

Grant Application Help Notes – Northern Ireland

What are these notes for?

These notes provide guidance on how to complete the online application form for the following:

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- Project Viability Grants
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- Project Development Grants
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Please read these notes in full to understand the information you will need to provide when you make your application. As well as the questions on the form, you will need to upload supporting documents as attachments.

Please also check the application deadlines on our website. These vary depending on which type and size of grant you are requesting. Applications seeking more than £7,500 are decided quarterly, whilst smaller applications are decided more quickly.

Using our online application form

You do not need to complete the application in one go: please follow the instructions at the start of the online form. We encourage you to use the Word document version of the application form to compile your answers in advance and then copy and paste into the online form.

A number of questions have specific word limits to encourage concise answers; please write as much as necessary up to this maximum. It is important to stick to these since any text that exceeds this will not appear in your submitted application. If preparing your answers offline first, please note that word counts may be calculated slightly differently in the online form, so it is advisable to stop a little short of the maximum word count for each question.

Once you have submitted your form online, a copy will be emailed to the main contact address you have entered on the form, so that you will be able to retain this for reference.

What happens once your application is submitted?

We will send you an acknowledgement to let you know that we have received your application. We may have queries during our assessment and if so will get in touch. We may also want to visit your building if we have not visited prior to your application. We will assess your application according to the criteria set out in the Grant Guidance, taking into consideration the information provided in your application form

and supporting documents. The guidance in these Help Notes explains what we are looking for and what you need to tell us to help us make a decision.

What to tell us

In your application you will be asked to tell us more about your organisation, your building and plans for it, the place where it is located and the work and costs you want us to fund. In addition, you will be asked to provide supporting documents – there is a Checklist at the end of these Notes. Combined with your application answers, this information will help us to decide whether or not to offer a grant.

The numbers below refer to the question number in the application form. Where a question is not included below, this is because the answer should be self-evident. The word limits where applicable are indicated in [].

Section 0: Grant Type

0.1 Which grant are you applying for?

You may choose only one. We do not accept applications for more than one type of grant at the same time. Please contact us if you are not sure which grant best fits your needs.

Section 1: About your organisation

1.5 Legal status of your organisation

A drop-down list of eligible types of organisation will appear. If you are not yet formally incorporated as a legal entity, please use the Other category. In this case, we would consider an application for a Project Viability Grant only: for all other grants you must be an incorporated not-for-private profit organisation. If your organisation is not a registered charity then it must have an adequate dissolution clause or asset lock in place. This is a provision in the governing document to protect its assets. It means that if the organisation is wound up any assets must be transferred to a similar not-for-profit organisation (or nominated asset-locked body) once creditors have been paid.

Helps us to: Check if you are eligible for our funding.

1.7 Is your organisation a member of any national networks or umbrella organisations?

Tell us about: At 1.7a, tell us if you are a member of the Heritage Trust Network and at 1.7b, add any memberships you have, for example, Development Trusts Northern Ireland.

Helps us to: Understand whether you engage more widely in the sector and take up opportunities to learn from others.

1.8 Briefly describe your organisation's main purpose and regular activities [up to 250 words]

Tell us about: The key aims set out in your governing document and what you currently do to achieve these, plus examples of past achievements. If you are a new organisation, explain what you have done to date to set-up and build your organisation.

Helps us to: Understand what you are setting out to achieve as an organisation, your track-record and potential. We recognise that you may be at an early stage of development, but will want to see that you have a clear mission for your organisation. We also want to identify whether there is support and advice we can offer to help your organisation develop.

1.10 Contact details

The contacts should be people who will have an ongoing involvement in the project, authorised to speak on behalf of your organisation and in a position to respond to requests for further information if needed. If one of the contacts is a member of staff, the other should be a member of your Board. We will generally contact the first person whose details you provide. This contact will also receive a copy of the submitted application by email.

1.11 Please summarise how your organisation will manage the grant-funded work and what skills and experience you can draw on [up to 300 words]

Tell us about: The structure of your organisation, including the make-up of your governing board, staffing or volunteers and any project management structure you have put in place. Explain how you will keep track of the progress and quality of the funded work. Who will make key decisions and how will risks be managed? What skills and experience can you draw on? If you are planning to undertake your project in partnership with another organisation, then please discuss this with your Support Officer prior to application. We will need to see a Partnership Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding which sets out in detail how the partnership will work.

Helps us to: Understand your capacity as an organisation to take forward the funded work successfully. It will also help us identify where any help and support may be needed.

Section 2: About the building

2.4 If the building is not yet in the ownership of your organisation

Tell us about: Your prospects for acquiring the building and physical access to it: outline your anticipated route to ownership and point you have reached e.g:

- Is the owner willing to sell or otherwise transfer the building to you? What stage have your negotiations reached? Can you access it for survey purposes?
- Is the local authority prepared to use enforcement action if necessary to secure ownership and transfer the building to you, or have they accepted you as preferred bidder for the transfer of the asset?

You will need to provide written evidence of the prospects of ownership such as a letter from the owners confirming their willingness in principle to sell and to grant access.

We expect your ownership of the building, once secured, to be freehold or a full repairing, fully assignable lease of a minimum of 25 years.

Helps us to: Confirm that your organisation has a realistic chance of being able to acquire the building and that you will have sufficient access to be able to carry out the development work.

2.8 Please specify the relevant demographic statistics for the postcode area containing your building using your national IMD data as a source

The AHF is committed to supporting the development of charities and social enterprises that make a positive social impact through the reuse of historic buildings. With this in mind, we are particularly interested to support projects in areas of deprivation. Please use the Index of Multiple Deprivation country links to look up the Rank Number and Decile for your project, using your post code, and insert them here. Some countries do not provide both Rank *and* Decile; in that case, you are only required to complete one of these fields.

2.9 Please provide a brief description of the building, its use, heritage value, and importance to the community [up to 300 words]

Tell us about: The design, layout and construction of the building, its age and heritage significance. If the building is not listed, describe what makes it of heritage significance. Explain how the building has been used at different times and currently. How is it valued by the community?

Helps us to: Understand what the building is and its circumstances, bearing in mind we may not have visited. It also helps us to understand the significance of the building.

Section 3: About your project

3.1 Outline your ideas or plans for the building: summarise the capital work needed and how the building could or will be used [up to 300 words]

Tell us about: Your ideas for using the building. At Project Viability stage, these are likely to be possibilities you want to test through the grant-funded work. At Project Development Stage, you will already have identified your preferred option. Summarise what work is expected to be needed, both repairs and adaptation, to enable the building to be used in the way you are planning.

Helps us to: Understand whether your project has the potential to regenerate a historic building in a way that retains its heritage value, while introducing viable new uses.

3.2 to 3.7

For projects just getting started or at an early stage in development, we recognise it may be difficult to gauge the answers to these questions, but we nevertheless want to hear your best educated guess about what is most likely to result from your project. Should you be successful in being awarded a grant, you will not be held to these figures to achieve them, but nor should you seek to inflate them – our aim is to gain a sense of what you feel is most likely to result from the project at the point of your application.

3.8 Explain how the project will benefit people, identifying what need and demand this will meet [up to 250 words]

Tell us about: Who will use your project, describing which sections of the community will benefit from it, identifying those affected by disadvantage, referring to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation where relevant. Explain what research you have done to identify the demand from

these users and how it will meet their needs. This might include tackling gaps in current service provision, or responding to changes in the local area. Explain the jobs, training and/or volunteering opportunities that will be created. Explain other ways that people will benefit, such as improved well-being, backed by evidence that this is needed.

Helps us to: Understand the potential social impact of your plans, and the likelihood that they will be sustainable for the long-term, by meeting a clearly identified need and demand.

3.9 Explain how your project could contribute to the revitalisation of the local area [up to 350 words]

Tell us about: The issues affecting the vitality of the place where your building is located, such as economic and social factors, appearance of the townscape. Refer to external evidence where possible, such as whether the location has Assisted Area Status. Explain how your building relates to the immediate local area e.g. is it an important feature; is it in a central location or at a gateway that will draw people in to the place? If in a more rural context, explain how your building sits within the wider landscape setting. Explain how your plans for the building will have a positive impact e.g. introducing new sustainable uses, increasing footfall and economic activity or improving the quality of the place. Tell us how this links with any wider strategic initiative for this place.

Helps us to: Understand the potential of your project to contribute to the broader revitalisation of a local area, beyond restoring the building itself.

3.10 Is there a wider initiative underway or planned to regenerate the locality?

A drop-down list of possible initiatives will appear. If you do not know what is in place in your area, it will be important to investigate, including by talking to relevant organisations locally, to find out.

3.11 How do you know that your plans for the building will be economically viable? [up to 200 words]

(If you selected Project Viability Grant as the scheme to which you are applying, this question will not appear on the form as it is not applicable to you).

Tell us about: The work and research you have done to test the long-term viability of the proposed use; this might include an options appraisal, business plan, feasibility study. If you have already submitted a Viability Appraisal produced through a grant from us, you can simply refer to this. But otherwise you will need to provide supporting evidence of viability – see Checklist.

Helps us to: Understand the potential for your project to prove sustainable in the long term.

Section 4: Grant request and financial information

4.1 Describe the work you want us to fund with this grant [up to 250 words]

Tell us about: The specific work you plan to undertake with the help of our grant. If you are applying for viability or development work refer to the list of costs we can consider in the Grant Guidelines. Describe the main items, referring to which types of professional will undertake them and what they will produce (this should align with the numerical costs set out at 4.10 below). Also explain any work that will be undertaken by volunteers, such as research and community consultation and any costs involved. We do not pay for volunteer time, but we can pay for the cost of venue hire, materials etc. We can also contribute to reasonable staff costs and a proportion of overheads for voluntary sector organisations, calculated on a Full Cost Recovery basis (you will need to show how any allocation of overheads has been calculated – see the National Council for Voluntary Organisation’s [Know How](#) website for guidance).

Helps us to: Understand what your grant request is for and consider whether it represents good value for money. We will also consider whether your timescale is realistic.

4.2 Explain how this work will help you to move forward [up to 200 words]

Tell us about: How will this work help you move the project on to a next stage? How will it help you make decisions or take steps to progress the project? What will have changed or been achieved as a result of the work happening?

Helps us to: Understand why you need our funding and whether you are taking a sound approach to moving the project forward.

4.3 Why is it essential for this work to be done now? [up to 150 words]

Tell us about: The urgency of this work. Mention any particular factors affecting this, such as deadlines you need to meet, time-limited availability of other funding, any particular threats relating to the condition of the building, circumstances relating to ownership/acquisition.

Helps us to: Prioritise requests for funding over time.

4.4 What is your organisation’s level of free reserves?

Free reserves are that part of your organisation’s unrestricted funds that is freely available to spend on any of the organisation’s purposes. This definition excludes restricted income funds and endowment funds, although holding such funds may influence an organisation’s reserves policy. Reserves will also normally exclude tangible fixed assets such as land, buildings and other assets held for the charity’s use. It also excludes amounts designated for essential future spending.

4.5 Taking account of your financial position, why do you need this grant? [up to 200 words]

Tell us about: Your financial position and why you are unable to meet all the cost of this work from other sources. If your organisation has significant uncommitted cash reserves, please explain why these cannot be used, ideally supported by a reserves policy statement. You will need to provide a copy of your latest accounts (if available) as a supporting document.

Helps us to: Consider if you have a financial need for our funding.

4.7 What is your plan for raising the capital funding required? [up to 50 words]

Tell us about: What potential funders have you identified for the capital work that the building will need? What work have you done to identify how your project will fit with their funding requirements and priorities? If you have made any capital funding applications, provide details in the table below.

Helps us to: Understand the likelihood of the project proceeding.

4.10 Please list the items of work you would like us to fund and the cost of each:

In this table, enter the main items of work as described at 4.1 above. A typical application is likely to involve a range of professional services – show each main service type separately. Indicate the number of days and rate per day for each professional. If you have not obtained quotations prior to application, these can be estimated. If a grant is awarded, competitive tenders will be required to be obtained where the fees of a professional or the cost of an item will exceed £10,000. However, seeking competitive quotations is also recommended below this threshold so that you can check value for money. If you are including any overheads based on Full Cost Recovery, include the total figure and a brief description of what is covered, then provide a more detailed calculation in a supporting document.

Checklist of supporting documents

Please upload supporting documents via the online application form. If you are unable to upload the supporting documents online, we will accept electronic copies by email or via a file sharing site. If you submitted any documents with a previous application and no changes have been made since then you do not need to re-send, but please refer to your previous application.

We recognise that not all of the documents we require may be ready at the time of application, however if we award a grant, we will need to see and approve these documents before your funded work starts.

Essential for all applicants

1. Your organisation's governing document (if not previously supplied).
2. List of current trustees or directors, with one-line biography explaining relevant skills and experience.
3. Copy of a minute from a meeting of your organisation's trustees or directors, formally recording the decision to take the project forward and apply for a grant from the AHF.
4. Your organisation's latest audited accounts and balance sheet, recent management accounts (if available) or up-to-date certified financial statement.
5. At least 6 high quality digital images of the interior and exterior of the building and any associated community events and activities, which the AHF will be able to retain and use for promotional purposes including our website, social media, traditional media and Annual Review.

Essential for all applicants except Project Viability Grant applicants

6. Proof of your organisation's ownership of the building (e.g. a copy of the title deed from the Land Registry), or evidence that your organisation can acquire the building (e.g. a letter from the owner indicating a willingness in principle to transfer ownership to your organisation).

7. Project Viability Appraisal, Feasibility Study or Options Appraisal. This should include:
 - a. Evidence that the project is permissible in planning and conservation terms (e.g. copy of pre-application advice received from the local planning authority)
 - b. Evidence of community/stakeholder consultation
 - c. Market research report/evidence of demand from potential users

Additional items: applicants for Project Development Grants

Your grant request may not include all the items of work indicated, in which case **only send the information if applicable**. Supporting information strengthens the application as it helps us to assess the overall viability of the project and how our funds could help move the project forward.

8. Business Plan.
9. Valuation report, if applicable, for example to support the calculation of a conservation deficit, or in relation to the financing of the project.
10. Building condition report / structural survey.
11. Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment.
12. Copy of briefs for development work.
13. List of consultants invited to quote for the development work and a copy of the preferred quotation or tender.
14. Job description and person specification of the individual(s) who will be working on the project (either existing staff or new staff to be appointed).
15. Curriculum Vitae of the individual recruited to work on the project.
16. Calculation of allocation of overhead costs (using full cost recovery method).
17. Project fundraising strategy, plus confirmation of awards secured to date.
18. Relevant correspondence with potential match funders.
19. Copies of any grant offer letters (relating to the work you are asking us to fund).
20. Partnership agreement or Memorandum of Understanding.
21. Design drawings to RIBA stage 3 or 4.
22. Copy of listed building consent and planning permission.
23. Details of any project management or other professional services related to project delivery included in your grant request.
24. Any other relevant information you think we need to see.