



# Guidance for Applicants to the Open Grants Scheme

Please ensure that you read these notes thoroughly before making an application for funding to the Ragdoll Foundation.

## The purpose of the Ragdoll Foundation

The Ragdoll Foundation is dedicated to supporting the creation, appreciation and awareness of imaginative and innovative content, programmes and projects that reflect the world from a child's point of view.

Our primary purpose is to make grants for charitable purposes that:

- Evidence the power of arts and creativity and their transformative power for children and young people;
- Promote children's development through their imaginative thinking;
- Encourage innovative thinking and influence good practice elsewhere;
- Ensure effective evaluation of projects to promote sharing and learning;
- Above all, demonstrate how concerns of children can be heard.

We direct our resources and funding through three programme strands:

- Open Grants - supporting organisations working with children and young people through the arts and creative media;
- Legacy - supporting projects that continue the work and vision of Anne Wood, founder of the Foundation;
- Advocacy - supporting initiatives that support the voice of and rights of children and young people.

We accept applications for funding through our Open Grants Scheme only.

## 1. Our Open Grants Scheme

The Ragdoll Foundation's Open Grants Scheme supports the cultural sector's work with children and young people, specifically projects where the concerns of childhood can be heard. All applications are expected to contribute to the Ragdoll Foundation's primary purpose above.

Proposals are invited from organisations developing creative and innovative approaches to engage children and young people using the arts and creative media. In most cases, we expect that the applicant will be an arts organisation; however we will consider applications from other organisations which intend to partner with arts organisations or work with artists within the project.

We are interested in projects that capture and develop the imagination of, and directly involve, children and allow their voices to be heard. Your project should place children and young people at the heart of the creative process.

We are particularly interested in projects that directly benefit children up to 10 years of age, although will also consider projects that extend the age group to 18 years of age.

The majority of grants we make are likely to be in the region of £5k to £20k, however we will also consider applications of up to £50k.

Applications will be considered for both one-off short-term projects and for projects lasting up to three years. With multi-year grants, the total amount of funding should not exceed £50k.

The Ragdoll Foundation gives priority to innovative, arts-based projects that:

- Share the same values of imagination and creativity as the Ragdoll Foundation, in particular, projects which have a deep commitment to listening to children and allow the perceptions and feelings of children themselves to be better understood;
- Involve children during their early years (0-10 years old);
- Take place outside of London;
- Are of strategic value for the organisation;
- Include high quality evaluation and sharing of project outcomes;
- Have the potential to become models of good practice within the sector.

## 2. Who can apply for funding?

The Ragdoll Foundation accepts applications from not-for-profit organisations based in the UK. We will only fund work that is legally charitable. Organisations that are not registered charities will need to provide a copy of their constitution showing charitable or social purpose.

As our focus is on funding work that actively involves children and young people all applicants need to have a Safeguarding / Child Protection policy that is regularly reviewed, and be able to demonstrate adequate processes are in place to ensure the safeguarding of children and young people.

### 3. What elements of your projects will we consider funding?

We will support the costs an organisation incurs in delivering a particular time-limited project. This could include research and development, piloting a new idea, or a significant development in the scope or scale of an existing programme, project or previous pilot.

We are interested in proposals where funding from the Ragdoll Foundation will make a considerable impact. We would expect to fund between 30%-80% of your total project costs, and would only fund over 80% in very rare circumstances. Partnership funding would need to be in place before any grant could be paid.

Depending on the nature of your proposal, we will consider applications that include a small contribution to core costs or staff posts specific to project delivery.

We will only consider projects that start after our funding decision. We consider the start date to be when a project is fully committed to by an organisation. We are unlikely to fund projects that are already advanced in planning and looking for top-up funding. We will not fund costs incurred before we have decided to fund you.

The Open Grants Scheme is open to organisations of all sizes, however if you receive regular, core funding from one of the UK Arts Councils, we would expect to see a high degree of innovation and sharing of good practice within your project.

Whilst we will fund work in and around London, we prioritise projects taking place elsewhere in the UK.

### 4. What we do not fund

The Ragdoll Foundation does not fund:

- Individuals, or proposals that only benefit one individual;
- Organisations that do not have a formal constitution;
- Organisations or activities that are for profit;
- Activity that is not legally charitable;
- Proposals from organisations based outside of the UK;
- Local authorities and other statutory bodies;
- Formal education institutions (both state and private) as applicants, including 'friends of' school groups;
- General circulars or fundraising appeals;
- Capital costs (including property, building renovations and equipment costs);
- Websites, apps, resources, publications or seminars, unless part of a wider proposal;
- Academic research, scholarships, bursaries, or any kind of student fees;

- Qualifications (including informal qualifications) or training courses, this includes Arts Award;
- Overseas travel or residential courses;
- Regular, ongoing, continuing or core projects and programmes;
- Funding for work that has already started (retrospective funding);
- Projects which effectively replace school provision;
- Projects which include competitions or prizes;
- Projects which have largely therapeutic aims;
- Projects that seek to promote religious views;
- Animal welfare or medical research;
- Resubmissions of projects that have previously been unsuccessful in securing Ragdoll Foundation funding.

## 5. Timing and Process

The Ragdoll Foundation operates a two-stage application process, with a rolling deadline. Stage one applications are considered in the order they are received. You can therefore submit your application at any time. Once you have submitted your application you will receive an acknowledgement by email within ten days. If you do not hear back from us within this time, please contact us to check we have received your application. We will aim to get back to you on the status of your stage one application within 12 weeks of acknowledgement.

Depending on when your application is received it can take between four and seven months from submitting a stage one application to being considered by the trustees at stage two.

In most cases the decision to invite a stage two submission will be made outside of a trustees' meeting. The trustees consider stage two applications at three meetings each year: February, June and October.

Whilst we cannot give definite dates for assessing stage one applications, in general:

- Stage one applications submitted between December and March should be for projects beginning no earlier than July of the same year;
- Stage one applications submitted between April and July should be for projects beginning no earlier than November of the same year;
- Stage one applications submitted between August and November should be for projects beginning no earlier than March of the following year;

Please note, these are not deadlines - the timeframe depends on volume of applications received; please submit your application as far before your project start date as possible, bearing the above guidelines in mind. The 'project start date' is the point at which you would

need to start committing resources to the project - for example advertising for artists, booking venues, drafting marketing material. Project activity delivery would almost always begin later.

If your application is selected to go to a second stage review we will ask for more detailed information to assist us in assessing your application including:

- Further details about your project including a clear timeline / project plan, evaluation and dissemination plans, and answers to specific questions we might ask you;
- A copy of your constitution (for organisations that are not registered charities);
- A copy of your Annual Accounts for the previous financial year and your current management accounts;
- A copy of your Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy.

In some circumstances, such as a particularly large grant request or a project of strategic importance to the Trustees, you might be invited to present to the Trustees at their meeting. In this case, we will cover reasonable travel expenses.

Successful applicants will be contacted within 10 working days of the Trustees' meeting. If your application is unsuccessful we will provide short written feedback. Please note, if your application is unsuccessful you cannot reapply for the same project at a later date.

## 6. What to do next

If you have read these guidance notes and feel that both your organisation and proposed project fit the Ragdoll Foundation's criteria, please download, save, and complete the Application Form from our website. Applications are only accepted by email and should be sent as an attachment and separate budget to [applications@ragdollfoundation.org.uk](mailto:applications@ragdollfoundation.org.uk).

Your application will need to demonstrate briefly how you will:

- Capture and develop the imagination of children and young people through interaction with the arts;
- Allow the voices of children to be heard;
- Apply creative and innovative approaches to benefit children directly;
- Strive to improve equality of opportunity for children and young people;
- Deliver a quality experience for your participants;
- Evaluate your project and share your learning from it.

Please note, we are a small foundation and seek to keep our administrative costs to a minimum and concentrate our resources on grant giving. We therefore cannot give detailed pre-application advice. The best way for us to understand what you are looking to achieve with our funding is to read your first stage application. If we are interested in your project, we will invite you to submit further information through our second stage application process.