

## **McAllen Grant Program – individuals and organizations**

### **Guidance notes**

#### **Welcome**

Thank you for your interest in McAllen Arts Grants. McAllen Arts Grants is our funding program for arts activities that benefit people in McAllen, or that help artists and arts organizations from McAllen to carry out their work.

The McAllen Chamber of Commerce and Texas Commission on the Arts fund McAllen Arts Grants.

We use McAllen Arts Grants to help us achieve our five ambitions for the arts.

These are:

- Supporting the artist
- Enabling organizations to thrive, not just survive
- Championing cultural diversity
- Offering opportunities for young people. Encouraging growth.

By ‘cultural diversity’ we mean the full range and diversity of the culture of this country. In some cases our focus will be on race and ethnic background and in others on disability. By ‘encouraging growth’ we mean finding ways for more people to access the arts and creating new opportunities for artist and arts organizations to work in different settings.

This pack should contain everything you need to know about how to apply, so please read the materials carefully before you start. We have highlighted some points here to help you fill in the application form, write your proposal and make you application eligible to be assessed.

The application pack includes:

1. These guidance notes, which include help with your budget and writing your proposal
2. An application form

McAllen Arts Grants is an annual program.

You can apply using this application pack for **2008 grant cycle**. Before sending us your application, please check you have the latest version of our application materials.

#### **Before you begin**

- Please read the guidance notes carefully before you write your proposal or fill in the form. They will tell you who can apply (page 6), what you can apply for (page 7) and how to make your application eligible (page 8).
- If you have questions that the application materials do not answer, or if you need advice about your application or the activity you are applying for, we strongly advise you to speak to us before you apply. Please read the application materials and be ready to describe your activity clearly to us. This will help us give you good advice and will save time. You can phone our enquiry team on 956-687-2787
- We want to make our funding go further and you should make the most of other sources of income where they are available to you. We expect you to have at least 10% of the total cost of your activity from other income sources.

### **Making your application eligible to be assessed**

We cannot assess applications that are not eligible. You can help avoid this by doing the following.

- Fill in all relevant parts of the application form. There are parts that everyone must fill in. These are listed at the beginning of each section and clearly marked with this arrow symbol [.
- Fill in the budget section of the form, giving as much information as possible so we can see how you have reached your subtotals and totals.
- Make sure your budget balances. In section F of the application form, the total income should be the same as the total expenditure
- Include your written proposal and follow the six headings we give, numbering each heading. See the ‘writing your proposal’ section of these guidance notes.
- Send us a resume if you are applying as an individual.
- Enclose everything we ask for –see the checklist in section G of the application form.

### **And finally**

There is a high demand for our grants and we cannot fund all the eligible applications we receive. As a result, we advise you to think about what you would do if we cannot fund your activity.

### **We wish you success with your application.**

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## Introduction

Welcome to **McAllen Arts Grants 2008** - individuals and organizations. Please take time to apply for a grant, and answer some common questions.

## How to apply

You need to write a proposal about the activity you want us to support. This is a very important part of your application. The 'Writing your proposal' section of these guidance notes gives detailed instructions that you should follow carefully.

Also, you need to fill in an application form. This gives us information about you, what you are applying for and your budget. The form also gives us important information which we must include in reports to our board and which we use for monitoring our grants.

Depending on the type of activity you want us to support, you may also need to include extra information. These guidance notes explain what we need. We will assess your application using the form, your written proposal and any other information we ask you to send.

Send your complete application to the Grants Management Unit at The McAllen Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 790, 1200 Ash Ave. McAllen TX, 78505.

## Getting advice

Our enquiry team provides general information about making an application. If you need advice about your application or the activity you are applying for, we strongly recommend that you get advice. To contact us:

- Phone 956 687-2787
- Email [rperera@mcallencvb.com](mailto:rperera@mcallencvb.com)

Before contacting us, please read the application materials and be ready to describe your activity clearly to us. This will help us to give you good advice and will save time.

## Other income for you activity

We want to make our funding go further and you should make the most of other sources of funding if they are available to you. We expect you to find at least 10% of the total cost of your activity from other income sources. This can include:

- Earned income from your activity
- Funding from public organizations
- Grants from trusts and foundations, and
- A contribution from you or your organization.

## Eligibility

### **Who can apply**

Our grants are for individuals, arts organizations and other people who use the arts in their work. They are for time-limited activities that benefit people in McAllen or that help artists and arts organizations in McAllen to carry out their work. Your activity must take place in McAllen between May 08 – February 09

### **Grants to individuals**

Grants for – individuals are available to:

- Artists
- Performers
- Writers
- Promoters
- Presenters
- Curators
- Producers
- Groups of individuals (one of the individuals involved will need to take the lead and have the main responsibility for managing the application and any grants),
- Other individuals working in the arts.

Grants to individuals normally range from \$200 up to \$1,000.

### **Grants to organizations**

Grants for - organizations are available to:

- Arts organizations
- Public organizations

By organization we mean a single group of people working towards a shared or common goal. This can take many forms, for example, a limited company, a charity or an unincorporated group. If you are applying to Grants for the arts as an organization, you should have a bank account with two people who can sign in the organization's name.

Grants to organizations normally range from \$200 up to \$1,000.

## **Applications we ask for**

We may occasionally ask for specific applications to help us achieve our ambitions for the arts. However, we will assess these applications in the same way as any other.

## **Who cannot apply**

The following individuals or organizations cannot apply to Grants for the arts. If you fall into one of these categories, your application will not be eligible to be assessed.

- Deficit budgets, purchases of major equipment, fundraising events, and administrative expenses not related to the specific project for which funds are requested.
- Students, for activities related to their course of study or their tuition fees (by student we mean a person following a course of study in a school, a college or a university).
- Projects serving only the organization's members and/or exclude the public's participation
- Individuals or organizations based (living) outside the region.

## **What you can apply for**

### **The types of activity we fund**

We have designed McAllen Arts Grants to encourage you to develop your ideas, linked to your artistic needs and future plans. It aims to be flexible and to encourage new ideas. We support activities that benefit people in McAllen or that help artists and arts organizations in McAllen to carry out their work.

You can apply for grants for time-limited arts-related activities, such as the following.

- Projects and events
- Commissions and productions
- Research and development
- Activities for people to take part in
- Education activities
- Buying assets such as equipment, and instruments.
- Public art
- Marketing activities
- Audience development (activity carried out specifically to meet the needs of audience and to help arts organizations develop ongoing relationships with audiences)
- Organizational development to improve the long-term stability of arts organizations
- Residencies

## **What you cannot apply for**

**You cannot apply for the following activities.**

- Activities that are not arts-related
- Activities that provide no potential benefits to the public, either in the short or long term

- Activities, including buying goods or services, which take place or start before we would be able to decide on your application
- Costs that are already covered by other funding
- General running costs and overheads that are paid for by other income, including your own funds
- Ongoing overheads related to equipment or buildings, such as insurance and maintenance costs
- Fundraising events, such as charity galas, that do not benefit the arts
- Second-hand equipment (apart from certain musical instruments and specialist equipment)
- Activities or events taking place outside McAllen
- Activities that do not benefit people in McAllen or that do not help artists and arts organizations in McAllen to carry out their work
- Buying equipment and instruments which do not provide public benefit, either immediately or in the longer term, or where the person applying does not have an artistic track record
- Self-promotional activities which do not provide public benefit, either immediately or in the longer term, or where the person applying does not have an artistic track record

### **Deadline for application**

The deadline for the application is **Friday, March 21, 2008, 12noon.**

You can apply using this application pack after **14th of December 2007**. Before sending us your application, please check you have the latest version of our application materials. You can do this by calling our enquiry team 956-687-2787

Remember that we do not fund goods or services that you have already bought or ordered, or activities that have already taken place. We may not be able to assess your application if we do not have enough time to make a decision before your activity starts. Also, there is a high demand for our grants and we cannot fund all the eligible applications we receive. As a result, we advise you to think about what you would do if we cannot fund your activity.

### **How to make your application eligible**

An application to McAllen Arts Grants must include a number of items to be eligible to be assessed, including a written proposal and a filled-in application form. You must use the application form we provide in this pack. The application form is also available by calling 956-687-2787.

### **To be eligible to be assessed, your application must include:**

- A signed and dated application form with all the questions listed at the start of each section of the application form and this arrow symbol [and any other relevant questions filled in
- A filled-in summary budget in section F of the application form (you may also include a more detailed budget on a separate sheet if necessary)

- A balanced budget (that is, your income and expenditure must be the same, including how much you are asking for from us)
- A written proposal following the headings we ask for in the guidance notes (you must use these headings or your application will not be eligible to be assessed)
- A resume (if you are applying as an individual)

If your application does not contain the necessary information in the format we ask for, it will not be eligible to be assessed. Also, we will not be able to process your application if it does not contain enough information to assess it.

### **Sending us your application**

These guidance notes should help you provide all the information we need to assess your application (see the 'Eligibility' section for details of what your application must include).

We want to assess your application knowing about your work and recognizing your future potential. There are a number of ways we can do this, including:

- From the information you give us in your application
- Seeing or experiencing your work at the time it is produced, and
- Seeing evidence of your work if you asked us for advice before applying.

We hope you understand that it is not always possible to see or experience your work first-hand. As a result you may want to include some supporting evidence with your application. Please do not send originals, as we will not return them to you. Your supporting evidence should fit into a standard sized envelope. Some examples include:

- An evaluation of your work
- Views on the quality of your work by other people, such as audiences, people taking part, readers, criteria or other artists
- Links to other sources of information about your work, such as a website
- A small sample of or images of your previous work or work in progress, and
- Other evidence of your past work.

Please send your application to the **Grants Management Unit at The McAllen Chamber of Commerce PO Box 790, 1200 Ash Ave., McAllen TX, 78505**. Make sure you have signed the declaration at the end of the application form, and check you have sent everything we ask for. If we need more information, we will contact you and ask for it. We cannot accept faxed or emailed application forms, or applications on disk.

Keep a copy of these guidance notes and of your application for your own records.

Please tell us immediately if anything changes while we are assessing your application.

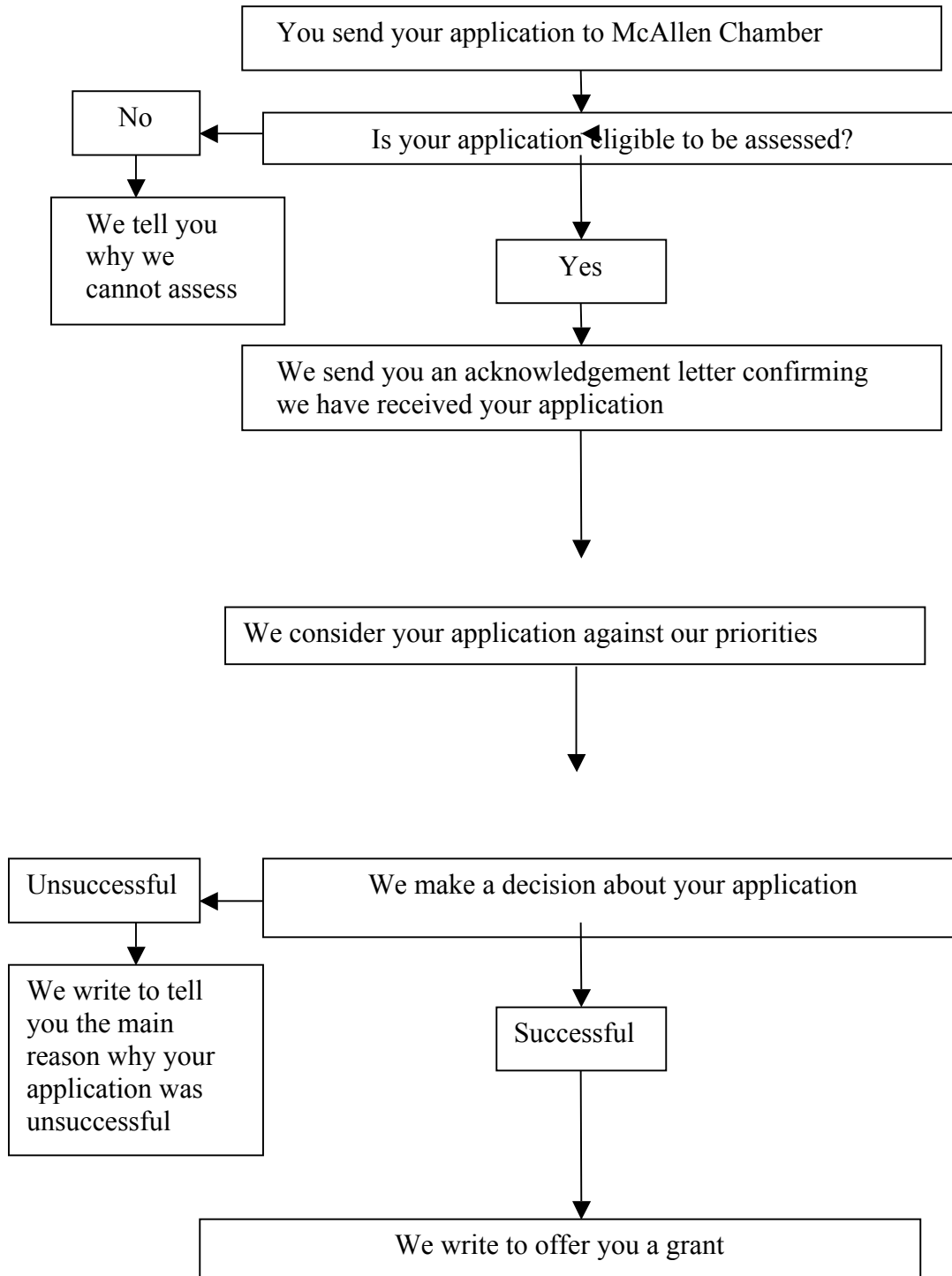
**What happens next**

We may contact you by phone, email or letter, so please make sure your contact details are correct and that we are able to contact you easily. If you are an organization, please make sure that the person you give as the main contact is easy to contact and has a full understanding of the application.

We may contact you for more information during the assessment. This might include asking for a copy of your business plan, examples of your work, your most recent account or quotes for goods or services. Please do not take this an indication of the outcome of your application. We will usually give you two weeks to provide any extra information. If you take longer than this, or miss any other deadlines we give you, the decision on your application could be delayed.

## What happens to your application?

This diagram shows what happens to your application.



## **How we assess your application**

We have designed our grants in a way that allows us to make fair and unbiased decisions. We will assess your application form and any other information we ask you to send.

We assess and score each eligible application against our five assessment criteria, which are:

- The artistic quality of the activity or its ongoing effect on your artistic practice (or both)
- How the activity will be managed and its ongoing effect
- How practical the activity is financially, and its future effect
- How the public will benefit from the activity, immediately or in the longer term, and
- The contribution of the activity to meeting our ambitions (these are listed in the 'welcome' section on page 1).

How well your activity meets the assessment criteria is one of the important things we consider.

### **Priorities**

There is a high demand for our grants. We have to make difficult choices about which applications to support. Our priorities are one of the tools, which help us do this.

We will look at whether your application:

- Is from an individual or organization that has not received funding from us before
- We will benefit areas of the McAllen with social deprivation (social and economic problems) or communities at risk of social exclusion (not being able to take part fully in society because of, for example, poverty, prejudice or isolation)
- Will benefit areas of the community that have limited cultural opportunities, and
- Will contribute to arts development, in McAllen.

Although we consider each application against our priorities, these are not a checklist for you to follow. We will fund activities that do not meet our priorities.

### **How we make a decision**

At our decision meetings we want to fund a balanced range of applications. We do this by considering how well applications have met the assessment criteria and our priorities.

### **When we will reach a decision**

If you provide all the information we have asked for, we will reach a decision by end of **May 2008**.

We will let you know as soon as possible if your application is not eligible to be assessed.

## **What happens if you are offered a grant**

You will receive a letter explaining any special conditions and how we will pay the grant. We will normally invite you to attend a small photo shoot where you will be issued a check. We will also explain how you should acknowledge funding from us and from the Texas Commission on the Arts. We will also at times request a progress report in person or via letter.

If you receive a grant offer but no longer want to accept it, please let us know in writing.

## **What happens if your application is unsuccessful**

We will write to you explaining the main reason why your application was unsuccessful and tell you whom to contact if you would like more detailed feedback. We encourage you to reapply for the next round of grants. Before you do so, we strongly recommend that you get advice and more detailed feedback on why your application was unsuccessful.

## **Writing your proposal**

Our experience with Grants has shown that people who apply prefer to write a proposal rather than answer a lot of detailed questions. So, we are asking you to write a proposal about the activity you want us to support. This is a very important part of the application process. We will use it with the application form when we assess your application.

The amount of information you provide in your proposal depends on how complicated your proposed activity is and how much money you are applying for. Your proposal, not including headings and any extra information, should preferably be no more than:

- **400 words**

The six headings below tell you the information we need. Please use the headings in the order they appear below when writing your proposal and number each heading. If you do not follow this guidance, your application will not be eligible to be assessed. Not all the details under each heading will be relevant to every application. If appropriate, you can put more emphasis on some than others, and add further points of your own.

### **1. You and your work**

You must describe, for this activity:

- What you want to do (if you have not been able to give a full description in question 17 of the application form)
- The idea behind the activity, and how you plan to do the activity

- What you want to achieve through the activity, how it fits in with your current work and its future development, and
- Why it is important to you or your organization

Please also describe, where relevant:

- The names, skills and experience of artists and the other main people involved
- What you will do to achieve high quality work through this activity - or how the activity will help in developing the quality of your work in the future, and
- How you will involve other artists or skills

If you are applying as an individual, you must include a resume with you application. This will help us to learn more about what you have done in the past. If you are applying as an organization, please include a resume or information about the main people involved in the activity.

## **2. Making it happen**

You must describe, for this activity:

- Any plans you have already made, and
- How you will manage and carry out the activity and what each stage contains and
- The long – term effect of this activity on how you will manage your work.

Please also describe, where relevant:

- Evidence of support from any partners for your work, including funders
- Your past experience of successful managing similar activities
- How you will manage the main stages of the activity and what each stage contains, and
- The long-term effect of this activity on how you will manage your work.

## **3. Your budget**

In many cases, the budget section of the application form will give us the information we need to carry out our financial assessment.

Please describe, where relevant:

- How the budget is suited to the activity you are planning, including details of major items of expenditure
- How your activity represents good value for money
- Your approach to raising as much money as you can from other sources for this activity
- Any effect the activity will have on your long-term financial position
- The financial control system you have in place to make sure you spend the money wisely, and
- What your special circumstances are if you are applying to us for the total cost of your activity.

#### **4. Benefit to you and the public**

You must describe, for this activity:

- The benefit it will bring to you or your organization, and
- How the public will benefit from the activity, or your work in general. Either immediately or in the longer term.

Please describe, where relevant:

- Details about the people the activity will reach (including those who may not normally be reached by the arts) – for example, the audiences or the people taking part
- How you will reach them, including marketing activity, and
- Any evidence you have that there is demand for the activity or your work in general.

#### **5. Meeting our ambitions for the arts**

Our five ambitions for the arts are:

- ‘Supporting the artist
- Enabling organization to thrive, not just survive
- Championing cultural diversity
- Offering opportunities for young people, and
- Encouraging growth.’

By ‘cultural diversity’ we mean the full range and diversity of the culture of this city. In some cases our focus will be on race and ethnic background and in others on disability. By ‘encouraging growth’ we mean finding ways for more people to access the arts and creating new opportunities for artists and arts organizations to work in different settings.

You must describe, for this activity:

- Which of our ambitions it will meet, and
- How you think it will do so.

You need to meet only one ambition well. You will not increase your chances of success by trying to meet more than one.

#### **6. Evaluation**

You must describe, for this activity:

- How you propose to evaluate it.

Evaluation is a structured way of thinking about what happened during your activity and why.

Evaluation can help you to:

- Take decisions during the activities
- Shape future activities

- Improve practice, and
- Show what happened as a result of the activity.

If we give you a grant, we will ask you to evaluate your work. We will also ask you to fill in an activity report form. Your evaluation will help you with this.

### **Extra information to include**

We need extra information for certain activities (see the sections below).

### **Application for organizational development**

You must:

- Describe your current financial position and send us your latest set of audited accounts and management accounts (if you produce them)
- Describe how you currently manage your work, and include your business plan (if you have one)
- Describe what you are planning to improve in your organization and why
- Describe the steps you plan to take to develop your organization
- Describe how your board or management committee is showing its commitment to the activity, and
- Give a clear outline of the work, including details of any plan or consultancy brief.

### **Application for buying equipment and instruments**

You should get competitive quotes from more than one business or supplier. While we do not ask you to send quotes with your application, we may ask for them at a later stage so please keep them safe.

You must, for this activity:

- Explain how it is the appropriate purchase for your needs
- Explain how we will achieve good value for money, including what process you followed to choose a business or supplier, and

### **Application for marketing and audience development activity**

You must:

- Include a marketing or audience development plan.

### **Filling in the budget**

Before you fill in the budget in the application form you should read this guidance carefully. You must fill in the budget section; otherwise your application will not be eligible to be assessed. Only fill in those sections that are relevant to your application. The budget should be for the total cost of the activity you are applying to do.

## **Income for activity**

You should break down the income for your activity under the headings provided in the application form. Where relevant, tick one box to show whether you are expecting this income or whether it has been confirmed. We want our money to go further and should make the most of other sources for funding if they are available to you. We expect you to have at least 10% of the total cost of the activity from other sources.

### **Earned income**

Include any income you earn from this activity – for example, from ticket sales, workshop fees or selling publications. You should be realistic about the level of income you are likely to earn for your activity.

Please provide a breakdown to show us how you have reached your figures. For example, four performances at a venue with 600 seats and a 70% full audience is four times 420 tickets at \$6 = \$10,080.

### **City funding**

Include all grants from city authorities. Please give us the name of each funder and the amount.

### **Other public funding**

Include grants from any other public organization. Please give us the name of each funder and the amount.

### **Private income**

Include any income from private sources – for example, from you or your organization, or donations or grants from trusts and foundations. If you are an individual and you are providing some income towards the activity, please include it in this section. If your organization is providing income towards the activity, please include it in this section. Please give us the details and the amounts.

### **Support in kind**

Support in kind can make a valuable contribution to your activity. You can include support in kind from volunteers who have given their time for free and other goods and services given to you that you would otherwise have to pay for. Please estimate the costs and give us the details and amounts. For example, 'Hiring a hall for eight days at \$100 a day = \$800'

This total should be the same as the total value of support in kind in your expenditure budget.

### **Amount you are applying for from us**

Include the amount you are asking for from us in the income section of your budget.

Remember, we expect you to find at least 10% of the total cost of your activity from other income sources.

## **Expenditure for your activity**

Give details of all the items you will be paying for as part of your activity, under the headings given in the application form. Use the form to provide a breakdown showing us how you have reached your figures.

### **Artistic expenditure**

We are committed to making sure that artists are paid appropriately for activities we support. The amount is likely to depend on a number of things, including the experience and skills of the artist, the type of work and the length of the contract.

Show the fees and wages of, for example, actors, musicians, dancers, visual artists, stage designers, directors, producers, composers, writers, choreographers, stage managers, lighting designers, curators and workshop leaders.

Show the costs of projects, events, commissions, research and development, preparation, productions and residencies, including any materials or equipment you hire to carry out these things.

We are committed to making sure that the work we fund is accessible. As a result, we encourage you to include access costs as part of your artistic expenditure. Access costs include for example, cost of signed performances, materials in other formats such as Braille or audio CD, and technical support for artists who have disabilities.

You can include the cost of evaluation. (Evaluation is explained in the ‘Writing your proposal’ section (page13) of these guidance notes.)

### **Organization and professional development**

Show the costs of organizational development activity, including business planning, artistic development, relocation, feasibility studies (studies to test the potential of a business plan), support from consultants and dealing with debts.

Show the costs of training, travel or other professional development such as bursaries and fellowships.

### **Marketing and audience development**

Include marketing and audience development costs that are a direct result of your activity (for example, design and print costs, direct mailing, website design, photography, research, and fees to people supporting press and marketing activity).

### **Overheads**

There are some overheads or running costs that we do not fund – see the ‘What you cannot apply for’ section of these guidance notes.

You can apply for extra time-limited overhead costs that are directly related to the activity you are asking us to support. For example, payments to staff, phone bills, postage and insurance. You can apply for a contribution to your ongoing overheads where these are not covered by other funding. The amount you apply for must relate directly to the amount of time spent on the activity you are asking us to support, so please explain how you are asking us to support, so please explain how you have worked this out.

**Assets-equipment and instruments**

Include the costs of buying assets including equipment and instruments. You should normally get competitive quotes from more than one business or supplier. While we do not ask you to send quotes with application, we may ask for them at a later stage so please keep them safe.

**Value of support in kind**

This should total the same as support in kind in the income section of your budget.

**Other expenditure**

Include any other expenditure for your activity that is not included elsewhere. This can include an amount for unexpected costs (contingency).

**Total income and expenditure**

Your total income and total expenditure must be the same. If they are not, we will not be able to assess your application. So please check that your figures match and confirm this in the checklist at the end of the form. You may want to get someone else to check your figures for you.