



Disconnected Bodies

ARTS FUNDING RESOURCE PACK

ART WITHOUT DISCOVERY MOVES NOBODY

Disconnected Bodies: A social enterprise working to improve access to the arts, culture and heritage.

Don't Let a Great Idea Go Unfunded: many inspiring and innovative projects go unfunded due to poorly written applications, where small tweaks would make all the difference. Let's make sure your application doesn't become the next.

Fast-Track Funding: the struggles of securing arts funding are real. As the UK's leading experts in arts, culture and heritage bid writing, we can have your application written in as little as three days. We also provide free advice and help guide you to free access support from Arts Council England.

Custom Support Driven by Your Vision: our arts grant support options are designed for both large and small-scale bids—covering Arts Council England Project Grants and DYCP, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, PRS, and the Community Fund. Whether you're applying for the first time or refining a resubmission, we're here to help.



19 years

Changing the face of cultural audience engagement and contributing our expertise to enabling more people to choose, create and participate in brilliant cultural experiences.



15 countries

Improving access to the arts and culture in 15 countries across the United Kingdom, Europe and Africa.



720,000 audiences

Reached in 2024. **375,000** being first time attenders.



2.1 million people

Engaged digitally in 2024.



8 national research projects

5 international research projects.



764 hours

Free advice provided in 2024.



“At Disconnected Bodies, we champion inclusive cultural access—empowering communities through bold engagement, free expert guidance, and equitable arts participation. Join us in transforming who the arts serve and how they connect us”.

- Pablo Colella, Founder



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Over the past year, Disconnected Bodies has made significant strides in advancing cultural equity through bold, audience-led engagement.

Our work continues to centre around those often excluded from traditional arts spaces, creating access points that are responsive, locally embedded, and artistically ambitious.

While independent of Arts Council England, our approach is deeply aligned with the Let's Create strategy. Through previous commissions, internal reviews, and frontline programme delivery, we've developed a strong understanding of the strategic outcomes that shape public investment in culture.

This allows us not only to report effectively against those outcomes but to model innovative practice that others now look to as a benchmark.

Our engagement work has taken place in diverse settings, from refugee support centres to rural community hubs and large-scale festivals; proving that inclusive cultural practice is both scalable and impactful.

We've seen increased confidence, wellbeing, and creative agency among

participants - while our partners consistently cite our methods as transformative for their own work.

As the Let's Create strategy approaches its 2025 review, we remain active contributors to the evolving conversation around public engagement, cultural access, and the future role of the arts. We continue to ask: who are the arts for, and how can we build frameworks that allow more people not just to take part, but to shape culture on their own terms?

This year has reinforced our belief that equitable engagement is not an add-on; it's the foundation of a thriving cultural ecology.

Disconnected Bodies will continue to deliver standout, values-led programmes that push the sector forward and ensure meaningful participation is a right, not a privilege.

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF ARTS FUNDING: FUELING CREATIVITY AND COMMUNITY GROWTH

In the vibrant tapestry of society, the arts play a pivotal role in reflecting our collective experiences, challenging perceptions, and fostering a sense of community. However, the journey from creative conception to public showcase often hinges on one critical factor: funding. At Disconnected Bodies, we understand the multifaceted benefits of arts funding and are dedicated to assisting artists and organisations in navigating the complex landscape of grant applications.

Providing Essential Financial Stability

For many artists and cultural organisations, financial uncertainty can stifle creativity and hinder project development. Arts funding offers a lifeline, ensuring that creators can focus on their craft without the constant burden of financial constraints. This stability not only nurtures existing talents but also encourages emerging artists to pursue their passions, knowing there is support available.

Sustaining Cultural Organisations

Museums, galleries, theatres, and cultural centres are the custodians of our heritage and the incubators of contemporary culture. Consistent funding is vital for these institutions to maintain operations, curate exhibitions, and host performances that enrich public life. Without adequate support, many of these establishments face the risk of closure, leading to cultural impoverishment.

Allowing Space for Experimentation and Risk-Taking

Innovation in the arts often requires stepping into the unknown, experimenting with new forms, mediums, and ideas. However, such ventures come with inherent risks, and without financial backing, artists may be reluctant to explore uncharted territories. Arts funding provides the necessary cushion, empowering creators to push boundaries and bring groundbreaking projects to fruition.

Introducing More Diverse Artistic Voices

A thriving arts scene is one that reflects the diversity of its community. Funding initiatives aimed at underrepresented groups ensure that a multitude of voices and perspectives are heard. This inclusivity enriches the cultural landscape, fostering empathy and understanding among audiences.

Enhancing Cultural Life

The arts are a cornerstone of cultural identity, offering avenues for expression, reflection, and connection. Funded arts projects bring communities together, whether through local festivals, public art installations, or community theatre productions. These events not only entertain but also provoke thought and dialogue, enhancing the quality of communal life.

Developing Communities

Beyond individual enrichment, arts funding has a profound impact on community development. Cultural projects can revitalise neighbourhoods, attract tourism, and stimulate local economies. Moreover, community-based arts initiatives often address social issues, promote cohesion, and provide a platform for collective storytelling.

Preserving Heritage

Our heritage is a testament to our shared history and identity. Funding dedicated to preserving historical sites, traditional crafts, and archival projects ensures that future generations can access and learn from the past. This preservation fosters a sense of continuity and pride within communities.

Job Creation and Skills Development

The arts sector is a significant employer, encompassing a wide range of professions from performers and visual artists to technicians and administrators. Investment in the arts translates to job creation and offers opportunities for skills development. Workshops, apprenticeships, and educational programmes funded through grants equip individuals with valuable skills, contributing to the broader economy.

Driving Social Change

Art has the power to challenge norms, inspire action, and drive social change. Funded projects that tackle pressing social issues can raise awareness, shift public opinion, and influence policy. By supporting such initiatives, arts funding becomes a catalyst for progress and transformation within society.

AVOIDING COMMON PITFALLS IN ARTS GRANT APPLICATIONS

Securing funding in the arts sector is a competitive and often intricate process. Many innovative projects face rejection not due to a lack of merit but because of avoidable mistakes in their grant applications. At Disconnected Bodies, we have identified several common pitfalls that applicants encounter. By addressing these issues, you can enhance the quality of your application and increase your chances of success.

1. LACK OF CLARITY

Unclear Objectives and Vision

A compelling grant application begins with a clear articulation of your project's objectives and vision. Ambiguity can confuse reviewers and undermine the perceived feasibility of your project. To avoid this:

- **Define Specific Goals:** Clearly state what you aim to achieve.
- **Articulate Your Vision:** Explain the broader impact and significance of your project.
- **Use Accessible Language:** Avoid jargon and complex terminology that may alienate or confuse the reader.

Overly Complex Language

While it's important to convey the depth of your project, using overly complex language can be detrimental. Reviewers appreciate concise and straightforward narratives that effectively communicate your ideas.

2. WEAK OR UNREALISTIC BUDGET

Lack of Detail

A well-structured budget is crucial. Providing insufficient detail can raise concerns about your project's viability. Ensure that you:

- **Itemise Expenses:** Break down costs to show exactly how funds will be allocated.
- **Justify Costs:** Explain the necessity of each expense in relation to your project's goals.

Overestimating or Underestimating

Accurate budgeting reflects your understanding of the project's scope. Overestimating can suggest inefficiency, while underestimating may indicate a lack of preparedness. Research and realistic projections are key.

In-Kind Contributions

In-kind contributions—non-monetary support such as donated goods or services—should be clearly outlined. Demonstrating these contributions can showcase community support and reduce the amount of funding you need to request.

3. IGNORING GUIDELINES

Not Reading Guidelines

Each funding body has specific criteria and expectations. Failing to thoroughly read and understand these guidelines can lead to automatic disqualification. Take the time to familiarise yourself with all requirements before drafting your application.

Not Tailoring Applications

Generic applications are easily spotted and often dismissed. Tailor your proposal to align with the funding body's mission, values, and specific interests. This demonstrates both respect and strategic alignment.

Incomplete Applications

Missing information or documents can derail your application. Use checklists to ensure all components are included and adhere to submission deadlines.

4. FAILING TO DEMONSTRATE IMPACT

Lack of Measurable Outcomes

Funding bodies invest in projects that promise tangible results. Clearly define how you will measure success and the specific outcomes you anticipate.

No Evaluation Plan

An evaluation plan outlines how you will assess the project's effectiveness. This demonstrates accountability and a commitment to continuous improvement.

5. POOR PLANNING

Unrealistic Timelines

Setting achievable milestones is essential. Overly ambitious timelines can raise doubts about your project's feasibility. Develop a detailed schedule that accounts for potential challenges and contingencies.

Lack of Risk Assessment

Identifying potential risks and outlining mitigation strategies shows foresight and preparedness. Funding bodies appreciate applicants who proactively address possible obstacles.

6. INADEQUATE AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Ignoring a Target Audience

Understanding and defining your target audience is crucial. A project without a clear audience may lack direction and relevance. Specify who will benefit from your project and how you plan to reach them.

Lack of Inclusivity

Inclusivity broadens your project's appeal and impact. Ensure your project is accessible and considers diverse participants and audiences.

7. WEAK PARTNERSHIPS

Lack of Credible Partnerships

Collaborations can enhance your project's credibility and resources. Identify and secure partnerships that align with your objectives and can provide valuable support.

No Letters of Support

Letters of support from partners or stakeholders strengthen your application by demonstrating commitment and endorsement from reputable entities.

8. NOT PROOFREADING OR EDITING

Spelling and Grammar Errors

Errors in spelling and grammar can detract from the professionalism of your application. Proofread meticulously to ensure clarity and correctness.

Inconsistent Information

Ensure consistency throughout your application. Discrepancies can confuse reviewers and undermine your credibility.

CLIENTS, PROJECTS AND PARTNERS

We're proud to celebrate 19 years of delivering impactful, growth-driven projects across 15 countries. Our work reflects strong partnerships built on trust, innovation, and shared vision. As we enter our third decade, we remain committed to excellence and meaningful solutions. Thank you to our clients and partners for being part of the journey.



Arts Council England

Recognised by ACE for our robust evaluation frameworks, we guide clients from concept to submission, ensuring alignment with priorities at every stage. We've contributed to ACE's audience and participation strategies and are involved in the independent review of its operations. Our expertise helps organisations understand audiences, create inclusive engagement strategies, and design evaluations aligned with ACE's outcomes and principles. We support the full lifecycle of ACE-funded projects, from shaping ideas to measuring impact, helping clients deliver and evidence high-quality work. As experienced bid writers and access support workers, we simplify complex funding processes.



National Lottery Heritage Fund

Recognised for our in-depth understanding of the National Lottery Heritage Fund's (NLHF) priorities, we support clients in developing projects that align with the Heritage 2033 strategy. Our work includes helping organisations identify heritage value, engage diverse communities, and create inclusive participation and learning opportunities. We design robust evaluation frameworks that demonstrate impact and legacy, ensuring projects meet NLHF's outcomes and reporting requirements.



Community Fund

We help organisations bring community-driven ideas to life, with a strong track record of securing support from the National Lottery Community Fund. From the earliest spark of a project to final reporting, we guide teams to centre lived experience, tackle inequalities, and design activities that make a real difference. Our approach blends practical planning with values-led thinking, helping groups build trust, deliver positive change, and show clear evidence of impact that resonates long after the funding ends.



British Council

We've supported community outreach for international projects via British Council Arts, providing tailored engagement resources and helping secure funding for international clients to deliver impactful, culturally responsive programmes.



MoMA

MoMA recognised our audience development research in 2010, using it to inform programme design, including their ongoing Arts and Activity initiative, shaping inclusive, intergenerational engagement strategies still in use today.



Somerset Libraries

Supporting audience profiling to enhance community outreach efforts, helping Somerset Libraries identify target groups, tailor engagement strategies, and increase library usage through more relevant, inclusive, and effective programming and communication.



The National Maritime Museum

We led community outreach for *Our Connection With Water*, the first Black-led exhibition of its kind, attracting diverse audiences through targeted engagement strategies and culturally relevant programming.



The Culture Trust

Leading comprehensive evaluation of a NLHF-funded project, supporting strategic redevelopment and enhanced programme delivery across four heritage sites for lasting community impact.



Black Country Touring

Leading the evaluation of BCT's Community Producers programme, assessing impact, strengthening community engagement, and informing future development strategies.



This is Croydon

Collated evidence of audience and community outreach for The Mayor of London's Borough of Culture Croydon year, demonstrating engagement impact.



Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation

Commissioned to support on an Arts Council England funding bid to reach the city's Sikh, Hong Kongese and Sri Lankan residents.



Pedestrian Arts

Leading evaluation of NLHF-funded Tell Tell Tales, ensuring youth engagement and increased access to local folklore and heritage.



Let's Create and Reuse

Supported securing funding for Let's Create and Reuse, enabling 184 contact hours in Coventry and Warwickshire, fostering creativity and environmental awareness among 560 young participants.



Muslim Artist Academy

Supported securing funding by guiding navigation of the arts sector, amplifying underrepresented voices, and widening cultural access for impactful growth.



Blanket Fort Club

Secured funding for The Blanket Fort Club's immersive theatre projects co-created with young children and those with complex needs, enabling therapeutic play and inclusive engagement across South Yorkshire.



Black Boys Choir

We helped secure funding by shaping a strong case for a nurturing, creative space where Black and South Asian boys build confidence, community, and wellbeing through music.



Bolton Contemporary

Supported securing funding for a project that facilitates community arts activities with elderly people in Yorkshire's local community spaces.



BIMM

Supporting students in marketing their work and navigating the creative industries, providing guidance, resources, and tailored career development advice.



Norwich University of Art

Leading student workshops on understanding cultural audiences and managed research projects, empowering students to develop effective engagement strategies and informed programming decisions.



UAL

Supporting students to navigate the creative industries by sharing expertise, offering mentorship, and providing valuable internship opportunities to enhance practical experience.



InDance International, Barcelona

Secured Erasmus+ funding for a dance programme connecting Spain, Hungary, and Georgia, fostering international collaboration and cultural exchange.



Mathare Foundation, Kenya

Secured British Council funding and led community outreach for a project connecting Kenyan and British creatives, fostering cross-cultural collaboration, sharing artistic practices, and building inclusive networks between diverse creative communities.



Circus Factory, Ireland

Developed an audience development strategy targeting new demographics, increasing engagement and accessibility within the circus arts community.



Art Meets Culture

Invited to speak about securing funding and navigating arts funding landscape.



We Restart

Invited to lead a workshop for recent refugees on how to access Arts Council England Develop Your Creative Practice grant.



Hounslow Creative People and Places

Invited to talk about community outreach and how freelance artists can connect with a wider audience through project partnerships.



Creative United

We act as advisers in audience development, providing strategic guidance to enhance engagement, diversify audiences, and strengthen programme impact.



Artist Run Alliance

UK ambassadors for the Artist Run Alliance, promoting collaboration, sharing best practices, and supporting artist-led initiatives nationally.



Artquest

Leading audience development workshops and one-to-one sessions, equipping participants with tailored strategies to grow and engage diverse audiences effectively.



The Space

Advising on audience development and profiling, enabling targeted engagement strategies that grow and diversify their audiences effectively.



A Bit of A Do Festival

Leading audience development and marketing for disability-led festival A Bit of A Do in Croydon, creating inclusive strategies to reach diverse communities and increase engagement and attendance.



Aurora Orchestra

Leading community outreach and evaluation with Aurora Orchestra at Printworks, developing a tailored performance that enhanced accessibility and engagement for deaf and hearing-impaired audiences through inclusive collaboration.



Creative Dance London

Supporting marketing for an over-60s dance company, increasing visibility and engagement, which led to a prestigious commission by Lacoste.



Create Arts

Managed arts workshops for young carers, coordinating logistics, ensuring smooth delivery, and fostering supportive, creative environments tailored to their needs.



Creative Access

Supporting young people to navigate the creative industries by sharing expertise, offering mentorship, and providing valuable internship opportunities to enhance practical experience.



Arts Emergency

Mentoring young people to launch careers in the creative industries, providing guidance, skill development, and industry insight for successful beginnings.



BOOK A FREE 30-MINUTE VIDEO CONSULTATION

Book a free 30-minute consultancy call and speak with Disconnected Bodies' Founder Pablo Colella.

We pride ourselves on offering free, no strings attached advice. Book a day and time that suits you then leave it to us to get you moving past sticking points and towards your goals.

Don't want to wait? Give our team a call on 020 3633 7617

