



Association of  
Independent  
Museums



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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

# AIM Hallmarks Grants

## GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS, JULY 2018

### 1. Introduction

The AIM Hallmarks Grants will support museums Accredited Museums in England, with grants totalling £55,000 each year for the next four years. The grants are funded through Arts Council England, through AIM's National Portfolio Organisation funding. The grants are in two strands:

**Main grants** of £4,000 to £12,000 will enable museums to implement the key ideas of the AIM Hallmarks. We will support projects that have an impact on museums' ways of working, culture, strategy or business model. These will be open to all Accredited AIM member museums in England.

**Small grants** of £3,000 - £6,000 will support museums to improve their financial sustainability through either cost saving or income generation. These will only be open to Accredited AIM member museums in England in AIM's small museum category (that is, museums with up to 20,000 visitors a year).

The **closing date** for the first round of both strands will be 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018. There will be one further round in each of the years 2019 – 2021.

The guidance notes below are split into two sections, one for each strand and there are separate application forms for the two strands. **Please ensure you complete the correct form.**

For queries about the main grants, please contact Helen Wilkinson, [helenw@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:helenw@aim-museums.co.uk).

For queries about the small grants, please contact Justeen Stone, [justeen@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:justeen@aim-museums.co.uk).

## 2. Guidance for main grants

### Scope

Grants will be available in sums of between £4,000 to £12,000, and we anticipate that the average grant will be £8,000.

These grants will support projects which either:

- **Enable museums to review their organisational health using the AIM Hallmarks and plan or implement future development accordingly**

Or

- **Take forward an area of work relating to one or more of the AIM Hallmarks, with the aim of strengthening the organisation and enabling it to prosper.**

The AIM Hallmarks identify what it is about how successful heritage organisations work that enables them to prosper and thrive. To read more about the AIM Hallmarks, see: <https://www.aim-museums.co.uk/aim-hallmarks/>

Applicants must demonstrate that the work they wish to be funded by an AIM Hallmarks Grant is central to their museum's organisational development, and closely linked to the museum's strategic plan. Museums must be able to show that the work undertaken using the grant could not have taken place without external support.

Where grants are funding implementation of a project or development, the work undertaken should have an impact on museums' ways of working, culture, strategy or business model. To be eligible, museums must be able to demonstrate that the grant will not only enable the museum to take forward a programme of work, but to do it in a way which supports change in the museum at a strategic level.

We are keen to support projects which have the potential to offer helpful lessons to other museums and that are genuinely new for the applicant organisation. This might involve trialling approaches or ways of working which are either wholly new to the museum sector, or new to museums of a particular kind or size.



## Eligibility

To be eligible, organisations will have to be:

- **In England**
- **Members of the Association of Independent Museums (applicants may join at the point of application)**
- **Either Accredited Museums or formally Working Towards Accreditation.**

### Assessment Criteria

The grant committee will judge all applications against the following **five** criteria. Applicants should clearly state and demonstrate how they will meet four of these in the relevant sections in their applications:

1. **Link to AIM Hallmarks:** how well does the project link to the Hallmarks?
2. **Opportunity:** how well is the proposed work linked to the organisation's strategic priorities? Does the application show that the organisation has reviewed its strengths and challenges?
3. **Impact:** how will the work funded change the organisation at a strategic level? Is it clear that it represents a new way of working for that organisation?
4. **Value for money:** is the project realistically costed and does it represent good value for money?

In addition, in reviewing applications, the committee will consider:

5. **Quality and ability to deliver:** how strong is the proposal overall? How well does the application demonstrate that the project is well planned and that the organisation is well placed to deliver it?

### Other sources of funding

- These awards can be used to fund work which is part of a larger project or development, provided the work funded by the Hallmarks grant is recognisably separate and distinct, and that it is clear that the funded work supports organisational development in line with the principles of the AIM Hallmarks. It is unlikely that applications which aim to satisfy the match funding requirement of another funder would meet the criteria for these awards.
- These grants cannot be used to match fund other grants from Arts Council England. However, they could be used to supplement other ACE funded projects and pay for additional elements which would not otherwise be taken forward, in line with the note above.

## Application Process

The closing dates for applications is Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018, 5pm.

Applications must be sent electronically to the AIM Grants and Finance Officer, Justeen Stone  
[justeen@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:justeen@aim-museums.co.uk)

Your application needs to include:

- a completed **application form**
- the **project budget**
- current **museum budget**
- most recent **annual accounts and report**
- a minimum of one hi resolution **image**  
(Where possible, send us an image which tells us something about the work proposed. Otherwise, choose an image which helps the panel understand what your museum is like. AIM may use these images to publicise the funding programme in future.)
- a link to your **museum website** or other **marketing materials**

- Decisions are expected to be made in January 2019. Successful applicants will receive 80% of their grant immediately with the balance being paid on completion of the project.
- Successful applicants will be required to participate in our project evaluation which includes an end of project report and a requirement to provide a short case study for the AIM Bulletin. Full details will be given when an offer of funding is made.
- All projects must be completed and the final 20% claimed within 12 months of the date of the grant.

Advice on any aspect of the main grant scheme can be obtained from Helen Wilkinson, AIM Assistant Director, [helenw@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:helenw@aim-museums.co.uk), 0771 966 7102.

**Museums planning to make an application are *strongly* advised to discuss their proposals with Helen before preparing a detailed application.**

## FAQs

### *What costs are eligible for support under the AIM Hallmarks Grants?*

If you have any queries about what kinds of projects the Hallmarks Grants will support and what costs are eligible, please contact Helen Wilkinson for advice. Where the application is for a project, it must aim to develop ideas and implement new ways of working. Projects which simply involve buying new equipment or materials are not eligible for a main grant (but may be eligible for a small grant – see the separate application materials for the small grants programme). For ideas about the kinds of work we can fund, see case studies on the AIM website.

### *Can my museum apply for a grant towards core costs or staff posts?*

The Hallmarks Grants support organisational development using the principles in the AIM Hallmarks. We recognise that sometimes the best way to implement a new way of working is to employ a new member of staff, or reallocate existing staff time, and will consider supporting staffing costs in these

circumstances. However, you must be able to demonstrate that the post is for a finite time and is focused on delivering your stated outcomes. The funding cannot be used to support 'business as usual'.

***Can a museum that is not Accredited apply for a grant?***

Museums must either be Accredited or formally Working Towards Accreditation.

***Can two or more museums apply for a grant together?***

Joint applications from two or more museums are welcomed, but both or all must be AIM Members, open to the public and either Accredited or formally Working Towards Accreditation.

***Are there any restrictions on the size of museums that can apply?***

No, all museums that meet our other criteria can apply, although we will look at museums' capacity to deliver the project (do they have the necessary capacity?) and the difference the award will make to that museum (is their turnover so large that our award will have a relatively minor impact?).

***I am a Local Authority Museum; can I still apply for an AIM Hallmarks grant?***

Yes, all AIM members which meet the other eligibility criteria can apply. However, the awards are designed to fund projects closely linked to the AIM Hallmarks and ways of working that characterise 'independent spirited' organisations, whatever their governance structure.

***Why are the awards only open to museums in England?***

This is a requirement of our funding for this programme, which is from Arts Council England.

***What percentage of my total project cost will you fund?***

There is no set requirement for a contribution from the applicant museum and we will fund up to 100% of project costs in principle. However, we will take value for money into account when assessing applications and the grants committee will look favourably on applications where the museum has taken steps to raise some match funding or commit some of its own resources.

***How long do we have to spend the award?***

All funding must be spent within 12 months of the award and we will look for a realistic timetable in assessing applications.

***How will funding be distributed between the main grants and small grants?***

***How many of each will be made in each round?***

There is no fixed split between the two strands. The committee will assess applications on their merit each year.

## 3. Guidance for small grants

### Scope

Awards will be available in sums of between £3000 to £6000.

- The AIM Hallmarks small grants are intended to help smaller museums improve their financial sustainability by developing their 'profitability', either by reducing expenditure or increasing income.

Examples of the type of project that AIM would be keen to fund are given below:

- Professional support relating to income generation, for example: marketing, fundraising retail, catering or audience development
- Equipment, training or other enabling works to help improve the museum's income generation potential
- Equipment, training or other enabling works to help reduce the museum's costs
- Development of new business partnerships
- Other projects to save costs or increase income, according to a museum's particular circumstances and context

AIM is keen to fund projects with an element of risk those which trial new approaches, but those projects must demonstrate that they have been well planned and thought through.

Funded projects can be part of a larger development or project, but an AIM Hallmarks small grant cannot be used to match fund another funders' support.

Although we are happy to support proposals associated with developing fundraising capacity, the grants cannot be used to pay for a fundraiser to prepare a specific funding bid (such as an HLF application).

**Museums planning to make an application are *strongly* advised to discuss their proposals with Justeen before preparing a detailed application.** Justeen Stone, AIM Grants and Finance Officer, [justeen@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:justeen@aim-museums.co.uk), 01584 878151.

### Eligibility

To be eligible, organisations will have to be:

- **In England**
- **Members of the Association of Independent Museums (applicants may join at the point of application)**
- **Either Accredited Museums or formally Working Towards Accreditation.**
- **Fall into AIM's small museum membership category, that is having up to 20,000 visitors a year.**

## Application Process

The closing dates for applications is Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018, 5pm.

### Assessment Criteria

The grant committee will judge all applications against **five** criteria. Applicants should clearly state and demonstrate how they will meet the first four criteria under the relevant headings in their application form:

- 1. Need:** does the application demonstrate need and that the proposal is a priority within the organisation's forward plan?
- 2. Impact:** what impact will the proposed work have on the organisation's sustainability? Are projected cost-savings or generated income realistically quantified?
- 3. Value for money:** is the project realistically costed and does it represent good value for money?
- 4. Innovation:** does the project display an innovative or entrepreneurial approach, or other characteristics which mark it out?

In addition, the committee will score all applications against this overall question:

- 5. Quality and ability to deliver:** how strong is the overall quality of the proposal? Does the application demonstrate the museum's ability to plan and deliver a successful project?

**Applications must be sent electronically to the AIM Grants and Finance Officer, Justeen Stone**  
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- a link to your **museum website** or other **marketing materials**

- Decisions are expected to be made in January 2019. Successful applicants will receive 80% of their grant immediately with the balance being paid on completion of the project.
- Successful applicants will be required to participate in our project evaluation which includes an end of project report and a requirement to provide a short case study for the AIM Bulletin. Full details will be given when an offer of funding is made.
- All projects must be completed and the final 20% claimed within 12 months of the date of the grant.

Advice on any aspect of the small grants can be obtained from Justeen Stone, AIM Grants and Finance Officer, [justeen@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:justeen@aim-museums.co.uk), 01584 878151.

## FAQs

### **Will the grant funding pay for building works?**

We will fund small building projects associated with cost-saving or income-generation (for example, improving catering facilities or refurbishing a shop). We will not fund major renovations or remedial work.

### **Can I apply for a grant for new equipment such as IT equipment or lighting?**

We will fund new equipment, if you can demonstrate that it is central to the work you want to undertake and if the associated cost savings or potential income generation are clearly quantified. We will not fund a general upgrade of equipment. For ideas about the kinds of work we can fund, see case studies on the AIM website.

### **Can a museum that is not Accredited apply for a grant?**

Applicants must either be Accredited or formally Working Towards Accreditation. Applicants working towards Accreditation will normally be expected to be on track to complete the process within two years.

### **I am setting up a museum that is not yet open to the public. Can I apply for a grant?**

Grants will not normally be given to museums that are not open to the public.

### **My museum is in AIM's Small Museum membership category. But we are part of a parent organisation that is larger. Are we still eligible to apply?**

Usually, a museum that is eligible as a stand-alone organisation can still apply even if it is part of a larger body. We will assess particular circumstances on a case-by-case basis, so please contact us if you are unsure of your eligibility, before preparing your application.

### **I am a Local Authority Museum; can I still apply for an AIM Hallmarks small grant?**

Yes, all AIM small museum members which meet the other eligibility criteria can apply.

### **Why are the awards only open to museums in England?**

This is a requirement of our funding for this programme, which is from Arts Council England.

### **What percentage of my total project cost will you fund?**

There is no set requirement for a contribution from the applicant museum and we will fund up to 100% of project costs in principle. However, we will take value for money into account when assessing applications and the grants committee will look favourably on applications where the museum has taken steps to raise some match funding or commit some of its own resources.

### **How long do we have to spend the award?**

All funding must be spent within 12 months of the award and we will look for a realistic timetable in assessing applications.

### **How will funding be distributed between the main grants and small grants? How many of each will be made in each round?**

There is no fixed split between the two strands. The committee will assess applications on their merit each year.