

Organisations Fund 2026-2029 Guidelines

Arts Queensland is committed to supporting the growth of strong and sustainable arts and cultural businesses to deliver on the priorities of the Queensland Government's [Creative Together 2020-2030](#) roadmap.

The Organisations Fund 2026-2029 (the Fund) recognises that a vibrant, sustainable arts sector requires strong small to medium arts companies. These include First Nations companies and non-Indigenous companies with diverse business models, requiring different levels and types of support to help them thrive.

The Fund supports the core operational and program delivery costs of Queensland-based small-to-medium arts organisations.

Organisations Fund (2026-2029) festivals stream

Recognising the unique business models, planning cycles and challenges for arts companies that primarily deliver a festival, a dedicated stream within the Organisations Fund 2026-2029 will open 13 January 2025 and close in March 2025.

By 'festivals' we mean an organised series or program of public arts and cultural events that support significant employment opportunities for Queensland artists and arts workers, are held over two or more consecutive days, and have broad town/city/region and community-wide appeal.

The stream will focus on supporting organisations operating in the current festival environment that are considering how best to deliver their program. The stream will have adjusted eligibility and evaluation criteria to reflect festival delivery, including enabling the potential for alternative delivery and ownership models to be proposed that would not typically be eligible for Arts Queensland funding.

Applicants to this stream will need to demonstrate significant employment outcomes for Queensland artists and arts workers across its operations and festival programming.

You will not be disadvantaged as an applicant in either the broader Organisations Fund or within the festivals stream, noting available funding levels align (refer to Section 3 of these guidelines).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the Fund can be found at [the Organisations Fund page](#). These include a glossary that defines key terms used in these Guidelines and a preview of the online application form. FAQs will be updated throughout the funding opening period. For more details and how you can ask questions, see section 7.4.

1. Fund objective

The objective of the Fund is to support Queensland small-to-medium arts and cultural organisations to be stronger businesses, to do and share great work.

Investment through this fund will support *Creative Together* priorities, lay the foundation for a vibrant arts and cultural program for Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and deliver a legacy beyond the Games that includes advancing and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and empowering people with disability.

Applications from organisations that demonstrate they can significantly support the key priorities of [Creative Together 2020-2030](#) and [Elevate 2042 Legacy Strategy](#) will be prioritised.

2. Who can apply?

Queensland-based First Nations and non-Indigenous organisations that generate their own artistic and cultural work, and/or present, exhibit or publish the creative work of others, and deliver employment opportunities for Queensland artists and arts workers. Service organisations whose core purpose is providing advocacy, employment, networking and capacity building programs and activities for Queensland artists and art producers/presenters or other arts, cultural and creative organisations can also apply to the Fund.

3. What can be funded?

The Fund supports core operations and program costs:

- Core staff or ensemble wages
- Core program delivery
- Overheads, legal and governance costs.

These costs are defined further in the *Glossary and Definitions* section in the [FAQs](#).

Funding is for activities from **1 January 2026 to 31 December 2029**.

The **minimum** funding amount you can request from the Fund is **\$100,000 per annum** (for four years).

The Fund has a limited budget and is highly competitive. It is very unlikely that new successful applicants will receive more than \$100,000 in annual funding.

Currently funded organisations (Organisations Fund 2022-2025, First Nations Pathways 2022-2025) are unlikely to receive more than a 10% increase on their existing base funding, or the minimum amount, whichever is more.

Organisations that have previously received funding through Arts Queensland should not assume they will be successful in their application.

Organisations should not enter any commitments based on an expectation of funding before being formally notified of the outcome of an application.

Arts Queensland will not fund the majority of an organisation's cash expenditure. It is expected that an applicant organisation can maintain and grow a diversified revenue model to support employment and programming or service delivery. In considering a funding request, it is unlikely an organisation will receive more than 30% of its total budget from Arts Queensland (core support and projected project funding).

4. How will my application be assessed?

Following an eligibility check by Arts Queensland, applications will be assessed by the Fund Assessment Panel comprised of arts, cultural, business and community experts. More information about the assessment process can be found on page 5 of these guidelines.

4.1 Evaluation Criteria

The Panel will assess your application against the following criteria to make their recommendations for funding.

High quality

- Track record of delivering high quality arts and cultural products, programs and/or services, including successful collaborations and partnerships
- A strategic plan with a clear vision for the funding term that responds to community need and aligns with government priorities including *Creative Together* and *Elevate 2042*.

Strong impact

- Evidence of social, cultural and economic benefits for Queenslanders as a result of the organisation's services and program delivery
- Leverages existing resources and partnerships to diversify income, deepen impact and strengthen business opportunities aligned to the organisation's strategic plan
- Demonstrates how the principles of the [Cultural Engagement Framework](#) apply through business operations.

Sustainable value

- Experienced management and governance team/s representing a diversity of skills and expertise
- Evidence of accountability and oversight by Board/Management Committee (or alternative governance structure) including frameworks to ensure financial control, best practice human resources and industrial relations management, cultural protocols, risk and asset management
- Evidence of business performance and processes that demonstrate sustainable financial management and organisational capacity to deliver on the strategic plan.

Other considerations

In making their recommendations, the Panel may also consider:

- the distribution of funding across the State and across industry sectors (including priority sectors)
- the level of ongoing employment opportunities for Queensland artists and arts workers created by the organisation relative to the funding requested
- representation of Queensland's diverse arts sector, and
- the proportion of the Fund's investment in the overall cash turnover of individual applicants.

5. Eligibility Criteria

Applicants and applications that don't meet the mandatory criteria below will be considered an ineligible application and may not be assessed.

5.1 Applicants

Your organisation must meet the following criteria to be eligible:

- be a small to medium business with an annual turnover of less than \$5 million
- have a primary or strategic focus on the delivery of arts and cultural products or services in Queensland
- have a registered Queensland business address and staff permanently based in Queensland
- be an incorporated legal business entity, with an active Australian Business Number (ABN) in the exact name of the applicant
- have a bank account in the same exact name as the applicant
- have completed any Arts Queensland reporting that is due
- not owe Arts Queensland any money
- have at least two years of activity and two years of audited or certified financial statements to be able to provide compulsory support material.

You **cannot** apply if you are:

- an individual or sole trader, a family trust, or an individual applying on behalf of a trust
- a government entity, or any entities owned or controlled by local, state or federal governments **
- an educational institution seeking funding for core business**
- an Arts Statutory Body or Arts Owned Company
- multi-year funded under the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework or the Backing Indigenous Arts Initiative
- an organisation with a focus on screen, streaming or television content development activities, games, or film making or presentation activities
- under notice that you are to be placed under external administration, petitioning for bankruptcy or winding up/ deregistering an organisation/business.

**Arts Queensland will consider a waiver, on a case-by-case basis, on applications from arts and cultural organisations that are directly supported or owned by an academic and/or training institution or a Local Government Authority. A waiver must be requested (see page 9) and additional support material may be required.

5.1.1 Probity

In order for the Application to be eligible the Applicant (including its employees and Board or Management Committee etc) must comply with the obligations set out in these guidelines. To ensure fairness in the application and assessment process, Applicants must only contact AQ regarding the Organisation Fund via the nominated email address: organisationsfund@arts.qld.gov.au. Applicants or their associated personnel that attempt to contact other members of Arts Queensland or elected officials in relation their application may be excluded from the process.

5.2 Applications

To be eligible your **application** must:

- be complete and include all the compulsory support material
- be for activity that starts after the published 'activity start date' for this fund
- be submitted by the [published closing time and date of the Fund](#)
- be submitted via SmartyGrants, unless given written permission by Arts Queensland to submit the application in another way
- **not** be auspiced.

If you already receive or are offered multi-year core operational funding from Arts Queensland through a different program that overlaps with the funding period of this Fund, you will need to choose which program to receive funding from as you will not be eligible to receive both.

6. What is the assessment process?

Assessment of applications will follow the process below:

1. Your application will be checked against the Eligibility Criteria at sections 5.1 and 5.2.
2. Eligible applications are assessed against the Evaluation Criteria at section 4.1. Arts Queensland reserves the right to shortlist applications based on any or all the Evaluation Criteria.
3. Arts Queensland reserves the right to undertake due diligence checks on any or all applicants to identify any adverse findings. Information sourced by Arts Queensland in relation to the applicants may be taken into consideration during the assessment process. Arts Queensland may also check the accuracy of any information you provide in the application with other government departments/agencies, as required.
4. Financial information provided by eligible applicants will be reviewed by an Arts Queensland expert financial assessor and their analysis will be shared with external industry Peer Assessors to inform their assessment.
5. A Panel of independent, expert, industry Peer Assessors (the Panel) will assess and score all eligible applications based on the Evaluation Criteria.
 - First Nations applicants have the option to be assessed by a panel with 100% First Nations representation. All other eligible applications will be assessed by a panel with at least 50% First Nations representation in line with Arts Queensland's peer assessment model.
 - As part of assessment, Arts Queensland may also draw on, and share with peer assessors, a summary of any reporting information (including financial) that you have submitted as part of other Arts Queensland funding programs, as well as any information in the public domain.
6. The Panel will meet for moderation and make recommendations for funding for approval by the Delegate, including the funding amount and any special conditions.

7. How to apply

7.1 Submission process and due date

You must view a recorded fund briefing on the Fund to access the application form. This will be provided to you along with a link to the application on or after **Thursday 10 October 2024**. Please request a link to the briefing by emailing organisationsfund@arts.qld.gov.au.

To prepare for your application, you are encouraged to:

- View the [PDF of the Application Form](#), which will be available prior to release of the recorded briefing and application link
- Review the Organisations Fund 2026-2029 Guidelines and the supporting [FAQs](#)
- Review [Creative Together 2020-2030](#) and [Elevate 2042](#)
- Submit any questions to organisationsfund@arts.qld.gov.au.

If Smartygrants doesn't meet your access needs, please contact an Arts Queensland Grants Officer on telephone (07) 3034 4016 or toll-free 1800 175 531 or email organisationsfund@arts.qld.gov.au.

Applications must be submitted by **2pm 20 January 2025**.

7.2 Completing your application

Applicants must address all Eligibility Criteria and Evaluation Criteria in their response. You must answer all the compulsory questions in the application form and attach all the compulsory support material otherwise your application will be ineligible.

We strongly recommend that you initiate a SmartyGrants application to preview the application form and read the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQs) to understand the time and information required to complete the application including:

- strategic plan
- current and historic financial information and budget forecasts, certified as true and accurate and aligned to relevant legislation*
- program information and outcomes of previous activity
- business operations information including governance and management details.

*If you are required under legislation to audit/review/verify your financial statements, you must upload financial statements that comply with your regulator's obligations. If not, you must upload financials that have been signed by your Chair/CEO as being true and correct. If you are successful, Arts Queensland will confirm the assurance level required as part of the financial reporting requirements under your Funding Deed. This will be based on an assessment of your legislative reporting requirements, the amount of funding received, your organisation's stated financial controls and your risk profile (as determined by AQ). This may mean you are required to provide audited financial statements as part of your reporting requirements, regardless of whether you are required to provide audited reports to your regulator, and you should make sure you factor this cost into your budget forecasts.

7.3 Technical support

For support with technical issues related to the online application, please contact an Arts Queensland Grants Officer on telephone (07) 3034 4016 or toll-free 1800 175 531 or email organisationsfund@arts.qld.gov.au.

7.4 Resources and asking questions

In addition to the Frequently Asked Questions, you can find additional resources to support you in making an application at www.arts.qld.gov.au/artsacumen.

If you have questions that are not answered by the existing FAQs, please contact Arts Queensland on telephone (07) 3034 4016 or toll-free 1800 175 531 or email organisationsfund@arts.qld.gov.au. FAQs will be updated weekly with any new questions and answers, shared with all registered applicants and published on our website to ensure everyone has access to the same information.

7.5 Access and Translation Services

If you require interpreter services, you can:

- telephone the Translating and Interpreting Service ([TIS National](#)) on 13 14 50 during business hours
- contact Arts Queensland about speaking with an interpreter.

If you are d/Deaf, have a hearing impairment and/or a speech impairment and need to communicate with someone at Arts Queensland you may wish to use the National Relay Service (NRS). For more information on how to access this service, please visit the NRS webpage <https://www.accesshub.gov.au>

8. Notification date

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by **30 June 2025**.

9. If you receive funding

If your application to the Fund is successful, you will be allocated an Arts Queensland Partnership and Investment Manager who will work with your organisation throughout the life of your funding.

Following notification, your Partnership and Investment Manager will meet with you to discuss:

- the offer of funding including the amount offered and conditions of funding, which will include Key Performance Indicators and reporting requirements
- opportunities for further support to enhance your organisation's business development, including partnerships and collaborations that deliver efficiencies and sustainability.

Reporting requirements have been streamlined but will include annual financial and operational reports, participation in surveys and sharing highlights of your past and future programs.

You may be asked to provide copies of organisational policies at the commencement of your contract.

10. Unsuccessful applications

If your application is unsuccessful, you can request a feedback call.

If you are an organisation that received Organisations Fund 2022-2025 or First Nations Pathways funding and are unsuccessful in your application to the Fund, you may be offered up to six months' funding to transition to new income sources. This option will not be available to organisations that have received transition funding at any time over the 2022-2025 period.

All funding decisions can be reviewed under the *Judicial Review Act 1991*. If an applicant is dissatisfied with the funding decision, a written statement of reasons in relation to the decision can be requested. The request must be made in writing and within 28 days of receiving notification of the decision to investment@arts.qld.gov.au.

Applicants may also apply to the Supreme Court for a review of the decision made on their application.

Under the *Judicial Review Act 1991*, the Supreme Court can only review the decision-making process and not the merits of the application.

Don't forget to complete all outstanding reporting for all Arts Queensland's funding programs by the application closing date, otherwise you will be ineligible and your application will not be assessed.

11. Arts Queensland's discretions

11.1 Requesting permission to submit a late application

Arts Queensland does not have to accept applications or any additional information after the closing time.

Arts Queensland will only consider requests to submit a late application in exceptional circumstances, and we will assess a request on its merits, and in accordance with probity principles.

You must request permission to make a late application no later than 24 hours prior to the closing date and time. The request should include a detailed explanation of the circumstances that prevented you submitting your application on time. Where appropriate, you should provide supporting evidence to justify your claim of exceptional circumstances.

All late application requests must be in writing and submitted to organisationsfund@arts.qld.gov.au.

11.2 Requesting permission for a waiver to other eligibility criteria

Waivers describe when an applicant to a funding program asks us to agree that they do not have to meet one or more of the published eligibility requirements.

You must seek a waiver in writing no later than 5pm Friday, 22 November 2024, clearly indicating which eligibility criteria you do not meet and providing a brief description of your organisation and planned activities.

Arts Queensland will consider how closely the request for a waiver aligns with the objectives of the Fund, and how strongly potential outcomes of the proposal support *Creative Together* and Government priorities.

11.3 Decisions

The decision to either accept or decline a special permissions request is final and is not subject to a review or appeal process. Arts Queensland will advise you of the outcome of your request within 10 business days of receiving the appropriate information and/or support material to support consideration of the request.

11.4 Changes to the Guidelines, grants process and application form

Arts Queensland may make any changes to the Guidelines, grant process and/or application form in its absolute discretion by providing an update via email to all those who have registered to receive the recorded Information session, and to the registered email of those who have started an application in SmartyGrants.

11.5 Other rights

Arts Queensland reserves the right to consider and accept ineligible applications and request additional information from applicants after submission.

Arts Queensland reserves the right to modify the Fund Guidelines, FAQs or application form at any time. You will be notified of any changes via the user email you provided in SmartyGrants when you commenced your application. Updated guidelines will also be published on Arts Queensland website.