

## Applying for Funding

researched and written by Rachel Gibson

If you are pursuing a career in the dance sector it is likely that at some stage you will need to make an application to a public funding body. You might be an individual artist seeking a bursary for professional development, a choreographer seeking funding towards the creation of a new programme of work or a dance manager making applications on behalf of the artists or companies for whom you work.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has published a “Guide to Arts Funding in England” which is downloadable from the DCMS website <http://www.culture.gov.uk> . This lists and describes sources of funding for the arts and includes links to relevant websites.

The websites of arts funding bodies provide a wealth of information on the funding schemes they have available, the criteria for funding and the procedures for making applications:

### **National Arts Funding Bodies:**

Arts Council England  
<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk>

Arts Council of Northern Ireland  
<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org>

Arts Council of Wales – Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru  
<http://www.ccc-acw.org.uk>

Scottish Arts Council  
<http://www.scottisharts.org.uk>

### **Lottery Distributors:**

Lottery distributing bodies which give some or all of their funding to the arts are:

- The Arts Councils of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (see above)
- Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)
- Community Fund
- New Opportunities Fund (NOF)
- NESTA

The five distributors also contribute to **Awards for All**, a joint scheme that gives funding to community projects including those using the arts. For further information go to the Lottery distributors joint website <http://www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk> or phone the telephone hotline 0845 275 0000.

**Trusts and Foundations** which regularly support the arts:

For further information go to the Association of Charitable Foundations website <http://www.acf.org.uk>

Many **local authorities** also support arts activity in their area and a visit to the website of your local council may also yield useful information and ideas.

The funding criteria and application procedures for these funding bodies all differ and there is no substitute for careful reading of the published literature of any funding source that you believe may be appropriate for your work. Many offer advice surgeries for prospective applicants and some will also give individual advice either over the phone or face to face (see [preparing for meetings available to download from http://www.workindance.com](http://www.workindance.com) ).

What this page aims to do is provide some general advice on approaching funders and making applications by offering checklists covering the three main phases of the application process:

- Before – research, preparation and initial approaches
- During – preparing and submitting an application
- After – outcomes and follow-up

### Checklist 1 - Before

Do	Don't
Research funding sources thoroughly and ahead of time	Rush to start writing an application before you have looked at all the possible options
Find out when deadlines fall and how long funders will take to get back to you with a decision	
Remember that nearly all funders will not fund work retrospectively – that is to say they will not fund a project that has already started	
Remember that most funders will not fund 100% of the cost of a project. You will probably need to secure more than one source of support	

Take advantage of any advice offered by many National Dance Agencies (NDAs) and other dance agencies and support services. <a href="http://www.anda.org.uk">http://www.anda.org.uk</a>	Try to do an application without advice
Ask friends and colleagues who have experience of making funding applications for advice	
Phone and speak to or arrange to meet relevant officer/contact and/or attend advice surgeries	

## Checklist 2 - During

Do	Don't
Allow plenty of time to research and write the application. Bear in mind that it is expected that you will have spoken to project partners, costed the budget as accurately as possible and these things take time and research	Leave everything until the day before the deadline
Research costing thoroughly and check your figures carefully (see <a href="#">Sample Budget available to download from www.workindance.com</a> )	Throw a guesstimate budget together at the last minute
Describe your project clearly and in detail – make sure it sounds interesting	Hype the project up
Remember that many funders limit the number of words or pages you can submit	Exceed word counts or submit pages of supplementary information without checking first whether they will be accepted as part of the application
Pay close attention to the criteria for the particular fund to which you are applying	Send the same proposal out to lots of different funding bodies regardless of their criteria and priorities
Ensure that you include any relevant supporting information. Some funders ask for copies of your previous year's accounts of your Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Arts Council's information for applicants includes a checklist of everything that you need to include with your application.	Leave out important bits of supporting information.
Pay attention to presentation. Type or word process wherever possible and keep spelling and other mistake to a minimum	Handwrite your application unless there is no alternative. If you must handwrite then always use black ink and write clearly
Submit applications by post or hand on time	Expect faxed or e-mailed applications to be accepted or miss deadlines

Get a friend or colleague to read through your application and check it for clarity before you submit it	
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### Checklist 3 - After

<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
Keep a copy of your application	Leave yourself in the position of having to phone the funder to ask for a copy back
Keep an note of any acknowledgement of receipt and/or application reference numbers that you are sent	
Find out in advance what the timescale is for decision making and expect to wait until this passes before hearing anything	Keep phoning up to see how things are going

### Checklist 3a – if your application is successful

<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
Find out how the grant will be paid and what special conditions you will need to meet in order to receive grant installments	Sigh with relief and assume that the bulk of the work relating to funding is over
If you don't have one already, open a bank account for the project and ensure that all grant payments go into this account	Muddle project funds with other monies in a personal bank account
It is likely that the grant will be paid in a series of installments over the course of the project so keep a note of what you need to send to the funder and revisit it regularly	Forget to send in information to meet special conditions – it could send your cashflow for the project haywire if it results in a delay in grant payments
Make sure that you send the funder regular updates on the progress of the project and that any information you send to the funder is presented to a high standard	
Retain a dialogue with funders and ensure that representatives of existing a future prospective funders are invited to performances or other events associated with the project	

### Checklist 3b – if your application is unsuccessful

Do	Don't
Talk to the funder and find out as much as you can about why it was not successful. Use the experience as an opportunity to improve your chances of success next time	Go off in a huff
Continue a dialogue with the funder, invite them to events and keep them informed about your activities	

### Other Useful Links

<http://www.artquest.org.uk>

<http://www.fundinginformation.org> (Funding Digest)

<http://www.dsc.org.uk> (Directory of Social Change)

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