

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 (immediately 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 them with oral history as an integral part of a wider project rather than a straight scheme in its own right. Below are a variety of funds that might consider a bid with oral history content. We start with the obvious and go on to funders where you might have to be a bit circumspect or even creative in the uses of oral testimony!

Heritage Lottery Fund

Still the main funder in the UK for oral history projects, it has enabled a massive expansion of community based schemes across the UK. They can and do fund large oral history projects but these have become less in number as their funding has been reduced over the past few years. Generally they normally suggest you apply under their **Your Heritage** programme with maximum funding of £50,000 – see below for details. They produce a helpful guidance document for oral history projects – the rather long link is:

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/furtherresources/Pages/Thinkingaboutoralhistory.aspx>

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

You will need to register to use their electronic application forms. This means you cannot easily look at the forms before deciding whether to apply. They have three general funding schemes that you can apply to:

Young Roots

Eligible Organisations: Organisations that work with young people should be the lead body.

Amount Available: Funding between £3,000 and £25,000.

Details: A fund for organisations working with young people aged 13 to 25. Only one application at a time is allowed per organisation. A partnership with at least one heritage organisation is normally required. You should be able to demonstrate that your project:

- provides new opportunities for a wider range of young people aged 13 to 25 to learn about their own and others’ heritage;
- allows young people to lead and take part in creative and engaging activities;
- develops partnerships between youth organisations and heritage organisations; and
- creates opportunities to celebrate young people’s achievements in the project and share their learning with the wider community.

Your project must also create new opportunities for young people to either:

- volunteer in heritage; or
- gain skills in identifying, recording, interpreting or caring for heritage.

Quite a few 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 after Heritage Grants for contact details

Website:

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/youngroots.aspx>

Your Heritage

Eligible Organisations: Any not for profit organisation, including statutory organisations.

Amount: Available: Funding from £3,000 up to £50,000 grant for projects. It can be part of a larger funded scheme from other sources.

Details: Many oral history projects are funded through 'Your Heritage'. This is a relatively simple application process. You start by completing a short pre-application advice form which normally gains you an interview at one of HLF's regional offices (sometimes they will write to you with their Comments instead). This is 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.

You may be able to get the services of a mentor for up to three days if you feel you need help during the project. 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 usually pay up to 50% of the grant at the commencement of the project and 40% when the first payment is almost fully spent. They retain 10% until they receive your end of project report.

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

Website <http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/yourheritage.aspx>

There are also examples of oral history projects that have been funded to give you some ideas via this link:

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/ourproject/projectsbysector/cultureandmemories/Pages/index.aspx>

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. 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 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. Decisions are made by regional or national HLF trustees every three or six months depending on the size of the bid. 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 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 downloadable although you will need to register online and be given a user number and password. If you are stuck contact 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.

Contact details

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

East of England

Terrington House

13-15 Hills Road

Cambridge

CB2 1NL

Phone: 01223 224870

Fax: 01223 224871

East Midlands

Chiltern House

St Nicholas Court

25–27 Castle Gate

Nottingham

NG1 7AR

Phone: 0115 934 9050

Fax: 0115 934 9051

London

7 Holbein Place

London

SW1W 8NR
Phone: 020 7591 6000
Fax: 020 7591 6001

North East

St Nicholas Building
St Nicholas Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 1RF
Phone: 0191 255 7570
Fax: 0191 255 7571

North West

9th Floor
82 King Street
Manchester
M2 4WQ
Phone: 0161 831 0850
Fax: 0161 831 0851

Northern Ireland

51–53 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8FE
Phone: 028 9031 0120
Fax: 028 9031 0121

Scotland

28 Thistle Street
Edinburgh
EH2 1EN
Phone: 0131 225 9450
Fax: 0131 225 9454

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

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

Big Lottery Fund

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, need or locality. They have a general fund called 'Reaching Communities' with an upper funding limit of £500,000 for a maximum, of five years activity.

For details of all their current funding schemes go to:

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Some of these schemes are specific to particular home 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 other than for conservation work.

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 for you. One specific funder is given as an example below. There may be others.

Essex Heritage Trust

Crossing Temple, Braintree, Essex, CM77 8PD

<http://www.essexheritagetrust.co.uk>

Tel 01376 585794.

Funding for projects exploring the history of Essex.

Funding up to £10,000

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. Another example:

Fidelity UK Foundation

Head of Foundations, Oakhill House, 130 Tonbridge Road, Hildenborough, Kent TN11 9DZ

Tel 01732 777364

www.fidelityukfoundation.org

Geographically confined to Kent, Surrey and London, funding for cultural activities including heritage and museums.

Funding projects in excess of £10,000 – will probably not fund 100% of costs.

Nationally Based Public Bodies, Trusts and Charities

As well as local and regional funders, there are a fair range of national (UK and home nations) 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

American Express – Philanthropic Programme

American Express Philanthropy, 3 World Financial Centre, Mail Code 01-48-04, New York, NY 10285-4

<http://home3.americanexpress.com/corp/gb/howto.asp>

Has a cultural heritage funding strand where preserving significant cultural traditions is flagged as a priority for funding (archival projects are discouraged).

No minimum or maximum funding levels specified

Clore Duffield Foundation

Studio 3, Chelsea Manor Studios , Flood Street , London SW3 5SR

Tel 020 7351 6061

<http://www.cloreduffield.org.uk>

Mainly around museum and gallery education work. No deadlines, trustees meet twice a year. High demand on funds. The applicant organisation must be a registered charity and staff posts are rarely funded.

Funding under £5,000 to over £1million

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

50 Hoxton Square, London N1 6PB

<http://www.gulbenkian.org.uk/>

Tel 020 7012 1400 or 0845 872 9930

Only currently running the Innovation Fund. Organisations will need to work with another organisation or expert in a different discipline that they would not normally have the resources to develop. Must be not for profit and they will not support projects that are primarily about arts education.

Funding between £10-25,000

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation

Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9AG

<http://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk>

Tel: 020 7812 3700

They fund innovative work that has more than local impact or could be used as a demonstration project. They also have a strand for heritage and museum collections.

Funding up to £100,000 or in some cases up to £250,000

Foyle Foundation

Rugby Chambers . 2 Rugby Street. London WC1N 3QU

Tel 020 7430 9119

<http://www.foylefoundation.org.uk>

Learning opportunities within museums and archives. Your organisation must be a charity although state funded schools can apply but with restrictions. Average funding £10,000 to £50,000

Gannett Foundation

www.gannettfoundation.org/newsquest.htm

Funder that will consider local history projects. They will need to be near to Newsquest owned newspapers. Applications will have to be processed through local newspapers.

Funding up to £50,000

Garfield Weston Foundation

Weston Centre, 10 Grosvenor Street, London W1K 4QY

Tel 020 7399 6565

www.garfieldweston.org

Generalist funder with a history of funding heritage projects (largely capital).

Your organisation must be a registered charity.

No specific indications on funding levels

Historic Scotland

Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh EH9 1SH

[Http://www.hs.grants@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](http://www.hs.grants@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

Tel 0131 668 8815

Direct Funding for the Voluntary Sector

Funding for voluntary organisations with an interest in Scottish heritage.

Funding for historic elements of area regeneration projects. Normally grants for three year funding.

Idlewild Trust

Trusts Manager, The Idlewild Trust, 1a Taylors Yard, 67 Alderbrook Road, London SW12 8AD

Tel 020 8772 3155

<http://www.idelwildtrust.org.uk>

Smaller funder for work in museums and galleries and education. Your organisation must be a registered charity.

Funding up to £3,000

John Ellerman Foundation

Aria House, 23 Craven Street, London WC2N 5NS

Tel 020 7930 8566

<http://www.ellerman.org.uk>

Will only fund UK wide charities and museums wanting to attract new audiences.

Minimum £10,000 upper limit around £200,000

J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust

1 Park Square West, London NW1 4LJ

Tel 020 7486 1859

<http://www.jpgettytrust.org.uk>

Funding for historic environments – mostly capital works. They have a 'Repairing Communities' strand which is about integrating disadvantaged communities. Normally your organisation must be a registered charity, but other non profit organisations can apply if there is a strong link to their funding priorities.

Funding - main grants £10,000 to £250,000, small grants under £5,000

Leche Trust

84 Cicada Road, London SW18 2NZ

Tel/Fax: 020 8870 6233

<http://www.lechetrust.org/>

Will consider funding the support of charitable bodies or organisations associated with the preservation of the nation's countryside, towns, villages and historic landscapes.

Funding up to £5,000

Mercers Company

Mercers Hall, Ironmonger Lane, London ECV2 8HE

Tel 020 7726 4991

<http://www.mercers.co.uk>

Heritage funding around library and archive projects. Unlikely to fund a current oral history project. Applicants must be registered charities. Not one of their priority funding areas.

No minimum or maximum funding

Pilgrim Trust

Clutha House, 10 Storeys Gate, London SW1P 3AY

Tel 020 7222 4723

<http://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

Porter Foundation

5A Jewry Street, Winchester, Hants, SO23 8RZ

Tel 01962 849684

Funding for cultural projects. Most grants are given to Jewish institutions in the UK.

Funding – most grants are less than £15,000

Ulster Local History Trust

c/o Vicky Herbert, 18 Clonaog Valley. Lisnaskea. Co. Fermanagh BT92 0LJ

Tel: 028 677 21730

<http://www.ulht.org>

Supporting local history initiatives in Ulster by the voluntary sector.

Up to £3,000

UNLTD Level 1 & 2 and 4iP Awards

Head Office/London Office: 123 Whitecross Street, Islington, London EC1Y 8JJ and six offices within the UK

Tel 0845 850 1100 (London)

<http://www.unltd.org.uk>

One of the few funders that will consider individual applicants. UnLtd currently offers two levels of award:

Level 1: Awards of between £500 and £5,000 (expected average of £2,000)

Level 2: Awards of up to £15,000

4iP - specific fund for innovation in digital media in conjunction with Channel 4 Television.

4iP funding up to £5,000

Wolfson Foundation

8 Queen Anne Street , London W1G 9LD

Tel 020 7323 5730

<http://www.wolfson.org.uk>

Museum and gallery funding mainly for capital improvements around access and interpretation.

Funding up to £300,000

Yapp Charitable Trust, 8 Leyburn Close, Urpeth Grange , Chester Le Street, Co Durham DH2 1TD

Tel 0191 4922118

<http://www.yappcharitabletrust.org.uk/>

Funding for smaller charities to work with older people among other priority groups.

Funding 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>

<http://www.heritagelink.org.uk/fundingdirectory>

Grantfinder

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

<http://www.grantfinder.co.uk>

Directory of Social Change

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

<http://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. Information about any additional funders not listed above, or simply questions you may have about funding are welcome.

RW March 2010