissioning@thespace.org or call 0121 663 1488 and leave a message.

Eligibility

To apply, you must be an **organisation engaged in cultural activities** with a **registered office in England**.

If you are an individual with a suitable project, please partner with an organisation that can apply on your behalf. Applications are limited to one per organisation.

Organisations can include museums, libraries, community organisations and local authorities, where the project has a cultural focus. We particularly welcome applications from diverse-led and disabled-led organisations.

If your application involves more than one organisation, pick one to be the lead applicant. If your application is successful, this organisation will receive the funding to share with others as you need.

Project activities can happen outside England, providing your published content is going to reach an audience in England. Other partners can also be based outside England, providing the lead organisation is in England.

If you have previously been supported by us you can apply again, but we may prioritise new applicants when making our selection.

What we fund

This opportunity is to fund and support the creation of **digital cultural content** that can be **experienced by a public audience by the end of March 2026** (your content can be published/made available sooner than this).

The content you create can be in any digital format. This might include video, audio, interactive content (e.g. a game or website) or immersive content (such as 360-degree video, VR or mixed reality experiences). It can be designed to be experienced online or in-person at a venue or event.

Your budget should include costs for promoting your content to the public, but we **cannot fund** proposals that are **only digital marketing campaigns**.

We can fund further production of work that is already in development or pre-production. We can also fund a digital 'capture' or extension of existing works e.g., the recording or adaptation of a live performance into an audio or video piece. We can only pay for activities that take place after we have confirmed your funding.

Audience objectives

Your application needs to demonstrate **value for money in terms of the size of audience** you reach. Our general guide is that projects should achieve at least **one audience session for every £1 invested**. So, an application with a budget of £8,000 will need a plan that has strong potential to achieve at least 8,000 ten-second-plus video views, online sessions, or an equivalent measure of audience engagement that is relevant to your objectives.

We can make exceptions to this rule. For example, a project aimed at **under-represented or hard-to-reach audiences** or that helps your organisation with **diversity and inclusion objectives**, could have smaller target numbers. If so, your application should explain why your audiences are underserved or important in terms of your inclusion objectives and how you will overcome any barriers to reaching them.

Making your content accessible to audiences

You should consider how people will find out about your project, and make it easy for them to engage with, **especially those with access requirements**.

Consider how and where you will market the finished piece, as well as how you might incorporate accessibility features such as subtitles, BSL interpretation, audio description or screen reader compatibility. Our [Digital Accessibility: Best Practice guide](#) contains some useful advice about how to design and deliver accessible digital cultural projects.

Your budget

For audio-only projects, you can apply for **between £5,000 and £8,000**. For all other digital projects, you can apply for **between £5,000 and £16,000**. These amounts include any applicable VAT.

Matched funding is not necessary, but we encourage you to secure additional cash and in-kind contributions where possible. This can include your own management time.

Costs should be for activities required to produce and publish the digital content and promote it to audiences. Where your project is 'capturing' or contextualising publicly available work, we do not normally fund the production of the original work.

Your budget can include:

- Artist(s), producer or crew fees
- Production fees and costs
- Project management costs
- Insurance and legal costs
- Software and hardware, whether hired or purchased
- Rights clearance costs
- Marketing costs, providing the project is not just a marketing campaign
- Access support costs
- A contingency of up to 10% of the total

We cannot fund:

- Costs incurred prior to us deciding to fund your project
- Projects that focus primarily on equipment purchase
- Staff salaries
- Other overhead costs that are not directly related to your project

The funding will be paid to you in instalments (typically four per project), based on your cashflow needs and on delivery of progress reports to us.

Timelines

Please consider the following dates when planning your application:

5pm Thu 29 May 2025: closing date for applications

27 June 2025: applicants informed of decisions

July 2025 onwards: shortlisted projects go through a due diligence process prior to funding being confirmed. See the 'Due Diligence Review' section below for more details

August 2025: earliest start for production once due diligence completed

31 March 2026: projects to be published by this date

Skills support

This opportunity is not just about funding your digital project. We also want to help increase your skills and future capacity to produce this type of work and reach your target audiences effectively.

This means you should not be put off from applying by any gaps in your skills or experience. Our application form allows you to flag where you may need advice in relation to e.g., production processes, digital accessibility, online rights clearances, reaching your target audiences or other areas.

The purpose of our application process is to identify projects that have both a **compelling creative idea** and **strong audience appeal**. We can then support successful applicants to realise their project's potential.

If your application is successful, we will appoint and separately fund an Executive Producer from The Space. Their role is to be a supportive partner, providing advice to help your project succeed and facilitating introductions to members of our team who can also support you. Our Executive Producer will also offer editorial feedback to help your project reach its full creative potential.

Digital rights

Our approach to intellectual property rights is to put the interests of artists and creatives first. This means that all rights to the work you create will remain with you and anyone else contributing material.

You will need to clear any rights necessary to publish your content according to your distribution plans, and to grant us a limited licence so we can use your marketing material to promote your work and share insights with others in the cultural sector.

Digital rights clearances can be complex. If your application is successful, we will provide advice on this and so we don't expect you to have rights clearances finalised when you apply. What we want to know is that you have **considered the feasibility and potential rights costs when planning and budgeting**.

Evaluating and sharing outcomes

We will work with you to define objectives for your project and ways of measuring whether it is successful. This will usually include tracking audience reach and engagement e.g., by using free social media analytics or Google Analytics.

We are also interested in other outcomes your project might have, such as growing your skills, forming new partnerships or shaping future digital plans. We therefore ask

successful applicants to collaborate with us on evaluating your project, including your experience of working with us.

Our [Evaluating Digital Experiences resource](#) offers practical tips and advice on how to measure and communicate the value and impact of your work that you may want to consider for your application.

Sharing your insights with the sector

Because we are using public money to fund and support this programme, we like other people in the cultural sector to benefit from any insights successful applicants gain from working on their projects.

After your project is finished, we might ask you to help us do this by sharing your experiences in one of our free webinars or contributing to learning resources we publish on our website. We recognise that your time is limited and that there may be information about your project that you don't want to share publicly. We will work with you to agree a practical and flexible approach.

Selecting projects

Eligible applications are assessed against seven criteria:

1. Quality and creative ambition
2. Potential to reach and engage the target audience
3. Experience of team members, partners and suppliers
4. Feasibility of your delivery plans
5. Value for money, including matched funding
6. Potential benefits for you and the wider sector of insights gained from the activity
7. Proposed methods of minimising environmental impact

We also apply balancing criteria to our final shortlist selection, to ensure we select applications that reflect the cultural diversity of England:

- Diversity of those leading the organisation and contributing to the project
- Diversity of target audiences and content themes
- Region of England where the organisation is based – we particularly welcome applications from Arts Council England's [Levelling Up for Culture Places](#)
- Art form or cultural activity the project focuses on
- Type of digital content/experience
- Size of organisation

Due diligence review

Before shortlisted projects are confirmed for funding, we will go through a due diligence review process with you. Members of our team will provide advice on any areas where you need additional support so that your project plans are as strong as they can be, including how you plan to engage your target audience. We will also help you to identify and consider how to reduce any project risks.

This review process is designed to be streamlined and supportive. If help is needed, we may appoint a digital specialist to work with you to refine your plans. If so, we will cover their costs.

At the end of the due diligence process, we will work with you to create documents that confirm the agreed scope of your project. These are usually a Project Overview that is part of our Funding Agreement with you, a budget and a marketing/distribution plan.

Once this process is complete, shortlisted projects are usually confirmed for funding. In exceptional circumstances, the due diligence process can reveal issues that mean it is not feasible for us to fund a project. However, we will always try to work with successful applicants to evolve project plans, so they can be confirmed for funding.

Contact us

If you have questions about this application guidance or the application process, please contact us. Out of fairness to other applicants, we are unable to offer advice on the content of an application.

You can email commissioning@thespace.org or telephone 0121 663 1488 and leave a message with your contact details.

Our funder

We are grateful to Arts Council England for its funding of this opportunity, designed to build the capacity of the arts and cultural sector to make and distribute digital content.