

West Midlands Combined Authority

West Midlands Future Growth Grants Application Guidance

1 Access Support

If you require any access support before you apply or would like to request the application guidance or application form questions in a different format, please email culture@wmca.org.uk

Access support can include, but is not limited to, help with reading our guidance, support using our online grant system, a BSL interpreter, a support worker to help you make an application. Access support is for people who may need support because they identify as disabled, D/deaf, neurodivergent, having a long-term health condition, and/or having a mental health condition.

Our applicant guidance is available in a variety of formats:

- BSL/Closed Captioned Introduction to the International Fund
- Screen Reader-friendly/Large print
- Easy read
- Braille (on request).

We understand that our systems and processes can present barriers and we are committed to being open and accessible.

Please email culture@wmca.org.uk if we can help with access support, or if you would like to submit an application in another format (e.g audio/video).

We will work with you to find a practical alternative.

Our online grant system has been designed, tested, and maintained with accessibility in mind, from colour contrast and video captions to keyboard navigation.

2 Overview

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is a group of 18 local authorities working together to make our region a better place to live.

The government gives combined authorities the money and power to make decisions for their regions. This is called devolution. It means that decisions are made by people who know their region best.

In 2023, the WMCA received funding from the UK Government to support the legacy of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. This funding is called **Commonwealth Games Legacy Enhancement Fund**, CWGLEF for short. A total of £4.1m of this funding will support **the arts, culture and heritage sectors.**

We can use some of this funding to support organisations and individuals from the WMCA area to develop new partnerships internationally via grants.

This guidance is specifically for the **West Midlands Future Growth Grants**, which are open for individuals and organisations who want to collaborate internationally.

3 What are the West Midlands Future Growth Grants?

The West Midlands Future Growth Grants will support any international research and development projects you may want to pursue.

Your projects should show that the international activity will help you develop your practice, business, or partnerships. There are no limitations on the countries that you can work with.

This funding will **not support** full-scale touring or exporting major existing projects, productions or products abroad.

Instead, it is designed to support individuals and organisations to:

- Create new international partnership through research and development activity, for example by having conversations with new potential partners in a specific country.
- Develop new partnerships through knowledge exchange.
- Maintain existing partnerships to further develop an existing project, production or product.
- Maintain existing partnerships with the aim to create a new project.
- Promote your projects or products abroad.
- Develop your practice, knowledge or learning.

You could use the grant to:

- Travel to visit international partners, or to develop new partnerships. This could include you creating some initial creative outputs like an artwork, piece of writing, piece of music etc. where it would support the delivery of a future project.
- Attend international conferences, festivals, showcases, salons or other similar events to develop partnerships or to increase your knowledge.
- Attend residencies or other exchange opportunities abroad to increase your knowledge, practice and experience.
- Test new types of project delivery with international partners.
- Attend trade events or trade missions to promote your organisation, project, product or production.

For example, you may be interested in doing a dance project with an

organisation in Germany and you have identified a potential partner. With a grant from this fund, you could then organise a visit to meet your partners and to plan the project.

For example, you may be planning an international conference to take place in Philippines next year. With a grant from this fund, you can identify a partner in the Philippines and develop the conference through online conversations.

Your application does not need to involve travel and you can also explore other ways to develop international partnerships where travel is not essential to achieving the outcomes.

Please note we cannot support travel costs for international partner to come to UK, we can only support individuals and organisations based on the WMCA area to travel abroad.

The result of your project does not always need to be a piece of art or a completed creative output.

For example, it could be that because of your project you have developed the necessary partnership, developed new skills, and created a plan on how to deliver your longer-term international project.

Your project can be **face-to-face, online, or hybrid**. We will particularly welcome applications focusing on digital innovation and collaboration, especially where this approach might avoid unnecessary carbon emissions.

4 How much funding is available?

We plan to make £64,000 funding available across two funding rounds in 2024. We reserve the right to amend total budget amounts to adjust to demand.

You can apply for any amount of funding between £2,500 - £8,000. Please note that if you apply for the West Midlands Future Growth Grants, **you cannot also submit an application for the Global Creative Legacy Grants**, which we are delivering in partnership with the British Council.

We expect most of the successful grants to be on the lower end of the tier and will only award funding in the upper range to a few exceptional projects.

There is **no requirement for match funding** for this grant fund. If you have some additional funding that you can put towards this project, then please mention this in your application. It can help to show that you already have a partnership in place. Please note that we cannot double fund activities already funded from another source.

Funding amount £2,500 £8,000

Personal Access Costs

You can include personal access costs in the 'Budget' section of the application.

Access costs are additional to your activity costs and do not count for the limits above; for more information on personal access costs see the **section below**.

For example: If an organisation applies for £8,000 in total and £2,000 of this is for personal access costs, we view this an application for £6,000.

We expect there to be a lot of applications for this fund which could mean that there are more projects that we can fund. As a general rule, we are not able to provide feedback.

5 Who can apply for this fund?

This fund is open for individuals, groups of individuals (delegations), and organisations.

We define organisation as a group of people working together.

An organisation must however have a governing document in place. An organisation could be a charity, limited company, community interest company (CIC) or a partnership. We can also support heritage trusts or foundations, as long as there is a governing document in place. Officers from Local Authorities or Parish Councils can apply where they meet the art form and geographical requirements. Individuals, freelancers and sole traders can also apply.

For **individuals** applying, you must be a resident of the West Midlands and, if chosen by panel, you must provide valid ID and Proof of Address before any grant offer is finalised. You **must have a UK bank account** and the name must match the name in your application.

For **organisations**, the bank account name must match the name you are using in your application, please ensure you therefore use the formal name of your organisation when applying. You must also have two unrelated signatories, who are the people authorised to make payments and manage the account. Limited companies must be registered in UK Companies House and charities with the UK Charity Commission. We expect to fund 1-2 people per organisation to take part, with most successful grants being on the lower end of the tier. We will only award grants in the upper range to a few exceptional projects or more organisation members.

A **group of individuals** can also apply as a **delegation** (e.g. a West Midlands delegation attending a specific trade show). In this case, you should submit only one joint application which provides details for all the individuals in the delegation. Each member in the delegation **must have a UK bank account**. We will make separate payments to each individual member or organisation and each member of the delegation must sign the application form to confirm they want to take part. You must tell us how much funding each member of the delegation should be allocated, and this should have been agreed by all the delegate members prior to submitting the application. If chosen by panel, all members of the delegation must provide valid ID and Proof of Address before any grant offer is finalised. **Please note that we are only expecting to fund a few delegations with grants up to £8,000 and anyone named in a delegation cannot apply separately as an individual for this fund or the Global Creative Legacy Grants.**

These areas are called the WMCA constituent Local Authority areas.

In addition, we are looking to provide a small number of grants (approximately 10% of the total fund) for eligible applicants in the following local authority areas.

- Cannock Chase District Council
- North Warwickshire Borough Council
- Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council
- Redditch Borough Council
- Rugby Borough Council
- Shropshire Council
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council
- Tamworth Borough Council
- Telford & Wrekin Council
- Warwickshire County Council

For delegations, a majority of the delegation members (over 50%) must be from the WMCA constituent Local Authority areas and the rest of the members must be based in the other areas listed above. We cannot fund any applicants outside these areas.

We are looking to fund individuals, organisations, and delegations working in arts, culture, and heritage.

By this we mean:

- Arts, including performing arts such as music, dance, circus and theatre.
- Arts, including visual arts and any type of artistic creation • Literature and spoken word, poetry.
- Crafts (limited to artists/makers working by hand within a craft medium).
- Museums and galleries.
- Libraries and archives.
- Cultural education (excluding statutory education, further education, or higher education).
- Combined arts.
- Heritage organisations with a main focus on looking after heritage buildings, collections or archives.
- Community organisations providing arts and creative activities.
- Digital art and film/video art.
- Photography.
- Independent publishing.
- Cultural policy.
- Arts and/or artist management, producing.

We are unlikely to fund applications from organisations in other sectors of the creative industries such as film, TV, animation, visual effects, video, radio, advertising, fashion, graphic design, architecture, video games, VR/AR (unless linked to sectors listed above of the arts and heritage sectors), marketing and IT.

We are also not able to support academic researchers or exchange and therefore unlikely to fund applications from colleges and universities. Religious, political or fundraising activities cannot be supported, and you cannot use this funding to provide grants to others. We are keen to support applications from **smaller organisations** and **freelancers** who may have limited resources to develop international projects. We are also more likely to support individuals with, or organisations that are led by people with, lived experience across different protected characteristics and socio-economic backgrounds, or those working towards more equitable distribution of resources.

The grants are designed to benefit the artistic community within the WMCA area, therefore projects that show clear benefits to professional artists and individual practitioners will be prioritised.

6 When Can I delivery the activity?

All activities must be completed by 31 December 2024. We also need you to provide a report of your activities to us by that date.

We therefore recommend that any actual activity is completed **prior to mid-December** to ensure you have enough time to report back to us. We will provide a template with some questions for you to do this. The earliest you can start the activity is after you've received our decision and have signed the grant agreement. Please note that we cannot fund any activities that have taken place prior to you signing the agreement.

Grants open 19th MARCH 2024 until 29 APRIL 2024

Decisions made up to 8 weeks after the closing date.

7 How do I apply?

We have an online grant system which will open on 18 March 2024, at 8am. You can use the button on our website to access it or access it via this link: wmcaculture.grantplatform.com

To apply, you will first need to create an applicant profile on the grant system. After this, we will ask you to complete an eligibility quiz before you can start your application.

For the application, we will ask some questions about you/your organisation or delegation and the activities you would like to include into your grant application. You will also need to provide your budgeted costs for the activities that you want to deliver, as well as your personal access costs. You can then submit your application online. If you are applying on behalf of an organisation you will need to provide your governing document.

If you are applying as an individual or as part of a delegation, you must have all of the personal details of those involved.

You can access all the application questions before the application opens on our website.

If you are offered a grant, we will give you a grant agreement to review and to sign. You may also be required to take part in promotional activities around the fund, and we will also expect you to keep a track of your expenditure and reporting. We will however try to make this as easy as possible.

Once you have been awarded you have until 31 December 2024 to complete the project. You must submit the final monitoring and evaluation report by this date to receive your final 20% of the grant and fulfil all your contract requirements with the WMCA.

8 What countries can I collaborate with?

There are no restrictions on the countries you can collaborate with, but these must be outside the United Kingdom.

We are therefore not able to support activities in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. You can include more than one country but please remember that we would all activities need to be completed by 31 December 2024 and most awards are likely to be on the lower end of the funding tier.

You should always visit the UK Government Foreign Travel Advice website before planning your activity to ensure it is safe to collaborate and/or travel to your destination
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>.

9 What costs can I include in my application?

For your application, we would expect you to do some research to find out what your key costs might be and how much you should budget for.

This could, for example, be done by checking costs for any accommodation or travel requirements. Please note, that we will pay you 80% up front when you sign a grant agreement with us, with the final 20% paid after you have submitted your final activity report by 31 December 2024.

We generally accept all types of costs relating to the project, including:

- Travel costs (train fares, flights, bus fares, car hire, etc.)
- Accommodation (hotels, other types of accommodation although we will not pay for stays with friends or family members)
- Attendance fees and tickets (e.g. for conferences)
- Travel insurance (compulsory for international travel)

- Required vaccinations
- Visa costs
- Per diems
- Your time (please note only applies to individual applicants who are not in a salaried position). For rates, please visit the relevant guidance on Union websites, e.g.

<https://www.artistsunionengland.org.uk/rates-of-pay/>

- Cost of materials directly relating to the project
- Other relevant costs relating to the project.
- Reasonable contingency.

Please note that travel in first or business class is not permitted for flights, nor is first class travel for trains unless required for access reasons. We welcome applications from people embracing slow and sustainable travel.

Please ensure that your accommodation and other costs are reasonable as excessive costs may make your application less attractive. We reserve the right to offer you funding that is less than your original application if we feel that the costs are excessive, or it is not clear why they are essential to the delivery of the activity.

For per diems, you can visit the Government site with a list of countries and per diems for guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/expenses-rates-for-employees-travellingoutside-the-uk>

Personal Access Costs

When you submit your budget, there will be an additional section for you to let us know of any personal access costs during your activity.

Personal access costs can only be for the activity period. Costs cannot be incurred before your activity start date and must end by **31 December 2024**.

We are not able to cover costs for support that is unrelated to your activity or that is covered by the Access to Work scheme.

Personal Access Costs are costs related managing and delivering your grant funded activity to remove barriers.

Examples include a carer/personal assistant, BSL interpreter for meetings with international partners, additional travel expenses related to access, costs related to helping you manage your activity, and more.

If in doubt, you can always contact us at culture@wmca.org.uk about any access costs and needs. Access costs are additional to your core activity costs.

For example: Your access costs are £1,000 and your activity costs are £5,000. You can therefore apply for £6,000 as long as you provide clear detail on your access costs.

We cannot fund:

- Activities that have already happened.
- Activity that takes place after 31 December 2024.
- Ongoing overheads or running costs.
- Professional membership fees.
- Costs not directly relating to the project.
- Activities that are not linked to international activity and/or the type of activity we want to support.
- You using this funding to give grants to others.
- Equipment that is not directly relevant to your project (e.g. laptops).
- Fundraising activity.

- Payments towards time for a salaried employee.
- Uniforms for competitions.
- Carbon offsetting.
- Work with international partners who do not conform to the values of the WMCA or the intentions of the grant.

There may be other limitations on costs, please email culture@wmca.org.uk with subject header 'International Fund' if you have any questions or are unsure about what you can include. Please note that due to high demand, we are not able to provide general support for applicants on how to write an application but will do our best to answer any specific questions about eligible costs or activity.

Please note **travel insurance** for any activity involving travel is **compulsory** and you can use the grant to purchase this. If any visas are required, please make sure to check the timelines for their release and factor that into your timelines and budget. You can include visa costs in your budget.

You should always visit the UK Government Foreign Travel Advice website before planning your trip to ensure it is safe to travel to your destination [https://www.gov.uk/foreigntravel- advice](https://www.gov.uk/foreigntravel-advice). You should also check if any vaccinations are required.

Please note that the WMCA does not take any responsibility for any actions during your project. If travelling to another country, you should ensure you familiarise yourself with local customs and rules prior to travel and consider safety concerns. You should always respect local customs and laws and any unlawful activity will result in funding being withdrawn.

10 How will you make decisions?

Your application will be reviewed by a panel of people from the WMCA.

The panel may also include some external members who are knowledgeable of the cultural sector. We will aim to make our decision panels as representative as possible.

When reviewing your application, we will consider:

- Whether you are eligible for the fund.
- Whether the activity that you are planning to do is within the remit of things we're able to fund.
- How likely your project will develop some partnerships internationally.
- Whether your budget appears reasonable and appropriate for the activities that you want to do.
- Whether the timeline for your project is feasible and can be completed before 31 December 2024.
- Whether you have considered the legacy of your activity and what you can do in the future.

Additionally, we will also think carefully about how we can fund a broad range of people and organisations, especially those who are currently underrepresented as recipients and beneficiaries of public funding for arts and culture.

We also aim to support a broad range of arts disciplines and WMCA areas benefiting from this fund and will therefore aim to reflect in this decision-making.

11 What will happen after my application?

After the closing date, your application will be reviewed, and we will notify you of your results via our grant software. Subject to all

information being correct, this should take up to 8 weeks from the application closing date.

If you are awarded a grant, we will request some details from you to enable us to issue your contract and add you to our financial systems so that we can issue your first payment of 80% of your agreed costs.

Please note this may take an additional **4 weeks from when you return this information**. A bank verification may be required, and you'd be contacted by our Finance team.

Please do not start your activity or make any payments before your contract is signed. After the contract is signed, you are free to begin your activity, but do keep in mind the timelines for payments which takes a few weeks after you've signed your agreement.

Once you have been awarded you have until 31 December 2024 to complete the project. You must submit the final monitoring and evaluation report by this date to receive your final 20% of the grant and fulfil all your contract requirements with the WMCA.

12 How can I get support with my application?

We have published the application form questions offline, to help you plan your application on our website.

We understand that our systems and processes can present barriers and we are committed to supporting people and being open and accessible.

Please **see page 1** of the guidance for access support information.

Please email **culture@wmca.org.uk** if we can help with access support before you apply, or if you would like to submit an application in another format (e.g. audio/video), or if you would like

to request the application guidance in a different format that is not available on our website.

We are unable to provide one-to-one support for all applicants, but we are hosting webinars to provide more information about our International Grants programme including the West Midlands

Future Growth Grants.

Please email culture@wmca.org.uk or visit our website for more information.

Data Protection and Complaints Policy

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is committed to ensuring that your privacy is protected, and that any personal information you provide to us is used in accordance with the data protection legislation.

A copy of our Privacy Policy for this grant is available on our website on the page dedicated to this fund.

If you would like to refer to our complaints policy, a copy of it can also be found on this fund's page. Alternatively, you can contact us for a copy of either our Privacy Policy or our Complaints Policy.

If you need any access support, please email culture@wmca.org.uk
Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund