Live Music – Business Development 2026/27

Tip Sheet and FAQ

PROGRAM UPDATES FOR 2026/27:

- ❑ Application deadline time has moved to 4:00 PM, PT from 11:59 PM, PT on the deadline day. No applications will be accepted past 4:00 PM. Applicants are encouraged to apply early in the day, or the day before, to avoid submission delays resulting in a late application.
- ❑ The program requires applicants to disclose and describe use of AI on application materials and the use of AI for content creation on Creative BC supported projects. Guidance on acceptable use of AI is based on the Province of B.C.'s draft artificial intelligence responsible use principles.
- ❑ Some minor updates have been made to applicant eligibility and ineligible expenses.

As You Work Through the Application

- You can start and save your application at any time. You will receive a link to your email from noreply@formstack.com when you save it. When you return to your application, the original link you received will continue to update your saved material.
- Once you submit your application, you will receive a confirmation email with a .pdf of your completed application form. If you don't receive this, please email kczenczek@creativebc.com
- Please submit any supporting documents in a .doc or .pdf format. If you are using a .pages file, convert your file to a .pdf before uploading it to the form.

TIPS FOR APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Reference the Business Development Scoring Sheet and Guidelines as you respond to the application questions. Stay focused on the goals of the program. Address the strategy and thinking behind your project, and how it directly relates to the funding requests in your budget.

1. Briefly describe the activities you are requesting funding for.

- Tell us about your project. Be succinct and specific.
- Give us the basic details about your project. Panelists and staff scoring your application may not be familiar with your organization.
- Make sure your funding request and proposed activities are in line with the capacity of your business.

2. Why have you decided to expand in this way? How will this project enhance the capacity and sustainability of your business? Provide a rationale for this type of project.

- Tell us how this project is relevant to your company or organization.
- Why is this project a good idea for your business and for your audiences/customers/clients? Do you have any research, data, or audience feedback that shows the need for this strategy or project?
- How will this project increase your business' capacity?
- Would it be best to apply for the entire project? Or phases of the project? (Consider if there are project phases that need to occur in a certain order, and if this sequence of events can be completed within one year).

3. What are the goals of your project? How will you evaluate the success of your project? Use metrics, statistics, and specifics where possible. (i.e., audience, ticket sales, and revenue projections).

- What do you hope to achieve as a result of this project? How will you know if your strategy is working?
- Tell us how you'll leverage this investment over time in support of long-term, sustainable growth.

4. What expertise, knowledge and/or experience (internal or external), do you have that will help you achieve your goals?

- Tell us about the team in place to deliver your project. What are their skills, experience, and backgrounds, and how will this support the success of your project?
- Are you working with any external consultants, advisors, or other individuals? What will they bring to the project?

5. How will this project help your company grow, experiment, adapt, or learn?

- Will this project allow you to offer a new service?
- Will this attract a new or expanded audience?
- Will this project help you to adapt to the current landscape of the live music industry?
- Will this project increase staff skills and business capacity?
- Will this project help your company to grow?

6. The climate for live events continues to be volatile and unpredictable. What challenges do you foresee? Tell us about your contingency or back-up plans.

- What challenges do you anticipate in delivering this project?
- Consider related challenges you've experienced in the past, and how you plan to overcome those challenges. (Production gear rental availability; audience hesitancy to purchase tickets, etc.)
- Have you considered a contingency plan in the event of inclement weather, wildfires, or other potential issues?
- Do you have other financial resources to help deal with any potential cost increases?

Frequently Asked Questions

HOW TO PLAN YOUR BUDGET:

1. Do I need to fill out two separate budgets if I'm applying for both Business Development and Live Music Presentation?
Yes. You will need to complete a separate application for each stream. Note that the Presentation budget information is provided within the application form; the Business Development budget information is provided using a downloadable Excel file and uploaded prior to submission.

2. What is considered private investment?
Private investment represents any funds not derived from government sources. This could be company investment, private funders or sponsors, or a personal investment. Earned revenue includes any revenue streams associated with the event, such as ticket sales, food, and merch.

3. What is considered public funding?
Public funding includes funds from municipal, provincial, or federal government programs. Examples of public funding include Creative BC, Music BC, BC Arts Council, the Canada Council for the Arts, and Canadian Heritage, etc. Arts councils and other regional bodies may receive funding from government sources or private sources – please contact the funder to determine where the funding came from.

4. What if my budget changes over the course of the project?
Your application budget is a proposed budget, and some changes are anticipated. In the final report you will address any changes to your application budget. If you are not sure if an expense that was not included in your application will be eligible, check the guidelines to be sure, and speak with Creative BC staff prior to incurring the expense for approval.

5. Do you need a vendor quote for every expense?
Vendor quotes are not required but are recommended for large budget items, and useful in supporting your request for key budget items. It also shows that you have done the research on your vendors and are further along in the planning process for your project. For this program, 2-5 vendor quotes are generally sufficient, depending on the project.

6. Do you require a lease agreement from venues?
Lease agreements are not required but are helpful in supporting an application for renovations, capital purchases, or significant investments for venues that are leased. A lease agreement or letter from the landlord or building owner can help show support and stability.

7. Do I have to give you all my receipts at the end of my project?
Please keep track of all receipts, invoices, and proof of payment (deposited cheques, e-transfer, credit card statement, wire transfer, paystub, etc.) so they can be readily available if needed. Creative BC may 'spot check' your final budget and cost report and may request supporting invoices and proof of payment upon completion of the project. Cash payments are not eligible forms of payments in Creative BC programs.

BUSINESSES

8. Do we need a business number to apply?
No; new companies and individuals acting as sole proprietors can apply without a business number, however, will be required to register their business upon successfully receiving a grant. Proof of business registration can be shown in the following ways: a GST number, statement of business registration, or certificate of incorporation. Eligible businesses include: sole proprietorships, general partnerships, corporations, or those working with registered GST numbers. If you have not registered your business, you can do so with BC Business Registry.

9. The wait time to register my business with BC Registry Services is after the application deadline; can I still submit an application?
Yes. Submit your confirmation of name request from BC Registry Services along with your application. Send us your statement of business registration as soon as you receive it, and we will add it to your file.

ELIGIBILITY

10. Are not-for-profits eligible for funding?
Yes. Canadian not-for-profits and BC Societies are eligible for funding in the Live Music program.

11. Do the vendors I'm hiring have to be registered businesses?
No. The only company that needs to be registered is the applicant company. You can hire a vendor that is not officially registered as a business.

12. Does this program cover operating expenses like utilities, salaries, and rent?
No. Operating costs not specific to the project are ineligible. However, if you are expanding your office to make space for new employees, the increase in these expenses can be claimed.

13. Can I apply for event expenses like artist fees and hospitality?
No. Expenses in Live Music: Business Development must be related to the overall growth in capacity of the business applying. Applicants who would like to receive funding for live music events must apply through Live Music: Presentation.

14. If my company/organization has already received funding through this program, am I still eligible to apply?
Previously funded companies are able to apply; there is currently no limit to funding over multiple intakes. Companies who have previously received funding from Creative BC need to address the impacts of previous funding in subsequent applications to make a case for reinvestment. Companies with competitive applications that have not received significant funding through Creative BC may be prioritized for funding.

OTHER FAQ:

15. Will everyone learn about their results at the same time?
Yes. All applicants to this program will receive results via email at the same time, in early 2027.

16. How do I know if you got my application?
Once you successfully submit your application, you will receive a confirmation email to the address you provided. This email will include a PDF copy of your submitted application, as well

as a copy of the attachments you provided. If you don't receive a confirmation email, please get in touch with Creative BC to ensure your application was received.

17. I need extra help understanding how to apply, or learning more about the Live Music program. What options are available to me?
Creative BC staff are available to answer questions. Sign up for an online info session to learn more about the program. You can also email staff directly.

Applicants with a disability or accessibility need may contact Creative BC for support in preparing an application. A limited number of appointments will be available for applicants to prepare an application by phone or video call with staff. Contact Creative BC a minimum of two weeks prior to the application deadline to schedule an appointment.

18. How does the scoring process work? Who reviews my application?
Applications are reviewed by staff and a panel of industry professionals according to the scoring sheet available on the Live Music program page. Industry panelists are different every intake and are curated by staff to eliminate conflicts of interest. Panelists are chosen for their industry experience, and may have backgrounds in a variety of roles, company and organization types, event types and sizes, including festivals, venues, programmers, and presenters. Panels are also curated to include Indigenous representation, regional representation, women, People of Colour, and other backgrounds.

19. What about conflicts of interest?
Creative BC staff do their best to curate scoring panels without conflicts of interest. All advisory panelists must declare any conflict of interest before evaluating applications. Additionally, all advisory panelists are required to sign an agreement preventing them from disclosing any information they come across during evaluation.

20. What's the success rate in an average year in this program?
This program is highly competitive and has an average success rate of 25-30%. Applications are evaluated and scored comparatively within the limits of the program budget.

- **First-time applicants:** Not all companies will receive a funding offer on their first application.

- **Previous recipients:** For previous recipients, we are interested in knowing about the results of previously funded projects. If you aren't yet able to measure the impact of your previous project, your application may be less competitive than projects that are able to report on Creative BC's previous investment using audience growth, revenue generation, and other data. Companies with competitive applications that have not received significant funding through Creative BC may be prioritized for funding.

21. What is an example of an expression of support?
A letter or expression of support can come from anyone who has experience working with you in music who can speak to the merit of your work. This could be provided in the form of a letter, email, or video testimonial. Sources of good supporting letters are often current or former artistic collaborators, colleagues, and members of the community who know your organization and its

work. These letters should also demonstrate that the vendors and companies you want to work with also want to work with you.

22. I'd like to use a generative AI tool to help me write my application and/or other supporting application documents. Is this allowed?

When organizing your ideas and drafting your application, you may find it useful to utilize one of these tools. If you do so, it's important to keep the following in mind:

- These tools sometimes make mistakes. If you're using one to generate ideas, or to help you answer questions in your application, you should review the results for clarity, accuracy, and relevance before submitting.

- Tools like these don't know your organizational history, goals, and plans like you do. Make sure that the responses that you develop relate to what you want to accomplish.

- Remember that any use of these tools must be disclosed in your application form

23. How does the self-ID process work?

Creative BC asks applicants to its funding programs to complete an additional self-identification form that allows them to describe how they identify in relation to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and other demographics.

For the Live Music program, applicants are asked to identify their main business decision maker (General Manager/Executive Director) and their main programming decision maker (Head Booker/Artistic Director). These key personnel, as well as all company owners, will be asked to provide self-identification information.

All information provided is confidential, and respondents can select 'Prefer not to respond' to any or all questions they do not wish to answer. This information is used by Creative BC to measure representation in each funding program, fill representational gaps within the pool of funding recipients, and to compile aggregate statistics on participation across Creative BC programs and services.

Once you complete and submit your grant application, all key personnel and company owners will receive an email to complete this additional form. Once the forms are completed, the information will be attached to your application. These emails sometimes go to spam filters, so please give all people listed in your application a heads up that this email will be coming.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Amplify BC funding programs offer support in the areas of artist development, music company development, live music, and industry development to stimulate the economy and serve BC's diverse music sector.

For more information about the Live Music program, and upcoming opportunities, please contact:

Katie Czenczek | Coordinator, Funding Programs

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