

# Covid Recovery Employment and Skills Initiative

## Application FAQs

### Job roles

- 1. Question:** Can this funding support roles which were planned during the pandemic but were unable to get funding previously? Or do the plans have to be brand new for our organisation?

**Answer:** We are happy to accept applications for roles which have been planned previously. You should justify within your application why this is the best approach for your organisation now, and how the role will fit into your organisation post-pandemic.

- 2. Question:** Can this funding we used to replace a post lost during the pandemic?

**Answer:** If there is a break between losing this post and applying for this scheme, we can consider this a new post. You should review your organisation carefully to ensure that this role is still fulfilling your organisation's needs, and adjust the role description accordingly.

- 3. Question:** Can this funding be used to renew the contracts of at-risk staff?

**Answer:** No, this funding should not be used to renew existing staff contracts.

- 4. Question:** Can this funding be used to increase head count within an existing team or does it have to be an entirely new job function?

**Answer:** This funding will support new roles only. So long as you have identified new skills and priorities for this role, it can be within an existing team.

- 5. Question:** Is this scheme targeted towards new entrants/entry-level roles?

**Answer:** Yes, new entrants to the sector are a priority for this scheme.

- 6. Question:** Can new roles work outside Northern Ireland, for example across Ireland?

**Answer:** Roles which are based or operate outside of Northern Ireland may be eligible to apply so long as the majority of their work and contribution to the sector is

in Northern Ireland. We expect this to be a competitive scheme so roles with limited impact in Northern Ireland will be lower priority.

**7. Question:** Must the length of contract of the appointed person be three years, or can it be less?

**Answer:** The scheme is designed to support posts for a three year period in order to maximise the impact of the funding, the likelihood of skills being embedded and the sustainability and resilience of the organisation. Therefore we expect contracts to last for three years.

**8. Question:** Do we have to guarantee that posts will continue beyond the three years of funding?

**Answer:** We would like to see evidence that you have a strategy to extend the role, although we do not expect you to commit to these costs at this point. In certain circumstances, for example if the role is tied to project work, it may be appropriate to show us your plan for the legacy of the work, rather than the role itself.

**9. Question:** What do we do if the post-holder leaves the organisation during the three-year period?

**Answer:** This funding is for roles within organisations, rather than individuals fulfilling those roles. If an individual leaves, the organisation should take appropriate steps to re-recruit into the role. You should liaise with your Investment Manager as to the most appropriate route for this, but management of the staff member lies within your organisation.

## Eligible costs

**10. Question:** Can we pay more than the living wage?

**Answer:** Yes, there is no maximum salary for these roles (other than the total award amount of £100,000). We expect you to be able to demonstrate how you have arrived at these figures, for example in relation to your existing internal policies and staffing structure.

**11. Question:** Can this funding cover Full Cost Recovery?

**Answer:** We will only fund direct costs under this scheme, so Full Cost Recovery is not eligible.

**12. Question:** Can funding be split between wages and obtaining new technology, such as equipment and software?

**Answer:** Yes, you can apply for wages and associated costs for new roles.

**13. Question:** Can we include supervisor/management costs provided by existing staff, e.g. to deliver training to the new role?

**Answer:** Yes, this is eligible if it is a direct cost of supporting this new role. We expect this funding to be competitive so any additional costs should be proportionate to the application and the needs of the role.

**14. Question:** The Guidelines state that grantees must commit to a minimum employer's pension contribution of 5%. Does this mean we can't apply if the employer contribution for the individual appointed through the funding were to receive 3% (like other staff already employed) rather than 5%?

**Answer:** Department for Communities has determined that all posts funded through this scheme must receive a minimum employer's pension contribution of 5%. Whether your organisation is able to commit to this for a single employee depends on your internal policies, your pension provider and relevant legislation. You should explore this independently before submitting an application. If you are unable to commit to this then the role is not eligible for this scheme.

**15. Question:** We are a small organisation with no current staff, and therefore do not have a pension provider. Can we ask post-holders to sign up to their own private pension provider, so long as we guarantee to pay the 5% minimum contribution?

**Answer:** You might find this [guidance from the Pensions Regulator](#) helpful. We cannot provide advice as to the best arrangements for your specific pension circumstances. You should take independent advice on this before submitting your application..

**16. Question:** Can costs associated with homeworking be eligible?

**Answer:** Yes, if the post-holder is based from home then the direct costs incurred by this can be eligible.

**17. Question:** Can any of the funds be applied to managing/training volunteers which the post-holder would be recruiting?

**Answer:** We are unable to fund the cost of new or existing volunteering programmes through this fund. We can only fund the costs relating to a new volunteer manager post.

## Eligibility

**18. Question:** Is this programme open to new organisations which were not in existence prior to the COVID-19 pandemic?

**Answer:** Yes, this programme is open to new organisations. As with all applicants, you must demonstrate that your organisation is viable, and that you make a significant contribution to the heritage sector.

**19. Question:** Can an organisation receive confirmation that they are eligible or not eligible to submit an application?

**Answer:** We are unable to provide bespoke pre-application advice. Please ensure you read the eligibility criteria closely as this contains all the information you will need to apply.

**20. Question:** How do you define not-for-profit organisations?

**Answer:** Organisations must be set up so that they are not for private gain. 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 apply. We have adjusted our guidance to make this clearer.

**21. Question:** Can natural heritage organisations apply?

**Answer:** Yes, natural heritage organisations are eligible under this scheme.

**22. Question:** Are organisations whose primary focus is not heritage, but who have a significant impact on the heritage sector, eligible to apply? For example social charities that manage heritage assets, language or cultural charities, sector support or membership organisations, Arms-Length Bodies?

**Answer:** Yes, organisations which have a significant role in the heritage sector may be eligible to apply, even if their primary focus is not heritage. Before applying please visit the websites of the other delivery partners for the Covid Recovery Employment and Skills Initiative to determine which scheme you should apply to.

All applicants must demonstrate that they make a significant contribution to the heritage sector. We expect this to be a competitive scheme and we are unlikely to be able to fund all good quality applications we receive. Please review the Prioritisation Criteria to ensure your application fits with the scheme.

**23. Question:** In relation to the priority criteria 'organisations which have not been funded by a public sector organisation in each of the last three years for core running costs', what constitutes core running costs?

**Answer:** Core running costs include the staff and overheads which allow your organisation to exist and operate day-to-day. We do not include project funding in this category.

## Application Forms

**24. Question:** What will you accept for Current Management Accounts? Would current bank statements suffice?

**Answer:** We cannot accept bank statements as a substitute for management accounts. If you do not have management accounts, please submit whatever documentation you use in the day-to-day management of your finances, such as cashflows, balance sheets or profit and loss calculations.

**25. Question:** We are unable to submit multiple accounts documents under one heading on the portal.

**Answer:** In order to submit multiple documents under one heading, such as Accounts, please select all the documents you wish to upload at once, rather than uploading them one by one. If you are still unable to submit documents this way, you may submit them under other headings in the portal, or email them to [Heritage.RecoveryNI@heritagefund.org.uk](mailto:Heritage.RecoveryNI@heritagefund.org.uk) by the application deadline.

**26. Question:** Why are you collecting the data in the question 'Tell us about the mission, or objectives, of your organisation'?

**Answer:** We use this data to monitor our own performance as an inclusive funder. The answer you provide should relate to your organisation's mission and objectives, rather than relating to any individual. Your answer will not be used in the assessment of your application.

## The Scheme

**27. Question:** Can organisations apply more than once?

**Answer:** Yes, you can submit as many applications as you want to this fund. Please note we expect to receive more good quality applications than we can fund, so we will prioritise these applications based on its own merit and on the Prioritisation Criteria. Each application should stand-alone.

**28. Question:** Is it possible to apply to more than one Delivery Body?

**Answer:** In the first instance, organisations should apply to the Delivery Body that best fits their primary purpose. Should an organisation have a **clearly defined dual purpose**, they could apply to a second Delivery Body for a second and completely different job role to the first. Each job role needs to meet the criteria as defined by each Delivery Body. Dual purpose organisations should not apply to more than Delivery Body for the same job role.

**29. Question:** How much money is available in total for this initiative? Can you roughly estimate how many applications you expect to receive?

**Answer:** We have £1.8million available in grants under the heritage strand of this scheme. We anticipate receiving significantly more good-quality applications than we can fund.

**30. Question:** Are you likely to offer this specific funding again or is it a one-off opportunity?

**Answer:** This funding has been provided by Department for Communities. We are unaware of any additional schemes planned for the future.

**31. Question:** Can you provide details of how successful projects will be monitored?

**Answer:** Successful projects will be monitored in line with our standard approach to projects of this size. Three payment will be made, 50% up-front, 40% at the mid-point of the project and 10% in arrears on project completion.

We expect successful grantees to be in regular contact with our staff, reporting to us a minimum of once per year. We may also be collecting additional data on behalf of the Department for Communities, and will provide details of this after awards have been made.