



**Australian Government**

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

## Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund Frequently Asked Questions

**June 2021**

## Making an application

### 1.1. I understand the RISE guidelines have been amended. What has changed?

The RISE guidelines have been amended to better articulate which organisations may apply and what activities are eligible for funding. Key changes include:

- 1) There is no longer a requirement for projects to be new or reimagined. Applications can be submitted for new, existing or recurring arts projects, activities or events so long as they meet all eligibility criteria.
- 2) Applicant eligibility:
  - local governments are now eligible to apply for funding to support cultural and creative projects, events and activities
  - individual business units and entities of state or territory governments with an arts or cultural heritage purpose are also eligible to apply without the need to have a separate ABN. Examples include art galleries, museums or performing arts centres.

See Section 4 and 5 of the guidelines for eligibility criteria.

- 3) Eligible activities and costs have been clarified to include:
  - planning, pre-production, development and delivery of arts projects, activities and events, including concerts, live music, theatre and other live performances
  - film festivals and film retrospectives
  - funding for all staffing costs in relation to an event or activity, including highly skilled permanent, part time and casual employees and subcontractor entities for staging of eligible tours and events. This also includes hiring of labour for an event.

See Section 5 of the guidelines for eligible activities and costs.

- 4) Ineligible activities now include:
  - visas, quarantine costs and international artist fees
  - catering costs
  - marketing costs not directly associated with the event or activity
  - royalties for non-Australian artists
  - infrastructure costs including construction/capital works, refurbishment and renovations (except COVID-safe infrastructure)

See Section 5 of the guidelines for eligible activities and costs.

- 5) Broadening of the recommended grant amount that can be requested:
  - the recommended minimum request for funding has been lowered to \$25,000, lower amounts will still be considered
  - amounts of greater than \$2 million will be considered where warranted as assessed on a case-by-case basis.

- 6) Disbursement of grant funds to third parties identified in a funding agreement are now required prior to staging an event to support artists and suppliers. You will be required to report on how and when you spent the grant.

See Section 10 of the guidelines for information about how we pay the grant.

## 1.2. Can individuals apply?

Individuals may apply for funding as long as they are part of a joint (consortia or partnership) application or if their application is auspiced by an organisation that meets the eligibility criteria.

Joint applications must have a 'lead organisation' that meets the eligibility criteria. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. In this case, the individual would be listed in the application as a partner.

Sole Traders are eligible to apply in their own right so long as they meet the remaining eligibility criteria.

## 1.3. Can local governments and local government-owned entities apply?

Yes. Local government-owned entities have always been eligible to apply so long as their primary purpose is arts and entertainment. A local government owned entity is a separate legal entity from the council and has its own ABN.

Local governments are now also eligible to apply in their own right to support cultural and creative projects, events and activities.

## 1.4. Can state and territory-owned entities apply?

Individual business units and entities of state or territory governments with an arts or cultural heritage purpose (such as art galleries, museums or performing arts centres) are eligible to submit applications.

Commonwealth, state and territory departments are not eligible but may be parties to a joint or partnership application, provided they are not the lead applicant.

## 1.5. Can "for profit" organisations apply?

Yes, as long as your organisation meets the eligibility criteria in 4.1 of the Guidelines.

## 1.6. Which entities can be auspiced?

Unincorporated groups (three or more individuals who do not form a legally constituted organisation) with an arts or entertainment purpose are eligible for funding but must be auspiced by an organisation that meets the eligibility criteria.

Auspice bodies can now receive funding for multiple organisations per Batch.

## 1.7. How do joint applications, including consortia and partnership applications work?

Joint applications may be formalised as a consortia application or opt to come in as a partnership.

Organisations wanting to join together as a consortia or partnership to deliver a grant activity or project, must appoint a 'lead organisation'. The lead organisation must meet the Fund's eligibility criteria and only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth.

The lead organisation must be an arts organisation with the primary purpose of arts and entertainment, with the exception of local government bodies (see eligibility criteria in 4.1 of the Guidelines). Partnerships can include creative collaborations, corporate sponsorship and venues.

Applicants (including the lead organisation in a joint application) may submit more than one application, however, the same applicant cannot receive funding for more than one application in the same assessment period, with the exception of auspice bodies.

Joint applications can include overseas partners so long as the lead organisation meets the eligibility criteria and the activity is undertaken in Australia.

### 1.8. I am a sub-contractor servicing the arts sector but my primary purpose isn't arts and entertainment. Is there any way I can access funding?

Organisations that are unable to apply in their own right, for example merchandising or IT companies, can apply as a partner in a consortia or partnership application where the lead organisation fits the eligibility criteria.

Partnerships within an application demonstrate creative and financial collaborations, allowing resources to be pooled. Sub-contractors or consortia partners should provide a letter of support outlining their contributions to the project (see Section 7.3 of the guidelines).

### 1.9. Are we able to apply for both the RISE and Sustainability Fund?

While an organisation may be eligible to apply to both the RISE and Sustainability Fund (noting Sustainability is open to Australian Government-funded organisations only), an organisation's financial position will likely make them better suited to one or the other in the first instance.

The Sustainability Fund will provide 'last resort' funding assistance to organisations at imminent risk of insolvency. The RISE guidelines outline that organisations that are at risk of insolvency are not eligible to apply to RISE.

If your organisation is facing imminent risk of insolvency we recommend firstly submitting an application to the Sustainability Fund.

### 2.1. Can I apply if I've also applied for a Show Starter Loan?

Yes. However, a combination of a RISE Fund grant and Show Starter Loan cannot make up more than 50 per cent of the total budget of a project or \$5 million, whichever is the lesser. Your budget must also include details for what part of the project will be funded by a Show Starter Loan.

### 1.10. Can my project be delivered solely online?

Yes. Innovative ways to deliver content and productions in response to COVID-19 restrictions are encouraged.

### 1.11. What does 'scale' of a project mean?

Scale refers to the size and extent of a project, including how many participants and locations are involved. Assessors will consider the scale of the project in the context of your organisation's experience and capacity.

### 1.12. What type of activities can be funded?

The purpose of the Fund is to support the arts sector to re-activate. The Fund does not support sporting, automotive, motocross, e-sports or hospitality-related activities.

The types of activities that are eligible for funding include:

- cultural and creative projects, events or activities, including innovative ways to deliver, concerts, live music, theatre and other live performances, exhibitions, tours and online delivery including the development, pre-production and delivery of an event
- cultural and creative programming and promotion
- festivals
- hiring or purchasing essential equipment for events, which might include hiring sound or lighting equipment, site infrastructure, venues and technicians and labour associated with the event or

activity (*purchase of equipment will only be considered where it is demonstrated to be the only feasible option, and/or more cost effective than leasing.*)

- development of COVID-safe infrastructure and protocols<sup>1</sup>
- community outreach activities such as workshops
- capacity-building activities that link to the objectives and outcomes of the program, supporting an organisation to build long-term financial sustainability
- film festivals and film retrospectives

### 1.13. Can administration costs be funded?

Yes, but only the administration costs associated with undertaking projects funded by the RISE Fund.

The RISE Fund does not provide operational funding for the day-to-day running of an organisation. It is important to demonstrate how funding your administration costs will contribute to successfully delivering your project, activity or event.

Projects, activities and events that include a high percentage of administration costs are likely to represent less value for money.

### 1.14. What staffing costs can be funded?

All staffing costs that are associated with your project, event or activity, including highly skilled permanent, part time and casual employees and subcontractor entities, are eligible for funding. This might include lighting or sound technicians, crew costs or production managers and can also include an organisation's staffing costs that are directly attributable to the project.

Staffing costs not directly associated with your project, event or activity are not eligible for funding.

### 1.15. Can infrastructure costs be funded?

No, infrastructure costs, including construction/capital works, refurbishment and renovations are not eligible, with the exception of costs associated with COVID-safe infrastructure such as physical partitions or shields.

### 1.16. I run an independent cinema, can I apply for funding?

Yes. Independent cinemas may apply for a program of activity which could include cultural events, film festivals and film retrospectives. Funding is available for projects which meet the objectives of the Fund by creating employment outcomes and experiences for audiences.

Costs associated with general feature film distribution are not eligible for funding.

### 1.17. I'm putting on a live performance, what can I apply for?

Applications for live performances are able to apply for pre-production and production costs of the event. Eligible costs can include but are not limited to: marketing, staffing, Australian artist fees, lighting and audio costs, site and venue hire, and costs associated with labour for the event.

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<sup>1</sup> See glossary for explanation of COVID-safe infrastructure and protocols

### 1.18. What activities are ineligible?

The guidelines (section 5.4) specify a list of activities which cannot be funded by a grant:

- competitions, Eisteddfods and interactive games
- film and television production (except for the filming of live performances, such as theatre and music performances, which is eligible)
- performances by DJs (except for producer DJs, for example creating and producing original work, which is eligible)
- royalties for non-Australian artists, overseas travel, visas, quarantine costs and international artist fees.
- purchase of land and capital expenditure (including construction/capital works, refurbishment and renovations). Built or natural heritage projects are also ineligible.
- insurance and catering costs, and marketing costs that are not directly associated with the event or activity
- costs associated with a project, activity or event, that have already been incurred
- business start-up costs, debt repayments and general ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, phone and rent and business as usual activities
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- costs already being funded by, or intended to be funded by other programs administered by the department, the Australia Council or Creative Partnerships Australia

### 1.19. What do you mean by 'arts and entertainment'?

The purpose of the Fund is to support the arts sector to present projects, activities and events following the disruptions caused by COVID-19 restrictions.

To be eligible, an organisation's primary purpose must be arts and entertainment.

Arts and entertainment entities are organisations whose major source of revenue or hours worked are in activities that involve at least one of the following:

- the employment of cultural or creative workers\*
- the operation of venues or facilities often used to exhibit or showcase creative and cultural talent
- the organisation of arts and entertainment activities.

\*Creatives and support workers are those who are engaged in either creative roles (such as artists, creative production roles) or in roles that support the arts and entertainment activity (such as technical or administrative roles).

Organisations whose primary purpose is sporting, automotive, motocross, health and lifestyle, and hospitality events are not eligible. Email the RISE Fund at [RISE@arts.gov.au](mailto:RISE@arts.gov.au) to check eligibility if you are unsure.

### 1.20. Can I apply more than once?

Yes. There is no limit to the number of applications you can make to the RISE Fund, however, only one application, per organisation (per Australian Business Number) can be funded in the same Batch. This is with the exception of auspice bodies which can obtain funding for multiple organisations per Batch.

Please note that funding decisions will consider a balance across art forms and types of activity, geographic and community diversity, as well as generation of jobs. Where multiple applications are submitted by the same organisation, those applications will compete against each other.

### 1.21. Can I reapply for funding?

Yes, you may reapply regardless of whether you have been successful or unsuccessful for a previous application. You may reapply for the same or a similar activity, provided you are not seeking to fund activities already paid for under a previous successful grant.

If you are unsuccessful, you may ask for feedback and re-submit. It is recommended that you include new or more detailed information when submitting your new application and ensure the activity you are applying for is aligned with the RISE Fund's objectives, outcomes and assessment criteria.

### 1.22. Can I submit an application on behalf of a group?

Yes. Joint or consortia applications are eligible for funding under the RISE Fund, as outlined in section 7.2 of the RISE Fund Guidelines.

### 1.23. What if I need to update my application after submitting it?

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should contact us immediately at [RISE@arts.gov.au](mailto:RISE@arts.gov.au). We do not have to accept any additional information, nor requests from you to correct your application, after you have submitted.

### 1.24. How can I make my project COVID-safe?

Organisations should prepare and develop a COVID-safe plan, including risk assessments, hygiene controls and physical distancing, to operate in a COVID-safe way to protect staff and project participants.

The National COVID-19 Commission Advisory Body has released a planning tool to assist businesses develop COVID-safe plans, which is available at [www.pmc.gov.au/nccc/resources/planning-tool-help-businesses-reopen-and-be-covidsafe](http://www.pmc.gov.au/nccc/resources/planning-tool-help-businesses-reopen-and-be-covidsafe). Safe Work Australia also has a range of guidance and protocols for office environments, workplaces, and training, available at [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au).

### 1.25. How do I demonstrate that my project would be substantially less likely to proceed without investment support?

You should provide evidence of funding need in your application, which may include financial statements or a statutory declaration about your financial status.

### 1.26. How do I demonstrate my project will generate increased economic activity?

Depending on the nature of your project, your application should show expected economic outcomes such as revenue from ticket sales, benefits for other industries such as hospitality and accommodation, and likely future benefits as a consequence of your project. You may base this on similar previous activities you have delivered.

### 1.27. How do I make my application competitive?

Before submitting your application, you should check that it:

- clearly addresses the program objectives, outcomes and assessment criteria (sections 2 and 6 of the RISE Fund Guidelines)
- uses plain language and answers questions concisely
- does not assume assessors know anything about your organisation or project

- provides relevant background information and includes attachments (supporting documentation) that are well marked and highly relevant to the proposal
- includes letters of support or confirmation of participation from relevant individuals and/or organisations
- fully outlines all creative partnerships and financial contributions to the project, including in-kind support
- includes attachments that are well marked and highly relevant to the proposal.

### 1.28. Where can I get more assistance with my application or SmartyGrants?

You can seek further assistance by contacting the RISE team at [RISE@arts.gov.au](mailto:RISE@arts.gov.au).

If you are experiencing technical issues with SmartyGrants, please contact [service@smartygrants.com.au](mailto:service@smartygrants.com.au). You can also call +61 3 9320 6888 between 9.00am and 5.00pm Australian Eastern Standard Time, Monday to Friday.

Further information is also available in the SmartyGrants help guide at <https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants>.

## 3. Assessment process

### 3.1. How long will it take to assess my application?

Applicants will usually be advised of an assessment outcome within 8 - 12 weeks from closing date of the Batch. Applicants will be advised of the outcome in writing.

### 3.2. When are the assessment periods?

There are no rounds and applications will be accepted at any time between the opening and closing dates for the program.

Applications are batched for assessment and for recommendation to the Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts. Additional assessment recommendations may be made outside of these timeframes, only in exceptional circumstances.

Batch closing dates are published at [www.arts.gov.au](http://www.arts.gov.au).

There is no allocated funding amount for each assessment period.

### 3.3. Can my application be fast-tracked?

No, unfortunately fast-tracking of assessments is not possible.

### 3.4. What is the role of the Creative Economy Taskforce?

The Creative Economy Taskforce provides strategic advice on sector recovery, focusing on ways to support revenue generation, innovation, arts tourism and the mental health and wellbeing benefits of the arts.

The Creative Economy Taskforce is not provided with details of individual applications or applicants, but is provided with high level summary data on each assessment Batch, so as to provide strategic advice to the Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts.

Further information is available at [www.arts.gov.au/covid-19-update](http://www.arts.gov.au/covid-19-update).



### 3.5. If my application is ineligible or unsuccessful, can I ask for feedback?

Yes. Should your application be found ineligible you have 10 business days from the date you are notified to request feedback. Should your application be found unsuccessful, you may request feedback within one month of being advised of the outcome. Feedback requests can be submitted to [RISE@arts.gov.au](mailto:RISE@arts.gov.au).

### 3.6. Will my funding history with the Office for the Arts or other Australian Government agencies be taken into account?

Yes. Your organisation's history as a funding recipient may be considered, particularly your compliance with reporting and acquittal requirements. For instance, if you have outstanding reports, you may be ineligible to apply for further funding. If you have a just reason for a delay in reporting you may explain this in your application.

## 4. Funding and acquittal

### 4.1. Can my budget include expenditure on COVID-safe infrastructure and protocols?

Yes. COVID-safe infrastructure and protocols are measures to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19, consistent with industry best practice and guidance provided by the National Cabinet, Safe Work Australia, National COVID-19 Commission Advisory Body, and Australian Health Protection Principal Committee. Such measures should be reflected in an organisation's COVID-safe business plan.

### 4.2. Can my budget include a contingency for unexpected expenses?

Yes. This should not exceed 10 per cent of the total funding requested through the RISE Fund.

### 4.3. How much funding do I have to contribute to the project?

A financial contribution towards your project is required. This can be your own contribution or from other sources of funding and can include in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions can include your own time allocated to the project or, for example, any office space your organisation uses for the project. It should also include similar contributions made by partners to the project. In-kind contributions should be listed in the budget under 'other income' and should include evidence of the contribution as a supporting document.

There is no minimum or maximum amount of co-contribution, but the level of contribution is expected to be relative to the nature and scale of the project, and higher co-contributions, including from states and territories, will be advantageous to your application.

### 4.4. How much am I able to apply for?

Grants usually range from \$25,000 to \$2 million depending on the scope of the activity and its complexity, however, smaller or larger amounts are considered including amounts over \$2 million where warranted.

Applications of this nature need to strongly demonstrate the need for government support and must have a co-contribution that is proportionate to the size of the request. Higher contributions, including those from other government sources, will be advantageous to your application.

In order to be more competitive, applications should include all financial contributions including sponsorships, state government grants and ticket sales.

#### **4.5. Can I apply for RISE funding if I currently receive funding for the same project from the Office for the Arts, the Australia Council and/or Creative Partnerships Australia?**

Yes, as long as the funding you are receiving is not for the same component of the project as the one for which you are seeking funding through the RISE Fund.

You must clearly identify all funding sources in your budget, and separate expenditure items that will be covered by the RISE Fund from the expenditure items that will be covered by funding from other sources.

#### **4.6. Do I need to have confirmed funding from other sources?**

No. Other sources of funding do not have to be confirmed at the time of application. The application form will ask you to identify whether funding has been confirmed, or is tentative or pending.

#### **4.7. Can other funding sources be entirely in-kind, or does some of it need to be monetary?**

Support can be financial or in-kind support from sources other than the Australian Government. In-kind contributions can include your own time allocated to the project or, for example, any office space your organisation uses for the project. It should also include similar contributions made by partners to the project. In-kind contributions should be listed in the budget under 'other income' and should include evidence of the contribution as a supporting document.

#### **4.8. What happens if my other funding sources fall through during the project?**

You will need to advise the Office for the Arts immediately and we will consider whether we need to vary our agreement with you.

#### **4.9. If an item in the proposed budget is deemed ineligible for funding, does this mean my entire project is considered ineligible?**

No. Partial funding may be considered through the assessment process.

#### **4.10. If I'm successful, will I receive the full amount of funding I've requested?**

Partial or full funding may be offered to successful applicants. The assessment of applications will consider value for money, which may include the need for funding support, the quality and viability of the work plan and timeline, and the viability of the proposed budget. The overall competition for funding, in the context of available funds, will also be taken into account when grants are offered. There may also be circumstances where partial funding is offered if a project is clearly scalable.

#### **4.11. Can I apply for multi-year funding?**

Funding is only available in the 2021-22 financial year.

#### **4.12. Can I receive funding for a project that has already commenced?**

No. You cannot receive funding for any part of a project for which costs have already been incurred.

#### **4.13. If I'm successful, how will I get paid?**

If successful, you will be required to enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. You will be paid following execution of the agreement by yourself and the Office for the Arts. Payments will be made as set out in the grant agreement.

The RISE Fund uses a Commonwealth Simple Grant Agreement. Sample grant agreements are available on the Department of Finance's website at [www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/tools-templates](http://www.finance.gov.au/government/commonwealth-grants/tools-templates).

#### 4.14. What happens if my project is affected by COVID-19 restrictions?

Your risk assessment and management plan should include COVID-19 restrictions and mitigation measures. If your project is affected by COVID-19 restrictions, you must advise the Office for the Arts immediately and we will consider whether we need to vary our grant agreement with you.