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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Museum Development Strategic Grants 2024-25

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Museum Development North

Strategic Grants 2024-25

The following document outlines the Strategic Grant available from Museum Development North for the 2024-25 period.

If you are unsure about applying for funding, please contact your Museum Development Adviser who will be happy to discuss this with you.

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1. MD North Overview

Museum Development North will enable strong, agile museums to contribute to the distinctive life, cultures and identity of the North of England and be widely valued for their transformational impact.

- We challenge museums in the North of England to be the best they can be, for everyone
- We empower museums to be sustainable, inclusive, and dynamic, agile, having a positive impact on people, communities and society
- We create opportunities for museums to connect, collaborate and grow
- MD North Strategic Grants are a major part of the Museum Development North (MD North) programme using our core funding from Arts Council England (ACE)

2. Grant Programme Summary

- There is one round of strategic grants for 2024-2025
 - There may be future rounds in subsequent financial years
- Project criteria is focused on Arts Council England's 'Investment Principles' of Environmental Responsibility and Inclusivity & Relevance from [Let's Create](#)
- £30,000 is allocated to Strategic Grants for museums across the North region, with an emphasis on the quality of the proposed project
- The maximum amount an individual museum can apply for is £1,500
- Multisite organisations, partnerships and consortiums can apply for £2,000 where the funding will benefit more than one Accredited museum
- All project funds must be spent and completed with final reports and invoices submitted to MD North by 30th June 2025
- We may release up to 90% of the grant value on signing the grant acceptance letter, with the remainder on completion of the project, submission of final report and proof of expenditure.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Who can apply?

The following museums are eligible to apply for an Open Grant:

- Museums in the north of England which are Accredited, hold provisional status, or are formally Working Towards Accreditation¹

¹ Recognised as Working Towards Accreditation by Arts Council England through the allocation of a reference 'T' number.

- Museums that are not Accredited, or formally Working Towards Accreditation, can be part of a project involving a partnership of museums, but an Accredited museum must be the lead partner

The following museums are not eligible:

- National Portfolio Organisations and DCMS (Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) sponsored National Museums, English Heritage, and National Trust sites and unaccredited museums

3.2 How much can you apply for?

In 2024-25, £30,000 is allocated to Strategic Grants for museums across the North of England to apply for.

- A single Accredited museum or museum Working Towards Accreditation can apply for up to £1,500
- A museum service with multiple Accredited sites, a partnership or consortium can apply for up to £2,000; the project must involve a minimum of two Accredited sites

There is no requirement for match funding, but your museum may want to spend more than you can apply for from MD North. You can also use this grant as match funding for other funders.

Please note that you may not be offered the full amount you apply for.

We may release up to 90% of the grant value on signing the grant acceptance letter, with the remainder on completion of the project, submission of final report and proof of expenditure.

Deadline: The deadline for applications in 2024-25 is **09:00, 30th September 2024**. Applications received after this time will not be accepted.

3.3 How long can projects last?

Projects supported in 2024 can start on return of the grant acceptance letter and must be completed by 30 June 2025. There may be future rounds of MD North Strategic Grants which will have later completion dates.

4. Programme Criteria

4.1 Investment Priorities

- In the application form, you will be asked to demonstrate how your project responds to the ACE Investment Principles of Environmental Responsibility and Inclusivity & Relevance
- You will also be asked to evidence how the project will deliver on actions arising from your participation in current and past Museum Development programmes. This can be evidenced through service specific support from a Museum Development Adviser or through participation in specific projects. Projects include but are not limited to:

Environmental Responsibility

- Everyday Innovation
- Get your House in Order
- Income Generation and Fundraising Cohort
- Innovation Movement
- In Your Customers Shoes
- Organisational Health Check
- Roots and Branches (Carbon Literacy and Seeds for Action)

Inclusivity & Relevance

- Access for All Cohort
- Equality, Inclusion and Access Cohort
- Everyday Innovation
- Front of House Cohort
- Get your House in Order
- In Your Customers Shoes
- Income Generation and Fundraising Cohort
- Innovation Movement
- Organisational Health Check
- Roots and Branches (Carbon Literacy and Seeds for Action)

As this fund is designed to implement advice, we will prioritise recommendations that are 'current.' We are unlikely to invest in projects that implement advice received prior to financial year 2022-23. Please talk with your MDA prior to application if this applies to your museum.

We are keen to support a range of project types and have a broad definition of the Investment Principles. Examples of potential projects include but are not limited to:

- Environmental Responsibility
 - Taking organisation wide action to mitigate your impact on the environment
 - Implementing recommendations from Energy audits to reduce energy outgoings
 - Researching the impact of the climate crisis on your area and communities

- Initiatives to engage your audiences with issues of the climate crisis using collections
- Developing your civic role to inspire connections, partnerships, and action in your area(s)
- Taking steps to become a leading voice for climate action
- Support enacting climate actions that meet targets in environmental sustainability strategies and action plans
- Inclusion & Relevance
 - Programming to reach new audiences and communities currently less likely to access your museum
 - Actions to become a more community centred approach to programming and service delivery
 - Working to increase the diversity of practitioners, freelancers, artists, and suppliers
 - Implementing recommendations from equality, diversity, and inclusion reviews
 - Activities that embed equality, diversity and inclusion within governance, leadership, and workforce practices
 - Implementing recommendations from access audits or other learning cohorts that remove barriers to participation
 - Working with collections to tell new stories-based plans formed after participating in a learning cohort
 - Using collections to share new stories relevant to communities you serve

We can fund:

- Materials and equipment
- Additional hours of existing employees
- Contracting freelancers or other specialists to increase expertise or capacity
- Research and development costs
- ICT equipment and digital infrastructure - however please note the case for investment must include a clear explanation of the need and show that you have considered the ongoing costs of development and maintenance
- Promotional activities
- Event costs
- Minor building modifications to implement sector guidance on safe opening, accessibility, or carbon reduction
- Additional resourcing to enable staff and volunteers to develop new ways of working

We will not fund:

- Revenue costs, such as salaries and general running costs
- Any expenditure for which the museum cannot provide evidence (e.g. receipts)
- Costs incurred prior to the project start date

- Projects partially funded by ACE or as match funding for monies from ACE

4.2 What criteria will my application be assessed against?

MD North will assess your application. We will be looking for evidence of the following:

- There is a demonstrable need which is clearly evidenced based on actions and recommendations from previous engagement with Museum Development Programmes
- Clear aims and objectives with outputs and outcomes that demonstrate the impact of funds in response to ACE Investment Principles of Environmental Responsibility and Inclusivity & Relevance
- The project demonstrates value for money – costs are appropriate to the scale and nature of your project along with details of any match funding or contributions in kind
- The project will be completed on time with risks to delay identified and mitigated

It is expected that applications be discussed with a Museum Development Adviser before submission.

Applicants will also be asked to demonstrate how they have considered:

- Good practice when working with freelancers/consultants²
- Environmental sustainability
- Issues around equity, diversity and inclusivity including digital and physical access

We do not expect these issues to be the focus of projects but rather that they have been considered as part of the design and development process.

5. The Application Process

5.1 When can I apply?

Strategic Grants for 2024-25 will be a single-stage process. You need to allow enough time for funding decisions to be made before you start your project.

30/09/2024	Deadline for applications
28/10/2024	Final decisions made following eligibility assessment and scoring process
	Assessments are made by the MD North team

² An introduction to the law around self-employed contractors is available from <https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/self-employed-contractors-guide/>. MD South West has produced a guide on commissioning freelancers [Working with freelancers: Commissioning freelancers in a fair, inclusive and transparent way - Museum Development South West \(southwestmuseums.org.uk\)](https://southwestmuseums.org.uk/working-with-freelancers-commissioning-freelancers-in-a-fair-inclusive-and-transparent-way). The MA has produced some introductory guidelines [Working with freelancers - Museums Association](https://www.museumsassociation.org/working-with-freelancers)

04/11/2024	Applicants informed of outcome
04/11/2024	Projects can start when acceptance of funding agreements have been signed
30/06/2025	All project funds must be spent and completed with final evaluation report and invoices submitted

5.2 Do I need to submit anything with my application?

You will need to provide evidence of your costs, this may include a detailed budget spreadsheet, screenshots, or quotes. No additional further documentation is required.

5.3 What are the grant conditions and reporting requirements?

It is a condition that grant recipients do the following:

- Complete a short evaluation report which describes the impact of your project to enable us to report the value of investment through Museum Development including evidence of expenditure
- Have completed the Annual Museum Survey for 2023-24 which will run summer 2024
 - The deadline for grant applications is after the closure of the Annual Museum survey – where museums have a clear and compelling reason why they were unable to complete the survey, we may choose to relax this requirement
- Acknowledge funding from ACE and MD North on all print and online marketing materials using the wording and logo we will provide

Additional Requirements

Every museum we support will be expected to share their learning with other museums. This could include:

- Providing a written case study or newsletter article
- Presenting a paper at our Celebrating Museums events
- Contributing to a Forum or online session

Though not mandatory, completion of an Organisational Health Check will help support the planning and delivery of your project. The Organisational Health Check is an assessment tool for museums which takes around an hour to complete. It is designed as an indicator to help you highlight your museum's current best practice, understand where the museum has areas of development and to feed into your forward planning. This will help you prioritise areas of working over the next 12 months and provide you with a benchmark for future work. For more information about the Organisational Health Check visit the MD North website [Museums' Organisational Health Check – Museum Development North](#).

5.4 Who can I contact for advice?

Museums can discuss their proposals with one of the MD North team before they submit a final application. You can find the team's contact details on our website [Team Members - Museum Development North](#).

5.5 How to make an Application

We recommend you consult the application guidance notes and expect you to discuss your application with a Museum Development Advisor before submission.

You can access the application form via the link below:

<https://online1.snapsurveys.com/c34hmw>