



Australian Government

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Communications**
Office for the Arts

Creative Economy Support Package

COVID-19 Arts Sustainability Fund

Frequently Asked Questions

August 2020

What is the COVID-19 Arts Sustainability Fund?

The COVID-19 Arts Sustainability Fund (Fund) will provide last resort funding assistance to significant Australian Government-funded arts organisations that are assessed to be at imminent risk of insolvency as a direct result of COVID-19, having taken all reasonable action to maintain their financial position.

More information on the Fund, including objectives and eligibility criteria are available in the [Fund Guidelines](#).

Eligibility

What organisations or entities are eligible to apply?

Your organisation is eligible to apply if it is currently party to, or due to enter into, a multi-year funding agreement with the Australian Government, either through the Australia Council or the Office for the Arts in the Department under one or more of the following programs:

- National Performing Arts Partnership Framework
- Four Year Funding Program 2021-24
- Four Year Funding Program 2017-20
- Visual Arts and Craft Strategy 2016-21
- Cultural Development Program for the National Performing Arts Training Organisations

If you have any questions regarding the eligibility of your organisation, contact the Sustainability Fund team at SustainabilityFund@arts.gov.au or on (02) 6271 7695 between 9am-5pm AEST, Monday-Friday.

Can statutory bodies apply if they are funded through one of the above programs?

No, statutory bodies under Commonwealth, state or territory legislation are not eligible to apply to the Fund. This includes, but is not limited to, national cultural institutions and performing arts companies.

Can other currently-funded arts organisations apply?

No, arts organisations with a one-off, project, annual or multi-year funding agreement with the Australian Government under any program or initiative not listed above are not eligible to apply to the Fund.

My arts organisation is not eligible but has been affected by COVID-19 – can I apply for any other funds?

Yes, organisations not eligible for the Sustainability Fund are encouraged to consider other funding opportunities offered as part of the Australian Government's COVID-19 Creative Economy Support Package.

Further information on all measures is available on the Office for the Arts website at www.arts.gov.au/covid-19-update.

Application Process

What are the closing dates for applications?

Applications will close on 31 March 2021, or until all funds are allocated – whichever is sooner.

How do I submit an application?

Applications are submitted through SmartyGrants at <https://arts.smartygrants.com.au>.

What information am I required to provide with my application?

The SmartyGrants application will include four financial templates for you to complete and include in your application:

- Latest Balance Sheet position at the time of application;
- Latest Profit & Loss Forecast for Year Ending December 2020 (or Year Ending June 2021);
- Latest Profit & Loss Forecast for Year Ending December 2021 (or Year Ending June 2022); and
- Monthly Cashflow Forecast from the month of the application to 30 June 2021, excluding any funding claim sought.

Noting that cashflow forecasts to 30 June 2021 may be difficult to provide, applicants are asked to provide the most robust projections possible at time of application.

My organisation receives or is applying for funding under the National Performing Arts Partnership (NPAP) Framework. Will my application under the NPAP Framework be taken into consideration as part of my application under the Sustainability Fund?

While Partnership Organisations and potential new entrants to the NPAP Framework are eligible to apply for funding through the COVID-19 Arts Sustainability Fund, these applications are assessed separately. Funding under the Sustainability Fund is a one-off grant and will not be rolled into any existing core funding you receive as a Partnership Organisation. In addition, Grant agreements under the Fund will be administered by the Department.

My organisation's initial application was unsuccessful. Can I reapply?

Yes, you can reapply if your application was unsuccessful. You may ask for feedback within one month of being advised of a decision outcome, however, funding decisions cannot be overturned. The Department recommends you address any issues that may have deemed your initial application ineligible or uncompetitive.

Where can I go to if I need assistance with my online application?

If you have any questions during the application period, contact the Sustainability Fund team at SustainabilityFund@arts.gov.au or on (02) 6271 7695 between 9am-5pm AEST, Monday-Friday.

If you need information on accessibility see <http://www.artsaccessaustralia.org/> or one of the arts and disability peak bodies.

If you are having technical issues with SmartyGrants, please contact service@smartygrants.com.au or on (03) 9320 6888 between 9am-5pm AEST, Monday-Friday. Alternatively you can visit <http://help.smartygrants.com.au/display/help/Help+Guide+for+Applicants>.

What is the GrantConnect website and why are my details published there?

Under Government grants legislation, all Commonwealth entities must publish information on individual grants on their website no later than fourteen working days after the Funding Agreement takes effect (CGRG 5.3). The Department's annual grants registers are available at <https://www.communications.gov.au/who-we-are/department/funding-reporting>. Further information can be found at <http://www.finance.gov.au/resource-management/grants>.

Assessment

How are the assessment criteria weighted?

Each of the three assessment criteria are weighted equally.

Who will assess my organisation's application?

Assessors will be officials from the Department. The Department will also seek advice from:

- an independent external financial assessor to advise on the risk of insolvency and ongoing sustainability if funds are provided; and
- the Australia Council, the Government's principal arts funding body.

Will every application be considered by an independent financial assessor?

Yes.

How long will it take for me to be notified of the decision on my organisation's application?

Applications will be processed as quickly as possible, particularly given the purpose and objectives of the Fund. Indicative timeframes are as follows:

Activity	Approximate timeframe
Assessment of applications	4-6 weeks from lodgement of application
Approval of outcomes of selection process	2-4 weeks from assessment of applications
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	2 weeks from approval of outcomes
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks from approval of outcomes

These timings are an estimate only and may change according to the number of applications received.

Funding

If my organisation's application is successful, will we receive the full amount of funding requested?

You may not receive the full amount of funding requested. You will be advised of the funding amount you will receive in writing if your application is successful.

Rather than receiving approved funding in one up-front payment, your organisation will submit claims for payment throughout the period of the agreement to the total amount of the approved grant. If the financial position of your organisation significantly improves during the period of the agreement, you may not need to claim the maximum grant amount.

My organisation's application has been successful. Will my sustainability funding be rolled into my existing grant agreement with the Commonwealth?

No, funding under the Sustainability Fund is a one-off grant only and will not be rolled into existing grant agreements. Grant agreements under the Fund will be administered by the Department.

What is a "claim"?

Execution of the grant agreement will trigger payment of the first instalment of your grant. Subsequent to this, you will be required to submit claims during the period of the agreement to trigger further payment instalments – it may help to think of a 'claim' as a 'milestone'. Claims may not amount to more than the maximum amount stated in your organisation's grant agreement.

How do I submit a claim?

Claims should be submitted via SmartyGrants no more frequently than every two months unless otherwise specified in the grant agreement. You may submit a claim under the grant agreement any time from the date of execution of the agreement to 31 May 2021.

Can I submit claims that amount to more than the maximum amount in the grant agreement?

No, claims may not amount to more than the maximum amount stated in your organisation's grant agreement. However, in certain circumstances you can request a variation to your grant agreement. You can request a variation by contacting the Sustainability Fund team at SustainabilityFund@arts.gov.au before the grant agreement end date.

Complaints Mechanism

What can I do if I am unhappy about how my organisation's application has been handled?

The Department's Complaints Procedures apply to complaints about this grant opportunity. All complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing to:

Email: SustainabilityFund@arts.gov.au