



NPO 2028–33

What we know and what next

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Independent fundraising consultancy — not affiliated with or representing Arts Council England

Today's session

A practical 30-minute guide to NPO — what matters, whether it is right for you, and what to do next.

01 The big things you need to know

02 What ACE want

03 Is NPO right for you?

05 Your next actions

Hello! Who am I?

13 years in arts fundraising

Working with 40+ cultural organisations of different sizes, artforms and stages of development.

Extensive Arts Council England funding experience

3rd NPO round, Project Grants and supporting new NPOs in 2022

A fundraiser's perspective

Today I'm sharing how I interpret the guidance through what I've seen and experienced — particularly what makes a strong case for investment and where organisations can strengthen their position.

Independent consultant — I don't work for or represent Arts Council England.

NPO: The Big Things You Need to Know

- **Deadline is now 15 December**
- 5-year grant period 2028-33
- Request from £50,000 per year
- Priority Places
- No attachments this time
- Track record questions focus on the last 3 years
- What you need to read:
 - Guidance – now available
 - Application form
 - Strategic framework
 - List of Priority Places
 - Art form overview
 - Place data
 - Sector resilience overview
- Support available: webinars on guidance and access support
- Assessments will involve Regional Boards, Mayoral Authorities and Community Voice



02

What ACE want: Three things to think about

1. Can you demonstrate you're ready to be an NPO?
2. Will you help ACE meet its priorities?
3. Will you bring a balance and variety to the National Portfolio?

Are you ready to be an NPO?

The area you have greatest control over — NPO readiness is organisational readiness.

Excellence

**Governance &
leadership**

Financial resilience

Evaluation & reflection

Access & inclusion

Risk management

Partnerships

Capacity & delivery

Where is your organisation already strong — and where is further work needed before submission?

Will you help ACE meet its priorities?

You don't need to respond equally to everything. Focus on where your organisation and plans make the strongest, most credible contribution.

PLACE

- Wider range of people
- More places
- Priority Places
- Children and young people

UNDERREPRESENTED LEADERSHIP

- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Lower socio-economic backgrounds

ART FORM PRIORITIES

- 9 artforms
- Priorities for the next 5 years

SECTOR RESILIENCE

- Financial resilience
- Advocacy
- Leadership
- Workforce
- Environmental responsibility
- Digital technology
- Research and innovation
- Children and young people

Place

ACE is particularly looking to increase investment and delivery in places with historically lower investment, opportunity and/or engagement, with a particular focus on Culture Priority Places.

Being in a Culture Priority Place is relevant — but it is not, by itself, a case for investment.

East Midlands

- Ashfield
- Bassetlaw
- Bolsover
- Boston
- Chesterfield
- East Lindsey
- Erewash
- Mansfield
- North East Derbyshire
- West Lindsey

West Midlands

- Cannock Chase
- Dudley
- Nuneaton and Bedworth
- Redditch
- Sandwell
- Stoke-on-Trent
- Telford and Wrekin
- Walsall
- Wolverhampton

Artform Overview – Visual Arts

ACE's visual arts priorities over the next 5 years

Focus on where your work makes the strongest, most credible contribution — not on ticking every box.

- Stronger Visual Arts education and talent development
- A sustainable, geographically diverse Visual Arts ecology
- Improved conditions for artistic production
- Wider access, participation and representation
- Support for innovation, artistic freedom and public engagement
- Improved visibility, evidence base and policy influence

Building a balanced National Portfolio

The part you have least control over.

ACE will consider applications together when building the overall Portfolio — including place, art form, communities and the overall mix.

ART FORM

PLACE

COMMUNITY

Is NPO right for you?

- Eligibility
- Track record — can you evidence strong work over recent years? Prior track record with ACE?
- Readiness — are governance, finances and systems strong enough?
- Plans — do you have a compelling, realistic vision for 2028–33?
- Relationships and accountability — are you ready for the monitoring, reporting and regular dialogue with ACE?
- Do ACE already know who they want to support?

Your next steps

1. **Decide whether NPO is right for you**
2. **Get clear on your case for investment — why you, why this programme, why now?**
3. **Review your organisational readiness — where are the gaps?**
4. **Stress-test your 2028–33 plans — programme, budget, capacity and partnerships**
5. **Get organised — agree responsibilities, timetable the work and gather evidence**
6. **Consider ways you and other organisations can work together and support each other through this process**

Get clear on your case for investment

A useful question to test the strength of your proposition:

If our organisation were not part of the National Portfolio in 2028–33...

What would be missing?

Three things to take away

- 01 **Start with the proposition, not the form.**
- 02 **Be specific about what your organisation does well and the distinctive contribution you can make.**
- 03 **See this process as a chance to strengthen your organisation — not just write the best application.**



Questions?

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