

Unlock creative industries support grant

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About the Grant

Sunderland Culture is proud to be one of the many cultural organisations, practitioners and businesses working in Sunderland. We recognise the incredible impact that artists and creatives have on the city – and your potential to do even more. Creative businesses, cultural organisations and self-employed practitioners need support to sustain and grow their work and we are committed to helping you thrive.

As part of this commitment, we are excited to launch a second round of Unlock grant funding for creative enterprise.

Independent creative practitioners, businesses and organisations based in Sunderland are invited to apply for a grant of £1000 – £2,500 to help improve the performance of your creative business.

Unlock is funded by the UK Government through the Shared Prosperity Fund. It is a part of the Sunderland Innovate and Grow enterprise programme, led by University of Sunderland.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this grant programme you must fulfil all the following eligibility criteria:

- Amount applied for must be a minimum of £1k and a maximum of £2.5k
- You must be at least 18 years of age
- You must have a home or business address registered in Sunderland. You can check whether your postcode is registered in Sunderland by using the gov.uk local council checker: www.gov.uk/find-local-council
- The fund applies to sole-traders, freelancers, CIC, LTDs, registered charities and other registered businesses. You or your business must be registered with HMRC at the point of application and have been trading for at least 12 months
- Creative industries are defined broadly as a business with creativity at its heart. For example, design, music, publishing, architecture, film and video, crafts, visual arts, fashion, TV and radio, advertising, literature, computer games and the performing arts
- You must have a UK bank account in the exact name you are applying in
- You must be able to demonstrate a professional track record of working as a creative business in the city
- You must be able to evidence how the support would enable you to develop your creative business
- You must be committed to completing relevant paperwork and meetings associated with the support
- You must be able to complete grant activity by 28 February 2025. The grant cannot support the costs of activity that has already taken place

- You cannot already have been allocated support from the UKSPF-funded Unlock programme

We will work with you to support any access needs. Access costs can be applied for in addition to the support received.

What the grant can support

The Unlock Creative Development Grant will offer independent creative practitioners, businesses and organisations based in Sunderland a grant of between £1000- £2500 to help improve the performance of their creative business. We are particularly interested in applications which focus on:

- Introducing a new technology/process or improving a technology/process within your business
- Accessing a new market to support your business performance

Examples of the type of activity your application could cover could include:

- You may want to take time to attend a conference or event to build your businesses networks to access new markets for future work
- You might want to pilot a new product, workshop or commercial activity
- You may want to access advice and support on developing your creative business or organisation (for example, fundraising, marketing, governance, or business planning consultancy)
- You may help with the costs of a new type of equipment or technology to enable your creative business or practice to provide a better-quality product
- You may want to increase the functionality of technology or processes you already use - such as adding a shop to your website
- You may need help to develop a new website or other marketing materials

This is not an exhaustive list, and we will consider any application which can demonstrate that this will help your enterprise meet the above criteria.

Please note that this grant is not paid upfront, and you will need to submit a copy of invoices paid and a copy of your bank statement to show funds have left the account before receiving payment. This can be paid in one payment or in instalments - this will be agreed with the Programme Manager in advance.

This is a competitive programme and we anticipate receiving more applications than we are able to fund so please feel free to email us questions about your idea or proposal.

How to Apply

To apply for the UKSPF Creative Development Grant, please complete this online application form: forms.office.com/e/Kh2N0HhKkr

Alongside contact and business details, the application asks three key questions:

1. Tell us about your creative business (300 words max)
2. Tell us what your grant will be used for, including a budget breakdown (300 words max)
3. Tell us how this will help your business to grow and/ or improve productivity (300 words max). We are particularly interested in applications which focus on:
 - growing your businesses performance
 - introducing a new or upgraded technology or process to your business
 - developing access to new markets

To maximise your chances of a successful application, please provide as much detail as possible within the word limit.

The application form cannot be saved in progress, and so we recommend completing in a word document first.

Access needs

Applicants with access needs are encouraged to apply for additional budget to put towards the higher costs that they might face in carrying out

fellowship activities. These may include access to an interpreter, additional technology, additional travel costs etc.

Please include any access costs in your budget, specifying the budget line as an access cost, for example: BSL Interpreter (access cost): £500.

Pre-application support

If you would like to discuss your application prior to submission, please email laura.brewis@sunderlandculture.org.uk to arrange a discussion.

Deadline

The deadline for submitting the application is Friday 8 November, 5pm.

If you are unable to access the online form, please contact laura.brewis@sunderlandculture.org.uk to arrange an alternative means of submission.

Decisions

We aim to contact applicants with a decision by Friday 22 November. This may be delayed depending on the volume of applications.

The process following decision

If your application is successful, we will be in touch by email to confirm, which will include paperwork to be completed. We will need returned:

- A signed and dated Registration Form
- A signed and dated Offer Letter
- Proof of your eligible address
- Proof of enterprise registration
- A completed Supplier Form

When this is completed, your business will be able to proceed with grant activities, as stated in your application.

To receive payment, you will need to submit a copy of invoices paid and a copy of your bank statement to show funds have left the account. Before

payment of the final instalment, you will also be asked to complete an online Outcome Form. When we have this, we will pay your final invoice.

More information

Sunderland Culture

Sunderland Culture was set up in 2016 to bring together the cultural programmes of Sunderland City Council, University of Sunderland and Sunderland Music, Arts and Culture (MAC) Trust into a single, independent, delivery model.

Sunderland Culture delivers the programme in National Glass Centre and Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens and Arts Centre Washington, as well as cultural engagement and events in communities across the city. It works to ensure the power of great art, culture and creativity is harnessed for the benefit of Sunderland, its residents and visitors. Sunderland Culture is a registered charity and an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. Its mission is to improve life for everyone in Sunderland through culture.

About Sunderland Innovate and Grow

[Sunderland Innovate and Grow](#) is a partnership project between the University of Sunderland and Sunderland City Council and consists of four main strands with activity that support all steps of the innovation cycle through:

- Identifying and promoting new technologies to stimulate innovation in process, product and business model via subject innovation specialists ([Arrow](#));
- Addressing gaps in business capacity and capability to innovate through active engagement and grant support, and student and graduate placements ([Arrow and Innovation Placements](#));
- Spotting innovative ideas and bringing them to market through engagement with commercial partners ([Northern Accelerator](#));
- Addressing innovation needs in the creative sector by engaging sector specialises, Sunderland Culture

Sunderland Innovate and Grow is funded by the UK Government through the Shared Prosperity Fund. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central

pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025. The Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills. For more information, visit UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)