

Oral History Funding

Oral history has many strengths especially in not necessarily fitting in any particular organisational niche. It can be used in a variety of settings – academic, non-academic, community, institutions, schools, life long learning, funded project, volunteer projects etc. Unfortunately its strength is also its weakness when it comes to looking for funding. Apart from the Heritage Lottery Fund (below) there is very little that can be applied for directly as an oral history project in its own right. This is not to say there is no chance of getting funding, more about how to approach funders. It might be better to approach funders with oral history as an integral part of a wider project rather than a straight scheme in its own right.

Heritage Lottery Fund

The main funder in the UK for oral history projects, it has resulted in a positive explosion in community history projects within the UK. Whilst it is more famous for funding large museums and institutions, most of its grants are for local or small national revenue projects. They have published guidance notes for oral history projects – the rather long link is:

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F6B05389-9FF5-4565-800A-73439A7ABFDF/3901/OralHistoryProjectsAugust2006.doc>

or else look on their website under 'Guidance Notes'. Most of their documents are also in Welsh.

They have three funding schemes that you can apply to:

Awards for All (administered by the Big Lottery Fund)

Eligible Organisations: Voluntary and not for profit organisations – public bodies are not eligible in general, but schools, health bodies and parish councils can put bids in.

Maximum Amount: £10,000 for up to 2 years, it is possible to apply for, say, two separate amounts of £5,000 each year.

Details: This fund is targeted at smaller community organisations wanting to get funding for small scale or pilot projects. You can purchase equipment, employ a project co-ordinator, pay for exhibitions etc. The project must however be self-contained and not have any ongoing commitments. Organisations must have a constitution and bank account. New organisations can apply, they will need to supply a first year organisational budget in lieu of audited accounts. Applications can be turned round in eight weeks. Please note 50% of applications are returned because they are incomplete or contain errors.

Contact: *Awards for All* Application forms can be downloaded from their Website www.awardsforall.org.uk

Young Roots

Eligible Organisations: Youth organisations should be the lead body.

Amount Available: Funding between £5,000 and £25,000.

Details: A fund for organisations working with young people aged 13 to 20 (or up to 25 for young people with special needs). Only one application at a time is allowed per organisation. A partnership with at least one heritage organisation is normally required. Young people should have a clear role in steering the project. Oral history projects have been funded and they clearly help in widening participation and increase involvement in recording and understanding the heritage that are requirements of this scheme.

Contact: HLF Home Country or Regional Office – see below under Heritage Grants
Website www.hlf.org.uk

Your Heritage

Eligible Organisations: Any not for profit organisation, including public bodies

Amount Available: Funding from £5,000 up to £50,000 grant for projects.

Details: Many oral history projects are funded through 'Your Heritage'. This is a relatively simple application process. You start by completing a two page pre-application advice form which normally gains you an interview at one of HLF's regional or national offices (sometimes they will write to you with their comments). This is a very useful in giving you feedback on your project proposal. If they consider your application a 'no hoper' they will tell you at this stage.

You will need to consider the following:

- Community involvement – how can you engage with the community you are working with.
- Creating opportunities for volunteering and training.
- What will happen to the information and resources you are creating or conserving. You may need to talk to a public archive or similar organisation if you do not yourselves have the facilities to keep this information.
- What 'in kind' contributions you and/or partner organisations will make to the project – for instance volunteer time.

Projects can last up to five years, although most tend to take place within a year to eighteen months. They will make a decision on your application

normally within three months of you applying. For these grants they normally pay up to 50% of the grant at the commencement of the project. They retain 10% until they receive your end of project report.

Contact: HLF Home Country or Regional Office – see below under Heritage Grants

Website www.hlf.org.uk

Heritage Grants

Eligible Organisations: Any not for profit organisation, including public bodies

Maximum Amount: Over £50,000 – there is no notional upper limit.

Details: This fund is for larger projects that have larger impacts. You will need to spend a lot more time in preparing these types of bids. There is also a requirement to contribute your own resources, cash and ‘in kind’, to any successful project. Assessment is more rigorous and you will be expected to already have or be able to develop a range of strategic documents to support the application. These can include educational, training, audience development, conservation (if part of a wider project) or volunteer policies. They have published a number of advisory booklets that can help you in developing these documents including one the on oral history mentioned above.

The application process is almost the same as ‘Your Heritage’ with an even bigger reason to talk to them before undertaking any major piece of work in support of your application. However decisions are made by regional or national HLF trustees every three or six months depending on the size of the bid. For projects applying for up to £1 million you will need to provide 10% match funding, at least 5% of this must be cash.

For projects over £1 million you will require match funding of 25%, again at least 5% of which must be cash. Also, all projects over £1 million must go through a two stage application process (with no guarantee that the eventual project will be funded). Larger applications are dealt with on a competitive basis as there is insufficient funding to support all eligible applications at this level. It is possible for more complex projects to get a project planning grant of up to £50,000 to be able to get your proposal more fully worked up for a larger application to them.

You will need to show a reasonable amount of support from outside your organisation and the outputs must be measurable and sustainable. Generally you will need to work with one or more partners either from the archives and museums sector or with community organisations, depending on which type of organisation you are.

Contact: Home country or regional office as below. Most of their application forms are not downloadable from the web (some are as PDFs only). You will

need a CD ROM which you can get from them on their Helpline on 020 7591 6042/3/4/5. You can also get help with individual queries around the application process on these numbers.

Other HLF Funds

Heritage Lottery Fund do administer other more targeted funds, these include funding for parks, landscape and townscape initiatives. There is no reason why one of these, mainly capital, projects could not include a smaller oral history component to help interpret the history of the location for instance. For details of these schemes go to their website.

Head Office (also for enquiries re UK

wide projects)

7 Holbein Place

London

SW1W 8NR

www.hlf.org.uk

Phone: 020 7591 6000

Fax: 020 7591 6001

North West

9th Floor

82 King Street

Manchester

M2 4WQ

Phone: 0161 831 0850

Fax: 0161 831 0851

East of England

Terrington House

13-15 Hills Road

Cambridge

CB2 1NL

Phone: 01223 224870

Fax: 01223 224871

Northern Ireland

51-53 Adelaide Street

Belfast

BT2 8FE

Phone: 028 9031 0120

Fax: 028 9031 0121

East Midlands

Chiltern House

St Nicholas Court

25-27 Castle Gate

Nottingham

NG1 7AR

Phone: 0115 934 9050

Fax: 0115 934 9051

Scotland

28 Thistle Street

Edinburgh

EH2 1EN

Phone: 0131 225 9450

Fax: 0131 225 9454

London Team

7 Holbein Place

London

SW1W 8NR

Phone: 020 7591 6000

Fax: 020 7591 6001

South East England

7 Holbein Place

London

SW1W 8NR

Phone: 020 7591 6000

Fax: 020 7591 6001

South West

Trinity Court

Southernhay East

Exeter

EX1 1PG

Phone: 01392 223950

Fax: 01392 223951

North East

St Nicholas Building

St Nicholas Street

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE1 1RF

Phone: 0191 255 7570

Fax: 0191 255 7571

Wales

Suite 5A
Hodge House
Guildhall Place
St Mary's Street
Cardiff
CF10 1DY
Phone: 029 2034 3413
Fax: 029 2034 3427

West Midlands

Bank House
8 Cherry Street Birmingham
B2 5AL
Phone: 0121 616 6870
Fax: 0121 616 6871

Yorkshire and the Humber

Carlton Tower
34 St Paul's Street
Leeds
LS1 2QB
Phone: 0113 388 8030
Fax: 0113 388 8031

Changes from April 2008

Partially because of reduced income, due to a additional £90 million diverted to the 2012 Olympics, there will be changes to HLF's grants programme. They say the application processes will be simpler and will extra help in applying for funds.

Also :

- They will introduce full cost recovery for voluntary organisations. This will help with core and management costs.
- All Heritage Grant applications will go through a two-stage application period but will be simpler and quicker
- The threshold for Your Heritage and Young Roots grants reduces from £5,000 to £3,000.
- There will be less funding for larger applications, particularly those between £1-5 million.

There will be new applications forms available in 2008. Please check with HLF you have the right forms.

Big Lottery Fund

As well as administering *Awards for All*, the Big Lottery Fund manages a number of other funds. In fact it distributes 50% of all lottery funds for 'good causes' within the UK. Unlike HLF it has no obvious programme to apply to so a bit of creative thinking may be necessary around a social inclusion and/or community involvement project. Please remember they are an 'outcomes' funder. In other words you will need to be able to show clear benefits from your project. In particular you will need to be able to work with more disadvantaged communities of interest or neighbourhoods.

For details of all their current funding schemes go to:

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Some of these schemes are only relevant to particular countries.

Other Funders

There are no specific other funders that flag up oral history projects with their own distinct funding stream or priority. In fact it is difficult to have a direct approach to most funders with a proposal for an oral history project as, through experience, oral history does not easily fit into funders' tick boxes. Therefore creative measures need to be employed. The following information is largely relevant to voluntary and community organisations. Most public sector organisations will not be eligible to apply for funding from, say, trusts and charities. There are only a very small number of organisations that consider applications from individuals.

- Try looking at themed funders – say if you have a project concentrating on disability, try disability funders.
- Arts funders generally are not interested in oral history as a form of literature unless it is part of a wider **ART** project.
- HLF apart, 'Heritage' funders tend to fund capital projects – buildings and landscapes, and are less keen on purely revenue funding.

As stated above there are no funders that target oral history projects in this section so wherever possible do contact the funder first to see whether they will consider an application. It saves yours and their time if they do not.

Local Funders

Worth looking for local funders like 'charities for the poor' type organisations. They may not have a lot of funding (some in London do) but often are quite sympathetic to a very local project involving communities in their area of benefit. Your local Council for Voluntary Service or Rural Community Council will probably be able to help locate them.

Regional Funders

Some funders tend to cover a given geographical area, often related to a business or a founder. They tend to be slightly more flexible in terms of what they will consider for 'non-specific' funding. Again no funders have been found with a specific oral history priority. Most Council for Voluntary Service or Rural Community Councils will have a funding database like Grantfinder or Funderfinder that can discriminate geographically.

Nationally Based Public Bodies, Trusts and Charities

As well as local and regional funders, there are a fair range of national trusts and charities that do fund community projects - again with no specific oral history priority. Some funders of cultural projects specifically do **not** fund oral history. The following might be worth contacting:

Funder	Details	Maximum Amount
Clore Duffield Foundation London SW3 Tel 020 7351 6061 www.cloreduffield.org.uk	Mainly around museum and gallery education work. No deadlines, trustees meet twice a year. High demand on funds.	£5,000 to £1m
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation London W1 Tel 020 7636 5313	Favour projects outside London, must be charity. Social Change programme favours work with older people to reduce isolation.	Max £15,000
English Heritage London EC1 Tel 020 7973 3288 www.english-heritage.org.uk	Funding available from March 2008 for national and regional voluntary organisations in England to undertake work to attract non-user groups of heritage sites to get involved. Further details to be announced.	Unspecified
Fidelity UK Foundation Kent Tel 01732 777364 www.fidelityukfoundation.org	Geographically confined to Kent, Surrey and London, funding for cultural activities	Up to £100,000
Foyle Foundation London WC1 Tel 020 7430 9119 www.foylefoundation.org.uk	Learning opportunities within museums and archives. Charities although schools can apply but with restrictions.	Average £10,000 to £50,000
Gannett Foundation www.gannettfoundation.org/newsquest.htm	Smaller funder for local projects near to Newsquest owned newspapers . Educational and neighbourhood improvements	Up to £5,000
Garfield Weston Foundation London W1 Tel 020 7399 6565 www.garfieldweston.org	Generalist funder with a history of funding heritage projects (largely capital).	In 2006 1533 projects funded to the value of £38m
Historic Scotland Edinburgh www.hs.grants@scotland.gsi.gov.uk Voluntary Sector Grants Tel 0131 668 8805 Historic Environment Regeneration Scheme	Funding for voluntary organisations with an interest in the heritage Funding for historic elements of area regeneration projects.	
Idlewild Trust London SW12 Tel 020 8772 3155 www.idelwildtrust.org.uk	Smaller funder for work in museums and galleries and education.	Up to £3,000

John Ellerman Foundation London WC2 Tel 020 7930 8566 www.ellerman.org.uk	Tends to go for national charities and museums wanting to attract new audiences	Minimum £10,000 upper limit around £100,000
J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust London NW1 Tel 020 7486 1859 www.jpgettytrust.org.uk	Some funding for therapeutic arts projects and environmental schemes. Likes to fund unpopular projects, although very low success rate around 6%.	Normally £5,000 to £15,000
Manifold Charitable Trust Maidenhead Tel 01628 825660	Museums and arts funding – conservation and restoration work.	Most grants £500 to £5,000 some up to £50,000
Mercers Company London EC2 Tel 020 7726 4991 www.mercers.co.uk	Heritage funding around library and archive projects.	No minimum or maximum
Museums Libraries Archives London WC1 Tel 020 7273 1464 www.mla.gov.uk	Occasional specific project funding e.g. PRISM Grant for industrial and scientific material.	Varying amounts PRISM Fund £500 to £20,000
Pilgrim Trust London SW1 Tel 020 7222 4723 www.thepilgrimtrust.org.uk	Conservation of records and archives where no other funding is available. UK charities, Friendly Societies and public bodies may apply.	Small grants of up to £5,000 also larger grants
Ulster Local History Trust County Down No Tel No www.ulht.org	Supporting local history initiatives in Ulster by the voluntary sector.	Up to £3,000
UNLTD Millennium Awards London EC1 Tel 0845 850 1122	One of the few funders that will consider individual applicants. They want to fund social entrepreneurs. Two levels of funding. Level 1 for new ideas, level 2 to develop them further.	Level 1 £500 to £5,000 (average £2,000). Level 2 £10,000 to £20,000 (average £15,000)

Wellcome Trust – History of Medicine London NW1 Tel 020 7611 8888 www.wellcome.ac.uk	Specifically funding for the study of medicine particularly in the 20 th century. Need to have an academic base.	Up to £120,000
Wolfson Foundation London W1 Tel 7323 5730 www.wolfson.org.uk	Museum and gallery funding mainly for capital improvements around access and interpretation.	Up to £300,000
Yapp Charitable Trust Holmfirth Tel 01484 683403	Funding for smaller charities to work with older people among other priority groups.	Up to £3,000

Useful websites

Heritage Funding Directory

Database of heritage project funders. Oral history appears as ‘spoken history’.

<http://www.heritagelink.org.uk/fundingdirectory/main/fundinghome.php>

Grantfinder

A database for searching for grants. Subscription required, although many local authorities subscribe.

www.grantfinder.co.uk

Directory of Social Change

Publishes regular funding guides and organises training on writing good applications etc

www.dsc.org.uk

Feedback

We are always keen to hear from organisations’ experiences of funding applications – good, bad or indifferent. Please let us know what worked or what feedback you had. Any additional funders not listed above, or simply questions you may have about funding.

RW August 2007