



Essex County Council

Creative Industries Project Development Fund Guidance Notes

Please read these Guidance Notes before completing the application form

Essex County Council's Everyone's Essex: The Plan for Essex 2021-2025: [Everyone's Essex](#) is the council's strategy until 2025. It sets out our ambition for Essex and 20 commitments we will deliver with our partners and communities. **All applications must demonstrate how any proposed work helps to meet these aims.**

[Essex's Cultural Strategy](#) outlines how ECC wants to nurture and promote arts and culture for future generations. Our Cultural Strategy shows how we can work with communities, authorities and organisations to achieve this and identifies ways to measure how the creative sector positively contributes to our society, including social value, good health and wellbeing.

Essex County Council Creative Industries Project Development Fund:

The creative industries sector in Essex is significant. In 2025 it employed more than 30,000 people across over 7,500 companies. Essex has a rich history of nurturing creative talent and is home to numerous creative hubs, including the Thames Estuary Production Corridor, which is poised to become one of the UK's largest concentrations of creative production

The Creative Industries Project Development Fund seeks to capitalise on the Creative industries being identified as a key growth sector in the UK government's [Modern Industrial Strategy](#) with crucial funding which will enable businesses to grow

Priority will be given to those organisations seeking funding for projects which will enhance and grow their business, including:

- **Growth:** Support for growing creative businesses, focusing on innovative ideas, new revenue streams, and market readiness.
- **Talent Development:** Grow awareness of creative career paths for young people and school children including apprenticeships.

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- **Video Games** Support video game studios to test and develop new concepts
- **Film:** Support innovative independent filmmakers showcase the best of Essex's screen sector regionally.
- **Music:** Support grassroots music venues, recording studios, promoters and festivals to develop new revenue streams and enhance the live music experience of the county.

This grant offers awards of £2,500 - £30,000 to cultural organisations employing two or more FTE members of staff based in the [administrative boundaries of ECC](#)

Who is eligible: Eligible creative Businesses as defined by the DCMS will include the nine creative industry sub-sectors:

- advertising and marketing
- architecture
- crafts
- design and designer fashion
- film, TV, radio and photography
- publishing
- IT, software and computer services (including video games)

Grants will not be made for the purposes of:

- The promotion of faith
- The promotion of political ideals
- The reinstatement of reserve funds
- Retrospective payments

Your organisation must demonstrate that it is:

- Financially viable.
- Have demonstrated an ability to manage your work effectively.
- Have effective policies in equal opportunities, health and safety, equality and diversity, children, and vulnerable adults' protection.

You will need to show that your organisation produces work that:

- Is of significant benefit to the people of Essex living within the [County Council area](#)
- Has a track record, or the capacity to innovate, take on new developments and make a unique contribution to the cultural infrastructure of the county.

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- Has the ability to disseminate good practice beyond the organisation to other practitioners and relevant partners.
- Contributes towards the fulfillment of the aim of the ECC Corporate Plan and its priorities – as detailed above.

The fund will not support:

- 100% of project costs – Each application will need to demonstrate a cash or in-kind contribution of at least 10% of the grant amount.
- Fundraising events where there is private gain.
- Applications from students unless the project is separate from or does not form part of their studies.
- Applications for support towards the cost of attending courses in Further or Higher Education.
- Support for international touring.
- Capital applications will not be supported by the scheme. Reasonable and proportionate materials and equipment can be supported and will need to be justified in the application.
- Projects in deficit.
- Projects which have taken place.
- Projects whose benefits fall outside of the administrative County of Essex.
- Applications directly from another Local Authority. Local Authorities can be a partner but cannot apply as a lead applicant.
- Schools' projects that are part of the school's curriculum activity. Any schools work will need to be extra-curricular.

Additional guidance on completing the application form:

Applications can only be made via ECC's online platform. To apply and save progress you will need to register for an account. Any attachments can be uploaded and submitted via the online system also.

Please note there is a maximum character limit for each question, including every letter, number, punctuation mark, symbol, and space as a character. We have provided an approximate guide to standard character limits, and how many words this can equate to, below:

Character limit	50	600	1000	1500	3000
Approximate word count	5 to 10	100	170	250	500

Section One: Your Details - Organisation

Please provide contact details for your organisation. All future correspondence relating to the application will be addressed to the contact's name. This must be someone from your organisation and should be able to answer any further questions concerning the application. Please also indicate the type of organisation.

Operational Management. Provide details of the skills and experience of the main people involved in the programme/project as well as other partners and their involvement.

How long has the organisation been in existence and how many staff do you employ? Your organisation needs to have been in existence for over 2 years, and you must employ 2+ full-time equivalent members of staff to apply.

Please give a brief overview of your organisation and the work it delivers Provide an overview of your organisation, its history, the work it delivers, where it works in the county and how it benefits Essex communities and residents.

Please state your organisations strategic aims. State your organisations strategic aims, what it hopes to achieve and how it will achieve it.

Please give an example of any recent highlights. Give an example of any highlights. These could be industry awards and recognition, funding and project successes or a programme of work you are particularly proud of and think advocates your organisation.

Section Two: Funding Request

How much funding are you requesting? Please state how much funding you are requesting. Applicants can apply for between £2,500 to £30,000.

Section Three: Project Details

Summary of your project: Provide a summary of your project, detailing the specific activities and programmes of work that ECC funding will address the key themes of Growth and Talent Development. State where and when the work will take place, the people it will benefit, and any partners involved. **Limit this to 1500 words.**

Safety Issues: What are the safety issues relating to your project? If you intend to work with children or vulnerable adults, how will they be kept safe? If your project involves children or vulnerable adults, you must have an active protection policy and procedures in place.

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You are strongly advised to do a risk assessment of your project. This will help you to identify any potential safety issues and problems, and how you will reduce their risk of occurrence.

If you are running a public event, the host venue should have a Premises License (s). If it does not, you must apply for a Temporary Event Licence from your local council Public Licencing Department. Please remember to allow sufficient time to apply for licenses - it can take up to 90 days.

You will be required to ensure that any event or activity you run has the relevant Public Liability insurance in place.

Outputs and Outcomes:

Outputs are the tangible products and activity created by your work and are quantifiable, focusing on the deliverables. For example, a young people's career advice session might work with 20 young people over 12 weeks, delivering 12 half day sessions.

Outcomes are the changes, benefits, learning or other effects that happen because of your work. They can be wanted or unwanted, expected, or unexpected. For example, the above-mentioned young peoples work could lead to greater employment opportunities.

Audience and Participation: Please state any anticipated audience and participant numbers for your programme of work / project.

Geographic Reach: State the geographic reach of your work, is its impact solely on one area of Essex or does it affect other areas. Does it have a regional, national, or international reach?

Evaluation: State how you will evaluate you project. What will you do to ensure you can demonstrate in real terms the impact of your project? How will you gather this information and use it to show the results of your project work?

Please refer to Arts Council England 'Evaluating Your Project' guidance for best practice: https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/downloadfile/Information_sheets_Evaluating_your_project_Project_grants.pdf

Section Four - Essex County Council's Everyone's Essex: The Plan for Essex 2021-2025

State how your work will meet Essex County Council's Everyone's Essex: The Plan for Essex 2021-2025. It is important in your application you take account of this strategy. You should ensure your answers are focused and specific and that you demonstrate how you will be able to contribute to ECC's aims through your

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activity/s. It is not expected that you will be able to contribute to all the points in the strategy; however, we would expect you to be able to demonstrate activities for at least one.

Section Five - Equality and Diversity

Essex County Council are committed to positively advancing equality, fostering good relations between different groups and tackling discrimination. In this section, please outline how your proposed programme of work will consider the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) aims as outlined in the application form.

Section Six – Project Finance

Please provide a project budget, detailing the specific programmes of work that our funding will support in Essex. Please detail any other income that our work will help to support, in terms of earned income, in-kind support and funding bids to other organisations. Please note, **you must indicate 10% match funding** (cash or in-kind) of the value of your financial request.

Please provide all the supporting documentation as requested, we will be unable to accept your application if you do not supply everything that is requested.

Grant Awards:

Agreement letters will be sent to all successful applicants, outlining payment instalment amounts and timelines, evaluation, marketing and publicity requirements and any specific conditions ECC deems necessary and appropriate for the programme of work.

ECC will pay 90% of funding in advance on receipt of a returned, signed agreement letter with relevant bank details. The remaining 10% will only be paid once the project has been completed and a report submitted to ECC.

How your application will be assessed:

An Assessment Board will make recommendations about the award of funding to the ECC Cabinet Member. The Board will consist of ECC Portfolio Holders and Officers within the Culture, Heritage and Green Spaces Service.

Applications will be assessed on how they meet the following criteria:

- How the project meets ECC's Everyone's Essex Priorities
- Audience and Participation engagement
- The geographic reach of the proposed work. Does the work focus on one or more area or local authority? Are there any county wide benefits?
- Evaluation Planning

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- The extent to which the work will lead to:
 - A more robust and confident cultural sector in Essex, with support ranging from individual artists to established cultural organisations.
 - Match funding from other partners and funders.
 - An increase in audiences and participation with Essex's cultural organisations and projects.
 - An increase in the county's physical and mental health and wellbeing as more people have access to cultural activity and the many benefits it brings.

Applicants will be informed in writing whether they have been successful or not and any special conditions that might have been attached to the grant will be included.

Decisions about grants will be made within available resources.

Essex County Council reserves the right to withdraw a grant in whole or in part, even after notification of approval, in appropriate circumstances (if, for example, circumstances have fundamentally changed from those indicated in the application or the authority receives further information which fundamentally alters the value or appropriateness of the project). The organisation must inform Essex County Council of any changes in circumstances that may affect its operational abilities e.g., administration/receivership, loss of expected funding, changes to the organisation's aims and/or constitution.

Appeals:

Appeals against decisions made by the Cultural Grant Assessment Board should be made in writing within 14 days of the applicant being informed of a grant decision. The Appeals Panel will convene to review whether to uphold or reject the appeal within available resources. All decisions made will be final. There will be no further right of appeal.

You may not canvass members or officers concerning your application.

You are advised to read the checklist at the end of the application form to ensure that you have completed all the necessary stages prior to posting. We will unfortunately, be unable to return supporting materials. You are advised to keep a copy of your application for your own records.

For further guidance or advice on applications, please contact culture@essex.gov.uk