The Digital Confidence Fund

Closed programmes

Grants and mentoring to grow the digital confidence of organisations in our 13 Areas of Focus. Part of our Digital Skills for Heritage initiative.

Important

The Digital Confidence Fund is now closed to new applications. Explore our available funding.

We are offering grants of £10,000 to heritage organisations based in 13 local authorities – our Areas of Focus. Each grant recipient will also receive £2,500 worth of free mentoring from a digital expert.

The purpose of the grants and the mentoring is to support organisations in achieving their own goals by building digital skills and confidence.

Areas of Focus

The 13 Areas of Focus are:

- Brent (Greater London)
- Corby (Northamptonshire)
- Enfield (Greater London)
- Knowsley (Merseyside)
- Inverclyde (Scotland)
- Luton (Bedfordshire)
- Newham (Greater London)
- North East Lincolnshire
- North Lanarkshire (Scotland)
- Neath Port Talbot (Wales)
- Rhondda Cynon Taff (Wales)
- Tendring (Essex)
- Walsall (West Midlands)

These 13 areas were identified in our Strategic Funding Framework as priorities.

About this fund

There are some heritage organisations in the UK that are keen to understand and test digital tools and approaches, but are not confident about where to invest in terms of skills and technology.

This fund is aimed at helping organisations like these to explore different digital technologies, so they can better understand which ones are most important to them.

Examples of digital technologies applicants may explore include:

- building and maintaining websites
- using technology to keep in touch with your community
- using websites to sell goods, services or tickets
- using social media sites like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter
- digitising and electronically cataloguing books, papers, audio or objects

Ultimately, this fund is about supporting organisations to grow their resilience by improving their ability to use digital.

This fund is not suitable for organisations which have already decided on a specific digital project and want funding to deliver upon that. Applicants in this position should consider applying through our open programmes instead.

The total available funding under this tranche is £200,000 across all grants. We anticipate making approximately 20 grants of £10,000 each. Each successful applicant will also receive £2,500 of free mentoring supplied by The National Lottery Heritage Fund's consultants.

How the process works

1. Start by contacting your local office to arrange a conversation with an engagement manager.
2. Review this web page for tips and advice on how to fill in the application.
3. Submit a full application via our online application portal by 11.59pm on 6 April 2020.

Who can apply

You can apply if you are a heritage organisation that is predominantly active in one of our 13 Areas of Focus.

You must also be one of the following:

- registered charity
- registered company or community interest company (CIC)
- faith based or church organisation
- community or voluntary group
- private owner of heritage
- local authority
- other public sector organisation

What we are looking for

Unlike most of the funding we award, this fund does not expect applicants to describe in detail exactly what they expect to do with the funding available. This is because its purpose is to allow applicants, under the guidance of a digital mentor, to experiment with different and potentially unfamiliar technologies.

The fund is about digital skills and confidence development. It welcomes applicants who are keen to make use of technology but do not currently feel very confident about digital tools or approaches.

We are seeking:

- Proposals that clearly describe what the applicant's organisation does and what its goals are.
- Proposals that include a simple declaration of an applicant's interest in developing new digital skills, and a short explanation as to why the applicant wants to develop these new skills.
- Proposals from organisations who really want to make the most of digital to achieve their goals, but who don't feel entirely confident about what to prioritise or where to start.
- Proposals that show that applicants are passionate about expanding the reach of heritage to a wider range of people.

We are not seeking:

- Traditional funding proposals that describe very specific deliverables and plans. If you would like to seek funding for a more specific project idea you have in mind, we encourage you to consider our open programmes.
- Requests for specific equipment or licenses for digital services (although grant money can be used for this, if identified as appropriate in conjunction with a digital mentor).

We aim to make up to 20 grants to organisations that are broadly spread across the 13 areas.

What you can use the money for

All successful applicants will be paired with a mentor: a digital expert who will help them to plan how to use their grant money in order to develop their skills.

We expect most grantees to work with their digital mentor to learn about and experiment with various different digital techniques. We do not expect applicants to be able to say exactly how their grant budget will be spent prior to the mentoring commencing.

Successful applicants can use the funds for the following project costs:

- options appraisal
- training
- professional fees
- costs to improve access to your heritage
- activities to help you strengthen your organisation

If your project produces digital outputs that will benefit people in Wales, you must use the Welsh language.

We can cover a wide range of direct project costs. We **cannot** cover the following however:

- existing staff posts or organisational costs
- statutory and/or legal responsibilities
- promoting the cause or beliefs of political or faith organisations
- recoverable VAT
- costs for any activity that has taken place before a grant is awarded

You must commit to acknowledging your grant and promoting The National Lottery. You should tell us about how you plan to do this in your application form. You can find guidance on acknowledgement, promotion and the branding we expect you to use on our website.

How to apply

Visit our application portal and register an account. From the pull-down menu, select £3,000-£10,000. Then choose 'Start full application'.

Please note there is no dedicated ‘Digital Confidence Fund’ application form, so some of the questions in the form are not actually pertinent to this fund. Follow these instructions carefully and you will be able to submit a fully completed application.

Project title

Please insert the hashtag #Digital3 at the start of your project title, to help us correctly identify your application.

Completing your application

Below is some additional advice for filling in your application:

- **Question 1b.** Please use the guidance in the above section “What we are looking for” to inform your answer.
- **Question 1c.** Please tick Training for staff or trustees.
- **Question 1d.** Your organisation must be based in one of the Areas of Focus as listed above.
- **Question 1f.** Please use this question to tell us about the heritage that your organisation looks after (rather than this specific project). Also, your work must take place predominantly within an Area of Focus: please use this section to gives examples that show this is the case.
- **Question 1h.** Please answer no.
- **Question 1i.** Whilst it is important that you consider environment sustainability during your grant, we acknowledge that prior to meeting your digital mentor you will not be in a position to do this. Please insert “To be determined in conjunction with project mentor.”
- **Question 1j.** We acknowledge that prior to meeting your digital mentor you will not be in a position to answer this question. Please insert “To be determined in conjunction with project mentor.”
- **Question 3a.** We acknowledge that prior to meeting your digital mentor you will not be in a position to answer this question. Please therefore input 90% of your requested budget as ‘Digital outputs’, 5% as contingency, and 5% as evaluation.

Outcomes

The full list of our programme outcomes can be found on our website. Please note that applications that do not state they will meet the mandatory outcome cannot be considered for funding. There is no obligation to name more than one outcome, and we encourage you not to claim more outcomes than you really think you can evaluate and achieve.

Documents

You will also have to supply various documents in order for your proposal to be considered for assessment.

Governing document

This should include:

- The name and aims of your organisation.
- A statement that prevents your organisation from distributing income or property to its members during its lifetime.
- A statement which confirms that if your organisation is wound up or dissolves, the organisation's assets will be distributed to another charitable or not-for-profit organisation and not the organisation's members.
- The date when it was adopted and the signature of your chairperson (or other authorised person).

Accounts

These should be:

- Your most recent audited or accountant verified accounts.
- If you are a new organisation and so not have a set of audited accounts, your last three bank statements or a letter from your bank confirming that you have opened an account.

Deadline for proposals

The deadline for applications is 11.59pm on 6 April 2020.

How your proposal will be assessed

When we assess your application, we will consider:

- Whether the work you do is relevant to heritage in the UK.
- Whether developing your digital skills is likely to help you to meet our mandatory outcome for projects that we fund.
- How much your organisation will benefit from the grant.
- How much the people you serve will benefit from you having improved digital skills.
- Whether your proposal reflects value for money.

Applications will be considered by an internal panel convened especially for this awarding process.

How the project will be evaluated

We are keen to understand how grantees' skills and confidence develop during the duration of the grant.

We will work closely with the successful applicants and mentors to evaluate progress. You do not have to supply your own plans for evaluation, which will be developed in discussion between the applicant, their mentor and The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Key dates

- The deadline for full applications is 11.59pm on 6 April 2020.
- The assessment panel will take place on 1 June 2020.
- Applicants will be notified by 8 June 2020.

Documents to help you apply

£3,000 to £10,000 application guidance – General information and advice for how to write a strong proposal. Please note that you may find some parts of this guidance document conflict with the requirements on this page. In such circumstances, the guidance on this page take precedence.

Standard terms of grant – Our terms and conditions for grants.

Receiving a grant guidance for £3,000 - £10,000 – This sets out what you will need to do to receive your grant.