

# John Ellerman Foundation

## Funding Guidelines 2020/21

**Updated: September 2020**

This document aims to tell you enough about our aim, values and funding criteria so you can decide whether you and your work are eligible for a grant.

If you would like to take your application further please also check our website for further information about the grants we make and how to apply.

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## 1. Our aim and values

### Our aim

We aim to advance the wellbeing of people, society and the natural world by focusing on the arts, environment and social action. We believe these areas can make an important contribution to wellbeing.

### Our values

Our values reflect how we work. We are a **responsive** funder, listening and responding to what applicants judge is important.

We have developed funding guidelines, enabling us to be **discerning** in our decisions about whom and what to support.

We value our relationships and seek to have a **personal touch**. Our Trustees are involved at every stage of an application, and we always visit or meet an applicant before a grant is made.

We prefer to be **connected** and are in regular contact with relevant colleagues and partners in the charitable world. We also like to keep in touch with grantees, convening and linking with them and others from time to time.

We are willing to be **flexible**, and may venture outside our funding criteria if we believe a different approach would be more effective.

## 2. Criteria that apply to all our funding

We receive many more applications than we can support, so we have to be selective. We are looking for work that is genuinely distinctive, has a high impact and achieves positive change or long-lasting benefits.

**We ask that organisations applying to us meet the following two criteria, which apply to all applications within each of our three areas of interest:**

### 1 Organisations

We prioritise UK-registered charities with an income between £100,000 and £10m. This focus allows us to use our capacity and resources by supporting organisations that are established and experienced in the work they undertake. If your income is greater than this we will only consider a grant if you are uniquely placed to help meet our funding objectives. We call this the 'only they can do it' test.

### 2 National significance

We want our funds to make a difference, with as wide an impact as possible. This may involve creating art of the highest quality; working across a wide geographical area; or sharing, expanding or replicating successful initiatives. We also recognise it may be necessary to change the system, and that by influencing policy, campaigning or adopting other approaches more far-reaching and longer-term benefits are possible.

National significance may look different in each of our categories:

- *Arts* – the creation of new work in itself has the potential to create a national or international legacy to inspire others. Using excellence as a key criterion is designed to strengthen and widen impact, thus demonstrating UK-wide significance. Partnerships, whether cross-art form, cross-sector or geographical, may also enhance this significance, and touring may contribute to a national footprint.
- *Environment* – certain species and habitats have national significance in themselves, due to their rarity. Some organisations occupy a distinctive, national niche; alternatively, the issue being tackled may be relevant to all or a large part of the UK. We also consider the biodiversity of the UK Overseas Territories to be of national and international importance.
- *Social Action* – we look to support organisations whose work is rooted in practical experience and applied at a national or UK level. This significance may result from the importance of the subject tackled or the approach taken.

More information about our approach to funding work in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is in the FAQ section, later in this document.

### What we are looking for:

- *Effectiveness and impact* – this could mean a good understanding of the needs being met and how best to tackle them; awareness of how your work adds value and relates to and complements the work of others; effective systems to monitor and review progress; a culture of learning, reflection and improvement; and being alert to opportunities to widen impact.
- *Strong governance and management* – a diverse and representative organisation with a well-qualified and engaged board and strong and inspiring leadership; a

thorough understanding and oversight of finances across the Board and leadership team; and awareness of the organisation's strengths and weaknesses.

- *Partnerships* – this could mean organisations that are well connected, understand how they fit within their world, and work well with relevant others.

**Core funding** has long been our signature, but we are also happy to make grants for projects or programmes. Core funding is funding which goes towards the core costs of delivering an organisation's work. These costs could include:

- staff salaries, training and expenses
- day-to-day running costs and operations
- monitoring and evaluation
- communications and digital innovation

### 3. Our categories

#### ARTS: Creators and Curators

##### Our aim

We aim to help make the highest quality art available to all, by prioritising support for the creative process itself. We do this by supporting cultural organisations that demonstrate excellence in a manner which illustrates our interest in their national significance.

We believe art has the potential to enrich and transform lives, and we recognise its inherent value and unique effects. We will fund organisations that nurture, incubate and commission those people who make and curate work.

##### What we fund

We concentrate our Arts funding under two separate headings:

1. **Creators in the performing arts** – we focus on the creation of the highest quality new work outside London, by funding organisations which collaborate with, commission or otherwise support artists to create or re-imagine work. We will prioritise applicants from outside the capital, but will consider those based in London where the proposal would bring significant benefits elsewhere. (*Organisations can apply at any time under this heading.*)
2. **Curators in museums and galleries outside London** – we aim to strengthen those institutions that focus on making use of curatorial skills to attract a wider public. (*This is an annual programme with its own funding guidelines and decision-making process; please see our website for the latest information.*)

##### What we are looking for in the performing arts:

- Organisations with new or original work at their heart
- Track record of producing excellent work
- Exciting, fresh and imaginative ideas and models of working
- Integration of emerging talent and artist development into the artistic programme of work (i.e. developing an individual is not the organisation's main or sole focus)
- An understanding of actual and potential audiences and how the artistic plans relate to them.

## **ENVIRONMENT: People and Planet**

### **Our aim**

Our aim is to contribute to greater harmony between people and the planet.

We believe that a healthy and well-functioning environment is essential to the health and resilience of people and nature. We are interested in organisations that understand the interdependence of communities, habitats and species and apply this in their thinking and practice. Often it is the system that has to change, so we will also support those working to influence government and the market.

### **What we fund:**

We concentrate our Environment funding under two main headings:

1. ***Protecting the seas*** – safeguarding and restoring the marine environment, through more and better managed protected areas; engaging coastal communities; reducing overfishing and tackling other harmful effects of human activity on the sea, such as pollution.
2. ***Creating richer, more sustainable places on land*** – building healthier ecosystems in urban or rural settings, through better management of these areas; experimenting with or linking together habitats; large-scale interventions that help restore places of special significance. We will also support work to reduce or prevent damaging effects of human activity, such as climate change, air pollution or pesticide use.

Our focus is in the UK and UK waters, and we are keen to support work in the UK Overseas Territories (on land and in the ocean). For work in the Overseas Territories, we welcome applications from UK-based NGOs with local partners or from organisations based in the Overseas Territories through a conduit in the UK.

### **What we are looking for:**

Organisations that do some of the following:

- understand both the significance of habitats for human wellbeing, as well as the impact of people on nature
- look for sustainable solutions by ensuring that the livelihoods and economic needs of local communities are integrated into their thinking and strategy
- work collaboratively
- tackle causes as well as symptoms.

## **SOCIAL ACTION: Championing Change**

### **Our Aim**

We aim to help create a society where all can thrive, by supporting organisations which work to create positive changes at a systemic level.

We believe people can create change, and will focus on individuals and organisations coming together to tackle disadvantage, divisions and inequality. We also believe that meaningful relationships are central to a shared sense of identity and community. We are interested in organisations which share these beliefs and work to ensure that individuals, community groups and national bodies connect with one another, and are listened to by government and the agencies that shape our lives.

### **What we fund**

We want to support those with ambition to achieve positive change at scale while also creating benefits for those involved. We will therefore concentrate our funding in pursuit of a thriving society on work which:

1. ***Improves systems and institutions through policy, advocacy and campaigning*** – through building bridges between people and the establishment by creating opportunities for contact and dialogue; enabling those with experience of an issue to have a voice on what matters to them; ensuring professionals and their organisations listen and respond; using this communication to advocate or campaign for improving policies, practices and systems.

#### **and**

2. ***Actively involves those with personal experience of the issue tackled*** – reflecting our belief that those closest to an issue understand it best. This means both people with direct personal experience of a problem, and those who have expertise and insight from working alongside them. A high priority will be finding new ways to draw on these experiences and skills, and engaging them in identifying and working on the change they want to bring about.

We expect a variety of people to benefit from our funding, from looked-after young people to vulnerable and isolated adults, and those facing discrimination. We have a special interest in enabling individuals to maintain their independence and worth as they get older. Given this broad canvas, we will prioritise work which tackles the greatest barriers created by disadvantage, divisions and inequality.

### **What we are looking for**

Organisations that:

- are rooted in practical experience, rather than working exclusively on policy
- understand the need to build people's confidence and skills so they are ready to engage with others
- value, promote and learn from the experience of those they support
- do not shy away from the unpopular or difficult cause
- seek to tackle causes as well as symptoms

## 4. What we do not fund

We do **not** consider applications from **organisations** that:

- have applied unsuccessfully within the previous 12 months
- focus on a single medical area, such as an individual disease, organ or condition
- are hospitals, hospices, schools, colleges or universities, unless the application is from a leading university specialist unit. More information is in the next section (FAQs)

Grants are **not** made to or for any of the following **purposes**:

- individuals, including student grants or bursaries
- general and round-robin appeals
- capital developments and individual items of equipment
- promotion of religion or places of worship
- arts organisations and projects whose main focus is supporting and developing an individual, rather than when new work is part of an artistic programme
- learning and participation in the arts, where this is the primary focus of the application
- leisure or individual holiday schemes
- sport, where this is the core of the organisation's activities
- education, such as initiatives linked to the curriculum, arts or environmental educational projects
- animal welfare, captive breeding and animal rescue centres
- medical research or treatment, including drug and alcohol rehabilitation services
- prisons and offenders
- individual campaigns
- one-off events, such as conferences, trips, seminars, master classes, summer schools, single commissions or productions.

## 5. Frequently asked questions

### **Will you support work that takes place in a single UK country?**

We fund organisations from any part of the UK whose work has impact across the UK.

Work based in individual countries may be funded where:

- The work is of UK-wide significance - this may be because of the issue tackled, for example, Scotland has the most substantial marine environment in the UK, or because the work is so exemplary or pioneering that it will be of special interest and relevance elsewhere in the UK; **or**
- The work covers more than one UK country - which could be a single organisation working across borders or a partnership of organisations in different countries; for example, an activity in Wales and NI would qualify; **or**
- The organisation is working across England.

### **Do you make grants overseas?**

Our Environment category provides for a small number of grants for work in UK Overseas Territories, and exceptionally for marine projects outside UK waters. We only consider applications from UK-based NGOs.

### **When do you fund core costs and when do you prefer to fund a project?**

As a responsive funder, we listen to what you judge is important. Our main interest is in supporting organisations whose work matches our funding priorities. We believe that core funding is usually the most valuable contribution we can make. If you think a project grant would be best, you can apply for that instead.

We are aware that a modest core grant will have a limited impact on the finances of larger organisations. If your turnover is close to or over £10m a year, it may be better to apply for a project grant.

### **Does an application have to fit more than one of your categories?**

An individual application or grant does not directly have to relate to all three elements of our aim – relating to people, society and the natural world. An environment grant, for example, might focus on a particular habitat, with the individual and social benefits only becoming evident indirectly or in the longer term.

If you are doing work which fits more than one of our categories, then such applications must be a good match with the criteria of at least one category, with a link to another being a bonus.

### **What type of work can I apply for under the creators in the performing arts strand?**

We tend to fund organisations working in dance, music, opera and theatre that are directly involved in the delivery of the work created, rather than working through partner venues, festivals or other organisations. Our priority is to support the artistic excellence of the work, rather than its educational value or social benefit – although we recognise that these are both positive additional benefits. We expect applicants to demonstrate their artistic excellence by providing us with evidence of positive audience feedback, awards and accolades and professional reviews.

### **When will you fund research?**

We recognise that rigorous research and policy analysis can provide the evidence and arguments to advocate for important changes in practice. We prefer to fund this sort of work if it is grounded in real life experience, includes the voices of those affected, and is likely to make a practical difference. When considering such proposals, your track record, expertise, knowledge of the context and understanding of how to effect such change will be important considerations.

### **Do you fund universities?**

Not usually, and not for their core work. Exceptionally, we may consider an application from a specialist unit if you are a centre of excellence and a leader in your field. Your work should:

- be distinctive and likely to make a practical difference
- involve partnerships with charities or NGOs
- have a budget that includes no contribution to overheads
- strongly match our funding interests.

### **How much can I apply for?**

Our minimum grant is circa £10,000. There is no maximum. Last year our grants ranged from £5,000 to £170,000. To get an idea of the kind of grants we award, take a look at the [grants list](#) on our website or on [360Giving](#).

### **How long will you make a grant for?**

Most of our grants are for two or three years.

### **When is the best time for me to apply? Do you have any deadlines?**

For the majority of applications there are no deadlines and you can apply at any time. We make decisions regularly throughout the year.

Some work strands, such as the Museums and Galleries Fund have an annual application deadline. Please check the website for more information on these.

### **How quickly will I know your decision?**

We will acknowledge your application within one week.

We have a two-stage application process. We aim to deal with all first-stage applications within 10 weeks, though most people will hear more quickly. On the rare occasion an application takes longer, we will be in touch.

Second-stage applicants are asked to apply within a month of being invited to do so. You should receive a decision within a maximum of three months.

### **When can I reapply if I have been turned down?**

One year from the date of submitting your application.

### **When can I reapply if I have a grant? Do you provide continuation funding?**

Ordinarily, we ask you to wait for one year after the grant has ended before you can apply again. We may consider a continuation grant in exceptional cases, such as a time-limited opportunity to change a piece of legislation. In these circumstances, please contact a member of the Grants Team to discuss this.

However, due to the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on the charity sector, we have temporarily suspended the need for organisations we fund to take a break before re-applying to us. We will be reviewing this decision again in December 2020.

**Can I discuss my application with you before I apply?**

We are always happy to discuss potential applications. Before you get in touch, please read our guidance.

**Do I have to be a registered charity to apply?**

We will only make grants to registered, excepted or exempt charities. However, we will sometimes make an exception if we feel the organisation is uniquely placed to help meet our funding objectives. We call this the 'only they can do it' test.

## 6. How to apply

### Before you apply

Before you apply, please make sure that you have read our funding guidelines carefully to ensure that your organisation is eligible and that your work meets our funding priorities.

We receive many more applications than we can fund. Unfortunately, this means that even if your work matches our areas of interest, we may not be able to make a grant.

If you are unsuccessful, we will ask you to wait for one year before you reapply. It is therefore important to make the best case you can at the first stage.

### The application process consists of two stages:

#### Stage 1

1. Please complete a two A4 page proposal using a minimum font size of 10/11 with the following headings:

- A brief summary of your organisation's aims and activities
- How your proposal meets our requirement that the work is of a national significance
- What you would like us to fund and why you are well placed to do this work
- How your proposal fits the criteria for the relevant category you are applying under

2. Ensure you have a copy of your most recent annual accounts to hand.

- You will need to upload a copy of your most recent audited accounts
- If the year-end date of your accounts is more than 10 months ago, we will also ask you to upload your latest management accounts.
- If your accounts show a significant surplus or deficit, high or low reserves, we will ask you to provide a brief explanation.

3. Our online portal is available through our website, and you can create an online account ([here](#)). Through your online account you can then upload your first stage proposal and financial information.

We make funding decisions throughout the year so you can apply at any time. However, if you are applying to the Museums and Galleries Fund there is an annual deadline and separate application process, so please check our website for details.

Once you have created your online account and uploaded your first stage application you will receive an instant confirmation. We will contact you within two weeks to let you know whether your proposal is eligible.

#### Stage 2

If your application proceeds to second stage, we will ask for a more detailed proposal and additional information. Then we will arrange to meet you to find out more about your work.

At this second stage, we aim to make a decision within three months. If your application takes longer, we will be in touch.

#### Further advice

If you are unsure about whether to apply or need further information about the application process, please call us on 020 7930 8566 or email [philee@ellerman.org.uk](mailto:philee@ellerman.org.uk).