



Youth-Led Creativity Fund: Helpful Guidance

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Accessibility

We have an Easy Read version of this guidance, which you can download from our website.

If you would like, you can request information from us in a more accessible format to you. You can do this by [email](#) or phone: 020 7812 3700.

This guidance tells you how to apply. Please tell us if any part of the process that feels like a barrier. We will do our best to accommodate alternative arrangements.

We also have additional [accessibility-related support](#) available for applicants where our application process may be a barrier to applying. This can include an Access Payment to pay for support to apply.

About this guidance

This guidance has information about:

- A. Youth-Led Creativity Fund:** This section has the aims of the programme and what we're looking to support.

- B. How to apply:** This section has information about each step of the application process and what to expect.

A. Youth-Led Creativity Fund

Esmée's long-term outcome	Supporting young people to build their own creative lives and to use arts and creativity to influence the world around them. The Youth-led Creativity programme is part of our work to secure a fairer future.
Introduction	The Youth-Led Creativity programme builds on young people's power to make change, use creativity to enhance their lives, develop their careers, and influence the world around them. We are focusing our support on work led by and for young people who have less access to creative programmes or who are underrepresented in arts and culture. This includes young people who: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are D/deaf, disabled or neurodivergent• are from communities experiencing racial inequity• are economically or educationally disadvantaged• identify as LGBT+• have migration or care experience The programme has been co-designed with Esmée's Involving Young People Collective. A panel of young consultants will play a key role in the assessment process for the Fund. This is to ensure the views and voices of young people are at the heart of the programme.

	<p>We will also use the Involving Young People Values to support our decision-making. The values were developed by Esmée’s Involving Young People Collective and offer guidance and learning for organisations on co-production with young people.</p>
<p>About the funding available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will award £1m in 2024. ● We will consider requests for project and/or core costs, and single or multi-year grants. The maximum limit that can be applied for is £120k for up to three years. ● We expect to make 8 to 12 grants. ● A Learning Programme will run alongside the funding. This will be co-designed by funded organisations and facilitated by a Learning Partner. The Learning Programme will enable peer support and learning. Organisations will be compensated to support participation. Through the Learning Programme, we want to support funded organisations to develop and share their models of practice. ● We will review the learning from this fund with the Involving Young People Collective and Learning Programme participants. This will help us to decide how we best support work to achieve this outcome in the future.
<p>Who and what is this funding for (criteria)</p>	<p>We want to support organisations and work that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is driven and shaped by young people so they can build their confidence and skills. Most of the young people supported need to be aged 14 to 30. ● Understands and can demonstrate a track record of centering the voices of young people from communities underrepresented in arts and culture. This includes: young people who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ D/deaf, disabled or neurodivergent ○ Are from communities experiencing racial inequity ○ Are economically disadvantaged ○ Identify as LGBT+ ○ Have migration or care experience. ● Prioritises the joy and care of young people. ● Uses art and creativity as a tool for young people to use their voice and influence change in their own lives and the world around them. ● Is driving change for the future <i>either</i> by doing something new, <i>or</i> by using tried and tested models to push things forward.
<p>Who or what can't be funded (exclusions)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organisations that cannot demonstrate strong youth leadership or have not yet started to become youth-led. ● Work that is part of the school curriculum. ● Organisations that do not have at least three trustees or directors (the majority of whom should not be paid employees) ● Organisations that are not registered charities or do not have an asset lock or other way to make sure that the assets of an

	<p>organisation, including profits or surpluses generated, can only be used for the benefit of its community or to further its activities and mission. See our FAQs for more information about the types of organisations we support in terms of governance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work that is not legally charitable. ● Work that does not have a direct benefit in the UK. ● Grants to individuals. ● Capital costs including building work, renovations, and equipment. ● Academic research – unless it can demonstrate real potential for practical outcomes. ● Healthcare with a clinical basis, including medical research, hospices, counselling and therapy, arts therapy, education about and treatment for drug and alcohol misuse. ● Independent education. ● Work that is primarily the responsibility of statutory authorities to provide using public funds (for example: social services for children and older people). ● The advancement of religion. ● Requests that are over £120,000 or more than 36 months.
<p>What we consider when making decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Track record: we look at successes, but also what was learned when things didn't go to plan. ● Connections: how this could link to and complement other work we support, and increase the combined impact. ● Broader context: the opportunities and barriers, allies and collaborators, for the work; and what influence or leverage the work aims to have. ● The difference our support could make: the value our funding and support could add to this work; along with the contribution the work could make to our impact goals.

B. How to apply for funding

There are two stages to applying:

- **Expression of Interest:** This stage is for you to tell us you are interested in applying for our funding and support, and for you to let us know, briefly, about your work. The Expression of

Interest is designed to save you working on a full application that may not be the best fit for the programme's aims. Most applications will not get past the Expression of Interest.

- **Proposal:** This stage is the full application stage, which includes a conversation with us so we can learn more about your work. We will invite you to the Proposal stage if we think your Expression of Interest is a good fit for the programme.

More information about each step of the process is outlined below.

I. Expression of Interest

When you are ready to tell us about your work, you can submit an expression of interest through our website.

First, you will be asked:

- **About your organisation:** charity or company number; total income for the last financial year; number of trustees and non-executive directors; date established; website and social media accounts.
- **What you would like Esmée to support:** briefly outline how our funding and support will be used.

Second, we'll ask you three questions about your work and how it meets our criteria for the programme. Your answers are meant to be short. You can type your responses into the form, **or** upload a voice recording or video.

You'll have a **total of 750 words** to answer all 3 questions (if uploading a voice or audio recording, this is usually around 5 minutes of speaking).

1. **How is your work led by and shaped by young people from communities currently under-represented in arts and culture?**
2. **In what ways do you prioritise the joy and care of young people?**
3. **How is arts and creativity used in your work to influence change?**

We're interested in understanding the **need** your work will address, and the opportunities your organisation or partnership is **uniquely placed** to take.

We will also look at your website and social media to learn about your organisation. We suggest you use this space to focus on **the change you want to achieve**.

The closing date for Expressions of Interest is 5pm on 15 March 2024.

After you submit your Expression of Interest

You will be redirected to a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion monitoring form. You will need to complete this for your organisation. We will use this information to make sure that the reach of our funding and our funding practices are fair and just. We will also use it to help us identify and address structural inequity. [Learn more about how we're classifying our data.](#)

We will get back to you in **early May** about your Expression of Interest.

Your Expression of Interest will be assessed using criteria based on the aims of the Youth-led Creativity Programme.

This process will be led by the Involving Young People Collective. A panel including members of the Collective and Esmée staff will select a longlist of applications to invite to the next stage.

If we cannot invite you to the next stage, we will offer **feedback**. We hope the feedback will be helpful.

2. Proposal

If we think that your work potentially matches our aims, we'll invite you to submit a proposal.

This has two parts:

- Written information
- Second part: a conversation. This usually involves a call with us. If you prefer, you can ask to do this part by sending us written information.

Please tell us if any part of the process that feels like a barrier. We will do our best to accommodate alternative arrangements. You can also ask for an Access Payment to pay for [accessibility-related support](#) to help with the proposal stage.

Written part

We'll ask you to submit some information about your work:

- **Financial information about your organisation:** financial details of the previous financial year, the current financial year, and the next financial year. The current year and next year should be based on your organisational income & expenditure budget.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Your organisation's approach within your organisation and through your work.
- **Outcomes:** Up to three outcomes you expect from the work, and what your indicators of progress might be. These should contribute to Esmée's aims for the programme. [See our guidance on outcomes for more information](#).
- **Supporting documents:**
 - A copy of your latest approved annual report and accounts
 - An income and expenditure budget for the organisation for the current financial year
 - A copy of your safeguarding policy (see [our approach to safeguarding](#))
 - A set of draft or management accounts covering the last financial year if you do not yet have an audited version (if applicable)
 - If you are applying for a project, a budget identifying what you would like us to fund and any other funding approached/secured
 - A copy of your Constitution, Memorandum and Articles of Association or other rules (if you are **not** a registered charity)

Second part

We want to have a conversation with you to learn more about your plans. You can see the points the conversation will cover below. This could be a phone or video call with a member of Esmée staff and a member of our Involving Young People Collective. You can have more than one person on the call but to make the most of the time, we suggest you have no more than three people. We expect the call to take approximately 60 minutes.

If you would prefer, you can ask to do this part by sending us written information. This could be a document you already have like a strategic plan or business plan; or an email with your responses to the points. The information you send us will be looked at by a member of Esmée staff and a member of our Involving Young People Collective.

The conversation will cover:

- **Fit to our aims for youth-led creativity:** Your work, the change you hope to achieve and how you plan to achieve it. As part of this, we want to understand:
 - What will be delivered.
 - More about the expected outcomes for your work.
 - Your approach to the care and wellbeing of young people.
 - What potential pathways there are for young people to progress their practice.
 - How you compensate young people contributing to and leading the work.
 - How you celebrate and bring joy into the process of creativity.
 - The role of adults and the intergenerational dynamics in your work.
 - Any risks you have identified: for instance, is the work new and untested? And how does the potential impact balance any risks?
- **Track record:** Your organisation, influence, and impact to date.
 - Talk through examples of your creative projects and impact to date.
 - How do you evaluate your work to understand the impact it is having.
- **Your approach and how you work:**
 - Who you work with, your appetite for collaboration, and how you share your work with others.
 - Your approach to learning and how you act on it.
 - More about your approach to diversity, equity and inclusion. We are interested in hearing about current challenges and any changes you are looking to make.

Key proposal dates:

- **The Written part should be sent off to us by 31 May.**
- **The Second part will take place in June.**

3. Due diligence

After the second part, we'll complete the assessment. This may include follow-up questions. Then a panel of Esmée staff and members of our Involving Young People Collective will prepare a recommendation for discussion and decision.

4. Decision

Our [Trustees](#) work with our [Executive team](#) to make decisions on how to use our resources and make funding decisions.

Decisions are made depending on the size of the funding request:

- **Grants up to £90k** - Executive Team, which meets every 2 weeks.
- **Grants up to £250k** - Executive/Trustee committee, which meets every 6 weeks

We expect to make all decisions by the end of September 2024.

Feedback

We will give feedback to every organisation we invite to proposal.

FAQs

Please see our [Youth-Led Creativity funding FAQs](#) for the most up-to-date FAQs as we will keep adding to these as we get more questions.

1. Is Youth-Led Creativity funding separate to your main funding priorities?

No, youth-led creativity is one of our long-term outcomes in our Arts and creativity making change priority in our aim for A Fairer Future. Together with our Involving Young People Collective, we have reimagined the guidance and process for funding towards this outcome.

2. Can requests for funding be used as match funding?

Yes, but the focus for our funding must be on our aims for Youth-Led Creativity.

3. Will Esmée accept applications from two or more organisations working in partnership?

Yes, one organisation will need to apply as the 'lead' - they will be treated as the grant-holding organisation in our system and hold responsibility for the progress of the work.

We'll need the collaboration partners to confirm their involvement. Not all partners have to be registered charities. You'll also nominate two contacts; one from the 'lead' organisation and one of the partners. You can include anticipated costs of setting up and co-ordinating networks or partnerships in your application.

Please note: The 'lead' organisation will need to meet our eligibility criteria for Youth-Led Creativity. If you would like to discuss this further, get in touch by emailing youthledcreativity@esmeefairbairn.org.uk.

4. What is the deadline for submitting an expression of interest?

The deadline for expressions of interest is 5pm on 15 March 2024.

5. Does this programme affect current grants or applications? If I have a current grant or application in progress, could I apply to this funding too?

No, current grants are not affected. If you have an application progress, it will be assessed through our main application process, as outlined in emails to you.

If you have a current grant, which has more than 12 months left of the term, you will not be able to apply to this programme.

6. Will there be another funding round for Youth-Led Creativity after this one finishes?

We're not sure yet. We want to review the learning from this programme with funded organisations and our Involving Young People Collective. This will help us to decide how we best support work to achieve this outcome in the future.

7. What other arts funding are you doing?

We fund the arts through three areas of our strategy. In our '[Arts and creativity making change](#)' priority in [A Fairer Future](#), we fund work towards two outcomes:

- Youth-led creativity, which is the subject of this programme.
- A representative cultural workforce, which you can apply for through our main application process. We expect to make 8 to 12 grants a year towards this outcome. As demand is very high, we are targeting our support. [Learn more in our guidance](#).

Finally, in [Creative, Confident Communities](#):

- Community-led creativity is one of our funding priorities. It has a strong emphasis on how creativity is a tool for community cohesion, and community regeneration.

We also have the [Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund](#), which is delivered by the Museums Association, and supports a range of projects that bring museum collections closer to people.

In addition to grants, we make social investments. Examples of our social investment support include an Arts Transfer Facility to support theatre productions from (under-resourced) subsidised arts sector to the commercial sector. We are also a co-investor in the [Arts and Cultural Impact Fund](#), which is a social investment fund for arts organisations.

8. I still have a question, who can I contact?

We have a [Q&A webinar on 7 February](#), which you can attend. We'll also be sharing the recording and answers on our website. If you still have a question, you can email us at youthledcreativity@esmeefairbairn.org.uk.