

Call for Expressions of Interest for the provision of Creative Hubs Project Coordination Services

About The Ark:

Founded in 1995, The Ark is a dedicated cultural centre for children born of a deeply-held belief in children's right to art and culture as equal citizens within our society. That radical vision was informed by the principle that all children have the right to artistic and cultural participation just as they have a right to play. Our mission is to create opportunities for children to love and discover art as a fundamental part of their childhood, no matter what their background or gender. Based in our architecturally award-winning home in the heart of Dublin's Temple Bar, we commission, produce and present work for, by and about children, from the ages of two to twelve years old. On an annual basis, up to 30,000 children and adults attend programmes at The Ark which include professional development training for teachers and artists. The Ark is primarily funded by the Arts Council and the Department of Education as well as Dublin City Council.

The Ark is now seeking expressions of interest in the provision of Creative Hub project coordination services on a freelance contract basis to coordinate the delivery of our new strand of programming as part of the DCC Children's Art in Libraries Creative Hubs. This is an exciting opportunity for someone who demonstrates an affinity for the values of The Ark, a talent for delivering multi-disciplinary arts programmes for children, and an ability to connect and collaborate with multiple partners to deliver both artistic and locally relevant aims.

This opportunity provides the right individual the chance to work with The Ark to deliver an exciting new programme for children in a community context working with key partners within the cultural sector for children in Dublin.

About the Project:

The Ark has been engaged to deliver one strand of the Dublin City Council Children's Art in Libraries Creative Hubs programme in 2021.

This programme is a partnership between Dublin City Council Arts Office and Dublin City Libraries, offering creative arts experiences for children since 2010. The Children's Art in Libraries (CAL) programme has been managed by DCC Arts Office and delivered in collaboration with Dublin City Public Libraries. CAL has engaged over 5,000 children in its free programme, through commissioned and programmed performances, exhibitions, workshops and short residencies.

The dual strengths of the local library as a site for cultural access and education is the sense of ownership felt by citizens - regardless of income, status, age, gender or ethnic origin - and its connection to local social, community and education networks. This runs alongside the recognised ongoing need to support the quality of artistic experience through professional development of artists, arts and cultural workers, educators and facilitators.

Since 2016, increasing access and provision for children and young people to quality arts experiences in their local neighbourhoods became a priority, so a locally engaged developmental programming approach in response to local need has led the programming in three locations since then: Ballyfermot, Cabra and Coolock. These are the current CAL Creative Hubs.

Some recent examples of Creative Hub developmental programming include:

In Coolock, early years programming was identified as a priority complementary to the library's reading initiatives. As a consequence of a library-based phase of this initiative (which targeted both a public families audience and local early years settings), the newly generated local partnerships later successfully supported artists residencies, and training and development for community childcare settings in the North Central Area.

In Ballyfermot, initial consultation with local schools indicated a dearth in experience of opportunity to see professional arts work (performances/exhibitions), particularly those that could also offer extended opportunities for children to respond, explore and create. Enhanced relationships with other resource organisations/venues in the area, meant that the programme could at times impact beyond the library setting. Most recently, primary school children engaged in a programme, in partnership with CDETB Music Centre Kylemore College, where they experienced live dance performances in their local library and then 80 children participated in a three month process of contemporary dance exploration to create their own original short performance work. An Advisory Group, with representation from education, community and cultural sectors, supports the development of the emerging Ballyfermot Creative Hub.

In Cabra, recent programming has explored early years music development with local crèches, a short inclusive programme for children with autism and their families, and a commissioned visual artist in studio-residence.

The Creative Hubs programme seeks to sustain high quality arts experiences for children, schools and families to access in their Library and locality, through the development of enhanced educational, community and cultural partnership. You can read more about the background of the Creative Hubs programme on this link: <http://www.dublincityartsoffice.ie/supporting-communities/programmes-for-children-young-people/childrens-art-in-libraries-programme>

Creative Hub Project Coordination Services:

The Ark will develop and deliver one strand of multi-disciplinary arts programming as part of the Dublin City Council Libraries Creative Hubs initiative in 2021. This is a new project for The Ark and will be focussed on programming for children in the early years (aged 2 to 5) only in 2021.

Reporting to The Ark's Creative Arts Manager, the primary purpose of the contracted Creative Hubs Project Coordinator will be to manage all aspects of this programme from planning through to delivery. This will include all necessary advance liaison with local partners in each of the Creative Hub areas (Coolock, Ballyfermot and Cabra) as well as engaging and supporting the artists who will deliver programme events, coordination with colleagues in The Ark, as well as completion of progress reports as necessary.

Programme art forms in 2021 will include dance, theatre and visual art with scope for another strand to be developed as the programme evolves, which could be in another art form. The programme may also include training opportunities for adults (parents, early years educators, primary teachers, artists).

The Ark wishes to invite expressions of interest from highly motivated and suitably qualified individuals for the provision of project coordination services to deliver The Ark's strand of the Creative Hubs programme.

Though this initial contract will focus only on early years programming in 2021, the hope is that it

will expand in scope and scale over time to include programming for primary school aged children also.

In line with The Ark's Diversity and Inclusion policy, we welcome expressions of interest from individuals regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, orientation, membership of the Traveller Community, socio-economic status, family or civil status, disability, or religion.

The services required include:

- The implementation of The Ark's early years multi-disciplinary programme as part of the DCC Children's Art in Libraries Creative Hubs
- Developing positive collaborative relationships with all relevant project partners' staff including Dublin City Art Office and Libraries as well as local stakeholders in each of the Creative Hub locations as relevant
- Carrying out all administration relating to the delivery of the programme including engaging and supporting project artists, confirming all details of programme delivery with relevant partners and The Ark's staff, managing the project budget, and supervising delivery to ensure high quality and child-centred events
- Identifying possibilities for new programming in response to discussion and collaboration with project partners, colleagues, artists and audiences
- Working with colleagues in The Ark to identify opportunities to connect the Creative Hubs to other aspects of The Ark's overall artistic programme
- Ensuring all events align with The Ark's child-centred and artistic standards, as well as our procedures and policies including our Child Safeguarding Policy
- Undertaking research as necessary to inform quality delivery
- Reporting regularly to The Ark team and project partners as required

Suitable Prior Knowledge and Experience:

- At least 3 years' experience in arts programme coordination, ideally in more than one art form and involving experience with young audiences of preschool or primary school age
- Understanding and experience of project delivery in a partnership context
- Strong artistic knowledge and a good grasp of the varying needs of different art forms
- A capacity to discern artistic quality, especially as it relates to young audiences
- A good understanding of the educational landscape for preschool and primary school aged children

In carrying out the project services, the Project Coordinator will need:

- Excellent organisational and project management skills with strong attention to detail and experience of delivering to deadlines
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to work collaboratively with a range of stakeholders
- Strong work ethic with the capacity to work independently and flexibly
- Proficient IT skills
- A passion for delivering inclusive high quality child-centred arts programming
- An affinity for the mission, vision and values of The Ark and that of the project
- To be a self-starter who works well within a small team
- Resilience in face of setbacks, integrity and discretion
- To be a confident communicator and excellent listener

The responsibilities for delivery of Creative Hubs Project Coordinator services may vary in accordance with the emerging needs and priorities of the project.

Contract terms:

This opportunity is offered on a freelance contractual basis.

It is anticipated that services will be required for approximately 128 days per annum and is capped at that level. However, this is provided as a guideline only, and is not a guarantee of services required. Time commitment involved will follow the pattern of the programme itself, which means that it will increase and decrease at different points in the year and therefore an ability to be flexible with your time will be necessary. The Coordinator will be expected to do at least one fixed day per week for consistent administration of the project, with a weekly working schedule for additional days to be agreed in response to the needs of the programme. This working schedule will be agreed in advance with The Ark's Creative Arts Manager and it is anticipated that a significant amount of the delivery of this contract will take place during office hours in order to aid communication with stakeholders and colleagues.

Individuals will invoice The Ark at agreed intervals for a fixed daily rate of €125 inclusive of expenses. Each invoice should be accompanied by a summary of work completed.

For this rate, the Project Coordinator is required to provide services, which will include a combination of contact time with colleagues in The Ark and project partners (DCC Arts Office and libraries), local stakeholders, desk work to include all planning and administration tasks, meetings with artists, and attending programme events to oversee delivery.

Attendance at required induction, training and development will be paid at a daily rate of €125 inclusive of expenses.

Garda vetting is a requirement of the appointment process.

Application and Selection Process:

Interested individuals should submit a current CV and a covering letter outlining their interest in providing these services, highlighting relevant experience and confirming their availability to undertake this contract.

These should be emailed to al@ark.ie by 5pm on **Tuesday 4 May 2021**.

Late applications will not be considered.

Expressions of interest will be evaluated for suitability to deliver the required services and individuals may be called to attend an interview.

We anticipate interviews will take place on the **12 May**, subject to confirmation. Following this process the contract will be awarded to one applicant.

The contract will last for one year from issue. Subject to project funding, an option to extend or expand the contract may become possible before the end of the contract.

Covid-19

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 related restrictions, it is anticipated that work will initially will need

to be undertaken remotely working from home. In due course, The Ark can provide a work space in The Ark's building once it is safe for us to do so.

Covid-19 may also impact the format and approach to programme delivery at least for the initial months of the contract. Options to work around any Covid-19 challenges will be discussed with project stakeholders and may include online delivery as an alternative in some instances.

There will be an amount of foundational work required, including meetings and developing relationships with project partners and stakeholders, as well as connecting with project artists which can begin regardless of Covid-19 restrictions however.

Confidentiality:

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, applications will be treated in strict confidence.

All enquiries, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone other than those directly involved in the recruitment process.

Finally:

This information booklet represents the principal conditions of the Project Coordinator services. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of terms and conditions. These will be set out in a letter of engagement with the person selected to deliver the services.