

# John Ellerman Foundation

## Museums and Galleries Fund: October 2020

Museums and galleries are a means by which people engage with arts and heritage. Many institutions outside London hold important collections that are nationally significant and have the power to inspire creativity, motivate artistic expression and stimulate local regeneration. In recent years they have been affected by the impact of funding cuts and curatorial under-provision, reducing their scope to research and display collections and create new exhibitions. The Covid-19 pandemic is causing further challenges, particularly in terms of income generation and visitor and audience engagement, while also presenting opportunities to engage in different ways with new and existing audiences.

### Aim

The Museums and Galleries Fund aims to help strengthen museums and galleries in the UK. We want to help organisations enhance and sustain curatorial development to attract a broader and more diverse public.

We have earmarked 10 per cent of our overall grants budget for the 2021/22 financial year to be awarded through the Fund in 2021. We expect to make five or six grants for periods of two to three years. While the average grant size is circa £90k we will consider higher amounts for exceptional projects.

### What we will fund

We are keen to fund work which has a legacy within and beyond the organisation. We prioritise applications that aspire to achieve outcomes for people working in curatorial roles, the collections they work with and the institutions in which they work. We are particularly interested in proposals which:

- enable new ways of working both for established curators or those just starting out or
- ensure organisations are able to safeguard and advance curatorial skills and make the most of opportunities at a time of development or change.

### Who can apply

The Fund is open to a wide variety of collection types. We have supported visual and decorative arts, archaeology, and social and natural history collections. You can find out about the grants we have made on [our website](#) and through [360 Giving](#). Accreditation is not required, but applicants are expected to demonstrate:

- excellence in their field at a national level
- national significance, usually through a unique or high quality collection
- commitment to collaborative approaches, either as the focus of the request, or at a minimum with a strong track record of partnership working.

In line with our general policy, we favour organisations with an income between £100,000 and £10m, but may fund a larger institution if it is uniquely placed to meet our aim. Local authority, independent museums and contemporary galleries without permanent collections are also eligible. While our priority is small to medium-sized museums and galleries outside of London, national and/or London-based institutions may also apply if their project brings significant benefits outside of the capital. Universities are eligible to apply but due to their size and relative financial stability are less likely to be successful, and we therefore recommend a pre-application conversation with a member of the Grants Team. We are particularly interested in receiving applications from those areas where we have made fewer grants, such as the East Midlands and Northern Ireland.

The organisation applying must be able to demonstrate the following:

- an emphasis on the value of curatorial skills
- a commitment to excellence and innovation
- strong leadership and commitment from senior management, board or governing body
- effective financial management
- the difference a grant would make, to the organisation, the general public or other audiences.

**What we do not fund:**

- individual conservation projects (but we may consider conservation work as part of a wider request)
- education and outreach work.

**Applying to the Fund**

The online application portal for the Museums and Galleries Fund will be open from Wednesday 14 October 2020. As for all other applications, we have a two-stage process. First-stage applications must be received by **5pm on Friday 8 January 2021**. We expect to make decisions in spring 2021, so you should plan for the work funded by a grant to start from or after June 2021.

If you have any queries in the meantime about eligibility criteria or the application process, please contact us via [museums@ellerman.org.uk](mailto:museums@ellerman.org.uk) in the first instance. A follow-up phone call with a member of the Grants Team can be arranged for more in-depth queries.

**Please note** that if you have applied several times before to the Museums and Galleries Fund and have been unsuccessful, or are applying on behalf of a University, then we ask that you get in touch with a member of the Grants Team prior to applying.

**Stage 1**

Your first-stage application should include:

1. A description of what you are seeking funding for, on no more than two sides of A4. Please include:
  - a brief description of your organisation, and relevant track record
  - the nature of your collection, and why it has national significance
  - what you would like us to fund, including (where possible) a specific amount and number of years for which funding is sought
  - how your proposal matches what we fund and are looking for (see above).

2. Financial information:

If you are a charity, a copy of your most recent annual accounts. If you are part of a larger organisation (such as a university or local authority) please provide an income and expenditure statement for the running costs of your department or unit.

If your accounts show a significant surplus or deficit, high or low reserves, please explain this briefly in the finance section of the cover sheet. We also ask all applicants to add a brief note on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on your financial situation and planning. If the year-end date of your accounts is more than 10 months old, please include your latest management accounts.

**Stage 2**

If we invite you to apply for the second stage, we will ask for a more detailed application, and arrange to meet you virtually or in person, circumstances allowing, to find out more about you and your work.