



Department of  
**Culture, Arts  
and Leisure**

[www.dcalni.gov.uk](http://www.dcalni.gov.uk)

# Community Festivals Fund

(1 January – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012)

## Guidance Notes

**Deadline for Applications  
12.00 noon, Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

Contact Details:  
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Belfast City Council  
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This form can be downloaded from [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/funding](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/funding)

Belfast City Council is committed to ensuring that its services are available to all sections of the community. Consideration will be given to providing this form in alternative formats on request, where practicable.

**Please note: These guidance notes have changed. You are advised to read them carefully before making an application.**

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# COMMUNITY FESTIVALS FUND

## 1. Introduction & Background

The Community Festivals Fund (CFF) was established in 2006 in recognition of the contribution festivals can make to communities, the local economy and to wider government policy priorities. The fund was administered for the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL) by the Northern Ireland Events Company (NIEC) through an open application process.

Under the Review of Public Administration, it was determined that the work of the NIEC should transfer to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB). However, as the Community Festivals Fund did not readily fit with NITB's focus on tourism development, the decision was made to transfer the operation of the fund to Northern Ireland's councils on 1 April 2008. This transfer of responsibility recognised the community development and support funding already provided by councils and the contribution which festivals can make in promoting community cohesion.

### **Purpose of the Fund**

Belfast City Council and DCAL both recognise that festivals can contribute to social cohesion, the celebration of cultural identity and the strengthening of community relations. They welcome the opportunity to provide financial support to enable festival organisers to deliver their planned events. However, funding alone is not enough to ensure that a festival can be sustained for as long as the community wants it to go on.

For that reason, the primary purpose of the CFF is to improve the capacity of community festival and to make them less reliant on public funding by providing support and training. Making funding available towards the cost of events is secondary. It follows that applications for funding must demonstrate how that funding will help build capacity within the community. The requirements of the application process are fully explained below.

### **Definition of a Festival**

Belfast City Council's Festival Policy states:

*A Festival is a series of activities within a condensed time period of at least one day in length (i.e. 8–10 hours). Activities are usually different but related. A Festival is not one event scheduled over several days i.e. a series of similar events (e.g. one performance happening several times) nor is it a fundraising event, nor a commercial event.*

A community festival is a series of events with a common theme delivered within a defined time period. It is developed from within a community and should celebrate and positively promote what that community represents.

Community festivals are about participation, involvement and the creation and/or development of a sense of identity/common interest. These are important in contributing to the social wellbeing of the community.

Community festivals must be initiated and led by a formally constituted community organisation or a community-led partnership. It is not enough to run a festival for a community – the community must have ownership of it and play a strong part in the development and delivery of the festival.

### **Definition of a Community**

A community is defined as a specific group of people, often living in a defined geographic area, who share a common culture, values and interests and who are arranged in a social structure according to relationships the community has developed over a period of time.

## **2. General Conditions**

Applications to the fund are competitive and the award of grant will be made on merit. Festivals may already be well established, emerging over the last two or three years or they may be new ideas developed to meet a specific need or opportunity identified within the community. They can be one-time only, the continuation of an existing event or the first in what is intended to become an annual event.

Applicants must be formally constituted, and you will need to provide evidence in the form of an adopted Constitution, Memorandum and Articles of Association, as appropriate.

You must also provide evidence of good financial management. Established organisations must supply a copy of their most recent audited accounts; projected income and expenditure for the current financial year; and a recent bank statement.

New organisations or organisations not required by law to produce audited accounts must supply their projected income and expenditure for the current financial year; their most recent management accounts, signed as agreed by the Board; and bank statements for the last six months, or for the life of the organisation, whichever is less.

The application must be signed by the Chairman or Chief Executive of the organisation. By signing the application, they confirm that the application is genuine and that the organisation will comply fully with the monitoring, reporting and evaluation procedures set down by Belfast City Council.

All festivals applying for funding must demonstrate their commitment to promoting social cohesion, social inclusion, equality of opportunity and good relations.

Applications that do not meet the above conditions will be ineligible.

An application to the CFF will **not** exclude the applicant from applying to other public sector sources for funding.

Particularly within this summer-time round of the fund, the Council is conscious of the importance of local cultural celebrations and commemorations within the City. The Council believes that local neighbourhoods have a rich cultural heritage and is keen to support local groups in the positive celebration of this. To this end, the Council is mindful that there will be various festival activities during July and August that will be celebrated within communities and is keen to support these. Where local community

festival events are promoting the positive expression and celebration of a neighbourhood's cultural heritage, the following criteria will apply:

- Events should comply with the 'Shared Space' criteria and be 'safe, welcoming, good quality and accessible'.
- No funding will be permitted for the purchase of flags and bunting
- No paramilitary flags or emblems must be flown at any event funded through the Festival's Fund
- There should be no burning of flags or emblems of any kind

### **3. Application Process**

#### **Making an Application**

Applications to the Community Festival Fund open four times a year. The dates for 2011–12 are:

<b>Applications open week beginning</b>	<b>Closing date for applications</b>	<b>Decision date week beginning</b>	<b>Eligible festival dates</b>
2 March*	23 March	4 April	April–June 2011
28 March	22 April	13 May	July–September 2011
24 May	1 July	26 July	October–December 2011
20 September	14 October	15 November	January–March 2012

- Please note: at the time of opening applications to the first round of Community Festivals funding, funding for the entire programme has not been guaranteed. Any awards will be made subject to confirmation of funding. Festivals taking place in early April may proceed at their own risk. The Council is not liable for any costs incurred if funding is not secured.

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Applications must be made on the Community Festivals Fund application form, which is available to download from [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/funding](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/funding). Or if you would like an application pack posted to you, please telephone the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit on 90 500512.

Applications must be submitted in hard copy. You should also submit an electronic copy, which can be emailed to [culture@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:culture@belfastcity.gov.uk).

If you would like further advice on the application process or criteria, please contact the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit on 90 500512. Please note that officers cannot comment on or provide advice on specific applications.

Please keep a copy of the application form for your records.

## **Available Funding Limits**

The minimum amount of funding you can request is £2,500, and the maximum, £10,000. Applications requesting funding outside this range will be deemed ineligible.

The Council may award a lesser amount than that requested, depending on the overall available funding.

Applications must demonstrate efforts to secure a minimum of 20 per cent of their income from sources other than the Council. This can include in-kind support, where the rationale for calculating the value of in-kind support is clearly demonstrated. Volunteer labour should be charged at the rate of minimum wage.

## **Impact on Section 75:**

Section 75 and Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998 came into force on the 01 January 2000 and placed a statutory obligation on public authorities in carrying out their various functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity –

between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;  
between men and women generally;  
between persons with a disability and persons without; and  
between persons with dependants and persons without.

## **Assessment Process**

All applications received will be logged. Due to the large number of applications received, it is not possible to acknowledge receipt. You are advised to deliver your application by hand.

The assessment process has four stages:

- Stage 1**      Assessment against the checklist of eligibility/ineligibility criteria (see section 4) (pass or fail on the basis of the evidence provided in the proposal). Should the assessment fail at this stage, no further assessment will be carried out.
  
- Stage 2**      Assessment of the festival proposal with regard to its ability to meet the general conditions applying to CFF (see section 2) (pass or fail on the basis of the evidence provided). Should the assessment fail at this stage, no further assessment will be carried out.
  
- Stage 3**      Assessment of the proposal with regard to the degree to which it meets the specific criteria set down by Belfast City Council (see section 5). Each criterion will be scored out of 100, as below, and

applicants should demonstrate how their proposal supports each condition.

<b>Score</b>	<b>Description</b>
80–100	Excellent adherence to criteria/excellent degree of evidence
60–79	Good adherence to criteria/good degree of evidence
50–59	Moderate adherence to criteria/moderate degree of evidence
30–49	Below average adherence to criteria/limited degree of evidence
0–29	Poor adherence to criteria/little or no evidence

**Stage 4** Assessment of the proposal with regard to management and governance of the organisation, including:

- festival planning, management and budgeting
- strategic planning
- project monitoring and evaluation
- marketing plans

Assessments will initially be made by a relevant Council Officer. These will then be moderated by a panel including relevant Council Officers and a Unit manager. Recommendations for funding will then be ratified by the Council.

#### **4. Eligibility Criteria**

##### **Who can apply**

- ✓ Arts, heritage and community organisations planning a festival within the Belfast City Council area
- ✓ Organisations that are formally constituted
- ✓ Organisations that are registered charities or cannot share profits
- ✓ Organisations who have a direct impact on Section 75 Groups

##### **Who cannot apply**

- × Other local councils, public sector organisations and statutory agencies
- × Individuals
- × Commercial organisations or organisations able to distribute profit
- × Organisations that are not legally constituted
- × Organisations that cannot demonstrate good financial management
- × Organisations working with children who do not have a Child Protection Policy

##### **Activities you can apply for**

- ✓ Arts and heritage events, performances and exhibitions
- ✓ Other cultural events that focus on or contribute to the cultural identity of an area or group and celebrate its/their uniqueness
- ✓ New commissions and/or productions that relate to the cultural identity of a community, its history, current issues or aspirations for the future

- ✓ Participatory activities that will engage the community and that relate to its sense of itself (culture and identity) and/or its sense of place and/or its relationships with other communities
- ✓ Events and other activities that seek to give the community a voice on issues as to its future and its place in the city
- ✓ Events and activities by which the community seeks to engage with its neighbours on issues of identity, shared space and future growth and development
- ✓ Events that celebrate what the community has to offer and that welcome newcomers
- ✓ Events developed by common interest groups that take forward that interest, reaching out to the further development of creativity, skills, opportunities and the development of audiences and participation (including 'showcase' events)
- ✓ Training events and similar activities (as part of festival delivery) that will build capacity within the community to ensure that the festival can be repeated (if appropriate) or that new festivals can be created and successfully grown in a planned, managed and controlled way
- ✓ Events (within the context of festival planning and/or delivery) that seek to establish, mobilise and motivate new partnerships for development
- ✓ Events that aim to identify and promote new enterprise/business opportunities for members of the community and that might usefully be developed in support of the festival, its participants and audience
- ✓ Marketing activities aimed at generating audiences (including tourists)
- ✓ Where the organisation is funded through other Tourism, Culture and Arts funding, you must clearly demonstrate the additional benefit of Community Festivals funding

#### **What you can't apply for:**

- ✗ Activities outside the Belfast City Council area
- ✗ Commercial activities, or activities that could be undertaken on a commercial basis
- ✗ Activities that provide no potential benefit to the Belfast public
- ✗ Goods and services that have been ordered or bought before receiving a letter of offer
- ✗ Activities that have already taken place or are due to start before the eligible time period
- ✗ Activities that do not start within the eligible time period. If your festival runs over two rounds of CFF (e.g. June into July), you should apply for the round in which the festival starts
- ✗ Activities, equipment or events that duplicate what already exists
- ✗ Costs that are already covered by other funding or income sources
- ✗ Festivals that are primarily fundraising events or are heavily branded as charitable events or deploy potential sources of income from a festival to a charity
- ✗ Award ceremonies or trade and industry events of a commercial nature
- ✗ Residential courses or associated events
- ✗ Festivals that are social events for an organisation
- ✗ The total cost of running your festival – organisations must demonstrate efforts to secure at least 20 per cent of their income from sources other than the Council
- ✗ No more than 10 per cent of the Council's funding can be spent on subsistence
- ✗ The cost of any celebrations primarily for the benefit of the organisers, sponsors or employees (paid or voluntary) of the event



- × Loans or deficits
- × Flags and bunting

Please note, the Council will not contact you about your application until the assessment process has been completed. This means the Council will not seek clarification of your application or contact you to submit omitted documentation. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all information is provided and is provided in a clear and understandable way. Applications that are substantially incomplete will be considered ineligible.

Under no circumstances will late applications be accepted.

## **5. Criteria for Decision Making**

If your festival is eligible, the following criteria will be used to score your application.

### **Providing leadership**

- Demonstrating relevance to the target community
- Demonstrating a high level of community participation
- Providing opportunities for future development (repeatability and expandability) if appropriate
- Demonstrating practical efforts aimed at capacity building
- Developing new partnerships
- Creativity – evidenced by themes and programming.

### **Promoting social inclusion and cultural and environmental engagement**

- Demonstrating that barriers to access have been identified and will be dealt with – this might include issues of access for people with disabilities, ticket prices, transport difficulties etc.
- Demonstrating that the events planned will be neither threatening nor offensive
- Demonstrating that the events planned are relevant to the community and its interests/issues
- Demonstrating that the events might reasonably be expected to generate significant community/audience engagement.

### **Animating the city (celebration)**

- Programme – demonstrating innovation and creativity
- Demonstrating quality in the delivery of festival events
- Demonstrating how the programme enhances the cultural experience of those living and working in Belfast

### **Promoting community-led regeneration**

- Providing evidence that there is a process to attract visitors to the area e.g. an audience development plan
- Providing evidence of support from the local business community
- Connecting with existing regeneration projects in the area.
- Evidence of the way in which the festival will make a contribution to the development of 'sustainable cultural activity'
- Evidence of the contribution to enhancing the cultural infrastructure of the city
- Evidence of enhancing public spaces through increased use

## **6. Letter of Offer**

If your organisation is successful, a letter of offer outlining the general conditions (see Appendix 1) and any special conditions of the grant, and explaining the stages by which we will pay the grant, will be sent.

The letter of offer must be signed as accepted before any grant can be released. At the latest, this must happen within twelve weeks of the date of the letter of offer or your grant may be revoked.

If the grant does not correspond with the amount requested, your organisation must discuss this with the relevant Council Officer, whose contact details will be provided in the letter of offer. You will be required to re-supply a programme and budget reflecting the amount awarded, if this is not the same as the amount requested. You must obtain the Council's approval prior to making any further changes to the programme or the budget.

If you receive a grant offer and no longer want to take it up, please advise the Council, in writing, as soon as possible.

## **7. Appeals**

You may appeal against a funding decision on the basis that

- (a) the Council did not take account of all the facts available as set out in the application; and/or
- (b) the Council did not follow the procedures stated in these guidance notes.

No other grounds for appeals will be considered.

Before lodging an appeal, you are advised to contact the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit to arrange a debriefing. At the debriefing, you will be given further information as to why your application was unsuccessful. The name of the Council Officer to contact will be printed on your letter of notification.

If you still wish to appeal the decision, you must write to Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, stating the grounds for appeal. This letter must be received within twenty-eight working days of the date on the letter of notification or within fourteen days of the debrief, whichever is greater.

You will then receive a written acknowledgement within five working days. This letter will include the target date for receiving notification of the result of your appeal, which in most cases will be within ten working days.

The appeal will be considered by the Head of Economic Initiatives, the Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager and appropriate Council Officers. Council's decision at this stage will be final and no further appeal will be considered.

A successful appeal does not automatically mean that funding will be provided. The award of funding following an appeal will depend on the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit's own funding position.

## **Complaints**

Complaints may be made about matters relating to the quality of service provided by Belfast City Council. More information on the Council's complaints procedure can be found at [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/complaints) or by calling 9027 0270.

## **8. Monitoring and Reporting**

If successful, you will be required to provide the Council with a final evaluation report on a template supplied by the Council. The final report must be returned within four weeks of the closing date of your festival.

The final report must contain statistics including, but not limited to, audience numbers; participant numbers; geographic spread of the event and of attendees, including number of tourists attracted to the event, where applicable. Care should be taken to record this information during the course of the festival.

The final report must be accompanied by financial accounts for the event, compiled under the same headings used in the application and signed off as verified by an independent accountant. The cost of employing an accountant to prepare the financial report may be covered by the CFF grant.

Alternatively, you may return accounts for the event, compiled under the same headings used in the application, along with original invoices and receipts confirming how you spent the CFF grant. This paperwork will then be verified by the Council and originals will be returned to you.

## **9. Drawdown of Grant**

The grant will be paid in two instalments. The first instalment – 90 per cent of the award – will be paid by cheque on signature of contract and receipt of an amended budget and programme, where applicable. The balance of the grant – 10 per cent – will be paid on submission of a satisfactory final report and accounts.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Terms and Conditions of Offer**

Belfast City Council will apply the following terms and conditions to any offer made under the Community Festivals Fund.

#### **Application of Funds**

- The budget as detailed in the application shall not be changed except with the prior written consent of the Council.
- The funding provided by the Council shall be used solely for the purposes of the implementation of the festival as described in the proposal.

#### **Management**

- The manager/co-ordinator of the festival shall make themselves reasonably available for discussion on the progress of the festival with Belfast City Council.
- Management will make available a re-profiled expenditure budget for agreement in advance of any letter of offer being signed.

#### **Payment of Grant**

- The grant agreed will be paid in two instalments, 90 per cent on receipt of a completed letter of offer and 10 per cent on receipt of a satisfactory festival events report and vouched and verified financial statements.
- Payment is conditional on the promoter complying with any Special Conditions listed in any Schedule to the Letter of Offer.
- No funding will be released until any requested outstanding documentation is submitted and is acceptable to the Council.

#### **Monitoring**

- For monitoring purposes, relevant Council staff should be allowed free access to all public presentations/events within the agreed festival programme.
- Subject to timetable and agreement, you shall provide the Council with a final report on a template that will be provided.

#### **Right to Access**

The Council through its authorised officers and agents shall have uninhibited right to:

- Inspect the premises and equipment used for the purposes of festival programme delivery;
- Interview all participating staff and trainees;
- Discuss all aspects of the festival with the manager/ coordinator of the festival
- Inspect all financial and other relevant documents relating to expenditure incurred in connection with the festival;
- Initiate independent reviews to assess the performances of the festival programme against stated performance standards.

## **Giving Notice**

The promoter shall notify Council immediately in the event that they should become aware of:

- Any threat to the future participation in the festival of any other contributors/ funders;
- Any doubt as to the ability of those contributors/ funders to continue with their commitment to the festival;
- Any substantial deterioration in your financial position;
- The happening or substantial likelihood of the happening of any circumstances that would mean that the festival would not proceed.

## **Withdrawal**

The Council reserves the right to cease any further or continued commitment to the festival if it should decide at its entire discretion that the festival for whatever reason has been jeopardised/is likely to be jeopardised as to its future continuance.

## **Repayment of Funding if:**

- The festival for whatever reason has been jeopardised as to its future continuance
- The progress of the festival has become unsatisfactory
- There has been a substantial change in the nature, scale or timing of the festival to an unacceptable degree
- There has been an increase in costs which no other contributors have agreed to meet
- Any of the information contained in the application or reports provided by you following the Letter of Offer transpires to be materially incomplete, incorrect or misleading
- Any of the monies provided by the various contributors is not entirely applied for the purposes of the programme.

Council will require that any money unspent up to the time that any of the circumstances outlined above have come to light will be repaid.

Council reserves the right, however, to reclaim all money advanced should you fail to substantially deliver on the commitments made and agreed to in the proposal for funding.