£1million in Skills for the Future

08/06/2010

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) investment was made through its Skills for the Future programme* as part of a £17million boost for 54 projects across the UK.

Skills for the Future is a one-off programme which supports the creation and provision of apprenticeships and work-based training opportunities within the heritage sector. The £1million funding boost will create 64 new placements that will address skills shortages and gaps within the museum, traditional building and natural heritage sectors, and will help reinvigorate and broaden the appeal of the heritage industry to job-seekers.

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the HLF, said: “When the recession kicked-in last year we thought very hard about how the Heritage Lottery Fund could make a difference to people’s lives at a time of real need. The answer was an innovative and ambitious programme focusing on equipping people with practical skills to help them secure future employment.

“We have been astounded by the response which clearly shows a great hunger for skills training within our sector. We’re delighted to be supporting 54 projects – from learning how to digitise archives to conserving historic gardens – and we know that the range of placements on offer will attract people who might not previously have considered working in heritage.”

A £270,000 grant will be used to address the lack of practical training in museum collections care in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Museums Council and National Museums Northern Ireland will provide 12 placements over a one year period through the ‘Collections Skills Initiative NI’ project. Providing training in collections management, care, interpretation and research skills, the project will equip participants with the broad range of skills required to pursue a career in museum curation.

Lexie Scott, Chair of the Northern Ireland Museums Council, commented: "This is great news for Museums. We are delighted to receive this support and I am sure that it will enhance the training of our museum professionals. We look forward to working with Heritage Lottery Fund and National Museums Northern Ireland."

The ability to conserve, repair and maintain our built heritage will be boosted by the creation of 28 placements and training development opportunities for traditional building craft skills within the construction industry. The £240,300 grant to CITB-ConstructionSkills Northern Ireland will be used to provide training in a range of traditional building craft skills including brickwork, stonemasonry, dry stone walling and thatching. A ‘Training the Trainers’ programme will be delivered for Further Education colleges and Heritage Ambassadors will be trained to act as advocates and mentors for the traditional building skills programme throughout the province.

Barry Neilson, CITB-Construction Skills, Chief Executive said: "CITB-ConstructionSkills Northern Ireland is delighted to receive this generous funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and we are pleased to be working in partnership with them in addressing a key need within the built heritage sector. As the Sector Skills Council for construction, we are committed to providing a range of training and skills development programmes across the industry to meet the needs of contractors and craftspeople including those working in the local built heritage sector.

“Flexible on-site training schemes and obtaining relevant heritage qualifications are essential to preserve our vast range of historic properties and this funding provides a real opportunity for individuals to develop this skill and expertise by working on real heritage projects. By training FE college trainers and developing mentors we are also improving the availability of traditional building skills training that is essential for pre-1919 buildings in Northern Ireland now and for the future.”

A grant of £520,700 will support a joint BTCV Scotland and Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland programme, designed to help people understand, value and conserve their natural heritage. Twenty-four trainees will be equipped with the skills to work closely with communities to identify local environmental needs, responsibilities and opportunities and to help them put their ideas into action.

Barbara Boardman, Director of Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland, said: “We were delighted to hear that this application has been successful and look forward to helping to provide training and support for the Skills for the Future trainees who will be based in Northern Ireland. Too often funding packages are targeted at particular countries or regions within the UK and it is refreshing to be involved in a project which links Northern Ireland to the mainland.”

Placements with the three organisations will start towards the end of 2010/beginning of 2011. Anyone interested in applying for a placement with one of the successful applicants can find details on how to contact them on HLF’s website.

Notes to editors

* Launched in July 2009, Skills for the Future is a one-off HLF programme supporting organisations across the UK to create new training places. Grants range from £100,000 to £1million for a number of traineeships over a period of up to five years with an emphasis on high-quality work-based training.

Skills for the Future is complementary to HLF’s existing £10m Training Bursary Programme which has been running for the last four years delivering a wide range of skills training - including blacksmithing, botanic gardening, stone masonry, thatching and book conservation. Over 700 placements have been created providing accredited work-based training with highly-skilled crafts people and environmental specialists. In combination with the Skills for the Future placements, this means that over 1,500 training opportunities have been created by HLF.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

Further information

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