Covid Recovery Employment and Skills Initiative for Heritage (Northern Ireland)

See all updates

Department for Communities funding for heritage organisations will create employment opportunities for individuals who wish to enter into, or progress within, the heritage sector.

Important

This programme is now closed to new applications. Explore our available funding.

Guidance updates

- **17 February 2022:** guidance was updated to show that the programme is now closed to applications.
- **10 February 2022:** FAQs from the second applicant support webinar were added.
- **3 February 2022:**
  - Application FAQs from the support webinar held on 3 February are now available.
  - A second application support webinar, taking place on Wednesday 9 February, was added.
  - The 'Who can apply' section was updated to include private limited companies that operate for the sole benefit of supporting not-for-profit organisations.

Introduction

The objective of the wider Covid Recovery Employment and Skills Initiative is to provide support for individuals within identified sectors in Northern Ireland whose job roles have been impacted by the pandemic, to enhance their job prospects and skill sets, and in doing so strengthen the organisations and sectors.

The Executive and the Minister for Communities, Deirdre Hargey MLA, have provided this COVID recovery funding for heritage organisations and a range of other not-for-profit organisations. The funding aims to deliver interventions to address labour market barriers faced by individuals in light of the impact of the pandemic on the economy. The interventions are to have a particular focus on the arts, creative industries, heritage, sport and voluntary community sectors.

The Department for Communities has appointed the Heritage Fund to deliver the Covid Recovery Employment and Skills Initiative for Heritage to organisations specifically within the heritage sector.

Available funding

Organisations can apply for between £50,000-£100,000 of funding. This funding should be spread over three years and can be used to cover salary and training costs of approximately £30,000 per annum. The funding should be used to support one person/role only.

Key dates

- open for applications between 31 January and noon on 17 February 2022
- funding decisions will be announced by 31 March 2022
- we will fund activity between 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2025
- completion reports must be submitted by 30 September 2025

Please note

We have developed this funding programme quickly in order to respond to the immediate needs of the heritage sector. We are not offering one to one pre-application advice, so please make sure you read the guidance carefully and check that you are eligible to apply.

We held two guidance webinars for applicants on 3 and 9 February. FAQs from the webinars are available to download.

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Overview

This programme is for heritage organisations operating in Northern Ireland.

Heritage can mean different things to?different people.?It can be anything from the past that you value and want to pass on to future generations.

As a guide, this could include:

- people's memories and experiences (often recorded as 'oral history')
- cultural traditions (for example, stories, festivals, crafts, music and dance)
- community archaeology
- historic buildings, monuments and environments
- designed landscapes, such as parks and gardens
- collections of objects, books or documents in libraries or?archives
- histories of people and communities or places and events
- the heritage of languages and dialects

- places and objects linked to our industrial, maritime and transport history

The Covid Recovery Employment and Skills Initiative for Heritage aims to:

- Encourage new talent to enter employment in sectors where talent has been depleted and/or there is an ageing workforce.
- Support new entry-level jobs.
- Allow individuals to acquire additional experience in new areas, along with transferable skills.
- Support work experience and placement opportunities.
- Support additional or enhanced volunteering opportunities and ensure volunteers are effectively managed.
- Allow individuals to fulfil their potential and add value to their organisation and sector, by training in sector-specific skills.

A broad range of roles across the heritage sector can be supported by this programme. These roles could include, and are not limited to posts, marketing, digital, operations, finance, sales, visitor experience or volunteering. Applicants are asked to demonstrate that the new posts would provide a good quality job opportunity for individuals which will in turn support organisational and sectoral growth.

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Who can apply?

We are accepting applications from heritage organisations operating in Northern Ireland. You should only apply to the Covid Recovery Employment and Skills Initiative which best fits your organisation's primary purpose. If you organisation's primary purpose is arts, creative industries, sport, voluntary and community work, please only apply to the relevant scheme.

Organisations must:

- be not-for-profit organisations, constituted, with two unrelated people able to sign on behalf of the organisation. Private limited companies operating for the sole benefit of a not-for-profit organisation, with all profits paid to the not-for-profit organisation, may also apply.
- have heritage as their primary purpose
- be based in Northern Ireland, OR be based in England, Scotland, Wales or the Republic of Ireland and manage heritage in Northern Ireland

Under this scheme we welcome applications from partnerships, provided that the lead organisation submitting the application meets the above eligibility criteria. For example, applicants may choose to partner with a recruitment charity or organisation in order to attract a more diverse pool of candidates. The majority of funding must be spent by the lead organisation, and new posts must be within this organisation.

Under this programme we are not accepting applications from:

- Organisations that manage heritage that is not in Northern Ireland.
- Organisations that were not operating sustainably before March 2020.

- Organisations whose primary purpose is sport, culture, languages, arts, charities or social enterprise. These organisations should apply to the equivalent Covid Recovery Employment and Skills Initiative from the relevant delivery partner (detailed in the Alternative Funding section of this guidance).
- Private owners of heritage sites, venues or attractions.
    - For profit businesses. This includes conservators, contractors, specialists, suppliers and cooperatives.
    - Universities and other public sector bodies that manage heritage sites, venues or attractions.
    - Local authorities.

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What can you apply for?

Your application costs should support **one** job role. This may be through the creation of a new post, increasing an existing role from part-time to full-time, or backfilling an existing post to allow the post-holder to perform other development activities.

Roles could include, and are not limited to, posts in marketing, digital, operations, finance, sales, visitor experience or volunteering.

Eligible costs include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Wages for a new staff member or paid trainee. We are committed to ensuring that the heritage sector is inclusive and sustainable. You must use the Real Living Wage rate (and London Living Wage if applicable) for all project staff.
- Wages for additional hours of an existing staff member or paid trainee.
- Reasonable on-costs and professional fees for hiring new staff members, such as pension contributions and HR support. Grantees must commit to a minimum employer's pension contribution of 5% for the funded role. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure this is compliant with their employee pension provider rules and employment law.
- Fees for training to support the skills and development needs of existing staff and volunteers. This should add value to the individuals involved, to the organisation and to the sector.
- Fees for professional memberships or associations.
- Expenses, travel and in some circumstances accommodation (for example when the post-holder is required to live on site) for a new staff member or paid trainee.
- Equipment and materials, for example a new laptop for the new post-holder.

Organisations may submit more than one application to this programme (so long as they are all submitted to the same delivery partner). Please note that each application will be assessed separately and awards will be prioritised by geographical spread and range of activity. Therefore each application should stand alone.

Partnership funding requirements

Partnership funding is not required for this programme. We expect applicants to provide assurance or evidence that they have exhausted all other sources of funding for this post.

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How to apply

Please note (update 17 February 2022)

This programme is now closed to new applications. Explore our available funding.

Before you apply

We are not offering one-to-one pre-application?advice?for this programme, so make sure you read the guidance carefully and check that you are eligible to apply. It should provide all the information you need to know to make an application.?

Please note:?The Heritage Fund uses the same forms across a variety of our?programmes.?Some questions need to be answered differently for this programme, so you must carefully read the relevant application help notes?to understand what information is required where.?Do not?use the help icons embedded in the online form.

We have designed the application process to be as straightforward as possible and we are requesting only the information we need.?

Guidance webinar

We held two guidance webinars:

- 11am on Thursday 3 February (now passed)
- 12pm on Wednesday 9 February (now passed)

These provided an overview of the scheme and provided applicants with a chance to ask questions. FAQs from the webinars are available to download.

Mandatory enclosures

You must include certain key documentation with your application. These must be submitted with your application by the application deadline. Any application which does not include all of the mandatory enclosures will not be considered.

The mandatory enclosures are:

1. Governing document
2. Accounts
3. Partnership agreements (if applicable)
4. Job Description
5. Action Plan (optional template supplied)

Mandatory enclosures are also referred to as supporting documents throughout our application guidance.

You may also submit letters of support and relevant images in support of your application.

The application form lists a number of other supporting documents which are not required for this programme. Please only provide the mandatory enclosures listed above. Please upload these in the order given in the Application Help Notes.

Details of what to include in each document can also be found in the Application Help Notes.

Application portal

When you are ready, apply using our application portal

When to apply

We are accepting applications from **31 January to noon on 17 February 2022.?**

We will assess applications and make decisions by 31 March 2022.

Technical support

For technical support or assistance with accessibility, please contact our customer service team by email:? Heritage.RecoveryNI@heritagefund.org.uk.

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Application help notes, templates and FAQs

Applicants to this fund should refer to the Application Help Notes.

Applicants should also submit an action plan – you can use our optional template.

We held two guidance webinars for applicants on 3 and 9 February. FAQs from the webinars are available to download.

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How will we assess applications?

When assessing your application, we will consider whether you meet the essential criteria for the programme.?If you do not meet the essential criteria, we will not assess your application further.

Due to the tight turn-around times of this programme, we are unable to get back to applicants for further information. Therefore it is important that you submit all mandatory enclosures, using the templates where required, and provide all information clearly for our assessment.

Essential criteria

We will assess your application against the following criteria to ensure your proposals are eligible for this programme. Applications must:

- Be from eligible organisations or partnerships containing an eligible organisation.
- Demonstrate that the new posts would provide a good quality job opportunity for individuals which will in turn support organisational and sectoral growth.
- Demonstrate a credible plan to recruit, develop and manage the new employee.
- Demonstrate a credible plan to prevent the need for further public sector funding for the new post after 30 June 2025, such as absorbing the post into the organisation.
- Provide assurance that funding for this activity has not been received from an alternative source.

Priority criteria

In the event that we receive more eligible applications than we are able to fund, our decision-makers will take into account the following criteria to prioritise applications:

- Proposals that prioritise new entrants into the sector.
- Proposals that provide enhanced career prospects and long-term job retention for individuals.
- Proposals where priority skills and resource deficits are addressed.
- Proposals representing balanced geographical coverage across Northern Ireland.
- Proposals representing a range of activities and approaches.
- Proposals that enhance the sector and demonstrate new and innovative ways of working.
- Small and medium organisations, and organisations which have not been funded by a public sector organisation in each of the last three years for core running costs (NICS department or council).

Changes to this guidance

We have developed this programme very quickly in order to respond to the immediate needs of the heritage sector.?We will continue to review our processes to ensure we are able to provide support where it is needed.?We reserve the right to make any changes needed to the guidance and programme.?We will communicate any changes as quickly as possible via this webpage.

Decision-making

The Heritage Fund will make decisions and inform applicants as to whether they have been successful or not by 31 March 2022. We will send you a legal agreement which includes the amount you have been awarded and outlines the conditions of your grant.

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Receiving a grant

You must wait to receive permission to start from us before beginning your project. You will need to submit a form online and provide us with your bank account details.

Your organisation will need a bank account. The name on this bank account must exactly match the name of the organisation making the application.

If your grant request is below £100,000, we will pay your grant in three instalments:

- we will give you 50% of the grant up-front
- once you have spent the first half of your total eligible project costs, we will give the next 40%
- we will pay the final 10% of your grant when you have finished your project and sent us a final completion report and project evaluation

Reporting

For grants of under £100,000 we will expect you to report on the progress of your project at least once during the project lifetime and once at completion.

We will expect evidence of delivery and expenditure, such as photos, reports, invoices and receipts. More detailed information on our monitoring process will be provided with your grant award confirmation.

The Heritage Fund retains the right to carry out post payment audits to validate the accuracy of the information provided and, if appropriate, to claw back payments made in error or payments made in excess of the appropriate amount of funding.

Publicising your grant

Publicity for this programme will be handled by us in partnership with Department for Communities and you may be asked to participate in the rollout of our plans.

Reporting on your progress and evaluation

All grantees will be required to participate in monitoring and evaluation of this programme and we will monitor the health of your organisation.

Department for Communities will be evaluating the impact of the whole programme and will require you to take part in some data collection to support this work.?We will provide more information about this requirement as soon as it is available.

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Subsidy Control

It is an applicant’s responsibility to confirm that their application has been considered and checked in relation to Subsidy Control rules.

At the point of publication of this guidance for applicants, public funding for organisations is no longer governed by the European Commission's State Aid rules as set out in Article 107-109 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union and associated regulations and guidelines. Instead all grant decisions made after 11pm on the 31st December 2020 are subject to the new UK subsidy control regime, the principles of which are set out in Chapter 3 (Subsidies) of Title XI (Level Playing Field) of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

There is expected to be further guidance, a consultation and possibly new legislation in this area to build upon those principles. You will be expected to comply with the principles of the subsidy control regime and to satisfy any future requirements. Agreements that have been entered into will be reviewed and varied accordingly. We reserve the right to impose further requirements and additional conditions in relation to this matter.

It is an applicant's responsibility to check whether State Aid or Subsidy Control clearance is required. Applicants should seek independent legal advice if they are unsure whether a project will require clearance.

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Managing your data

For more information about how your data will be processed under this grant programme please see our?privacy policy.

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Alternative funding

If your organisation's primary purpose falls into one of the following categories, please apply to the Covid Recovery Employment and Skills Initiative from the corresponding delivery partner:

- Arts – Future Screens
- Creative Industries – BBC
- Sport – Rank Foundation
- Voluntary and Community – Rank Foundation

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Complaints

We understand that you may be disappointed with the outcome of your Covid Recovery Employment and Skills Initiative for Heritage application. We can only review our decision again if you make a complaint about how we have dealt with your application. We have a two stage complaint process for this programme.

We will only be able to consider and investigate the complaint if you can demonstrate that:

- we did not follow the published procedures for assessing your application
- you can show that we have misunderstood a significant part of your application
- you can show that we did not take notice of relevant information

A complaint must be made in writing by emailing enquire@heritagefund.org.uk within 10 working days of receiving your application decision. We aim to acknowledge your complaint within three working days.

Your complaint will initially be reviewed by an area or country director from the Heritage Fund. They will be independent of recommendation and decision panels for this programme.

We aim to communicate a decision within 15 working days from when you submitted your complaint.

For assistance, contact our Customer Services Team on 020 7591 6044 or email enquire@heritagefund.org.uk.

Changes to this guidance

We have developed this funding programme very quickly in order to respond to the immediate needs of the heritage sector. We will continue to review our processes to ensure we are able to provide support where it is needed. We reserve the right to make any changes needed to the guidance and programme. We will communicate any changes as quickly as possible via this webpage.

Funding comes from the Department for Communities and is being delivered by the Heritage Fund.

