



2025-26 ONTARIO MUSIC INVESTMENT FUND LIVE MUSIC GUIDELINES

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1. Overview: Ontario Music Investment Fund

The Ontario Music Investment Fund (OMIF) is designed to provide targeted economic development investment to the province's vibrant and diverse music industry.

Program Objectives:

- OMIF supports Ontario music companies with strong growth potential to maximize return on investment (ROI), and create more opportunities for emerging artists to record and perform in Ontario (please see page 5 for emerging artists definition).

Key Program Goals:

- Focus resources on music companies with strong growth potential by:
 - Providing investment to drive long-term growth; and,
 - Maximizing ROI and enhancing opportunities for emerging talent.
- Strengthen support at critical stages in the careers of artists.

The program's four streams are tailored to different parts of the industry:

- **Music Creation:** supporting businesses that take risks discovering and developing talent – particularly emerging artists – and bringing it to market through recording and production, marketing and promotion, touring and showcasing, and publishing.
 - Eligible applicants include domestic and multinational record labels, and domestic music publishers.
- **Music Industry Initiatives:** supporting industry organizations that undertake professional development/training and export activities, conduct industry analysis/data gathering and build regional capacity.
 - Eligible applicants include music industry trade associations and music service organizations.
- **Global Market Development for Music Managers:** supporting music management companies to participate in national and international activities (e.g. business travel and conference attendance) that correspond to a strategy for company growth.
 - Eligible applicants include music management companies
- **Live Music:** supporting businesses and organizations that produce or promote live music events featuring Canadian artists including eligible music festivals and concert series.
 - Eligible applicants include live music promoters and presenters.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- Focused targeting of funding to optimize revenue, profits, job creation, private investment and tax revenue.
- Production of intellectual property (content) which may be owned and consumed domestically and exported, leading to sustained revenues and jobs in the province.
- Increased profile and prestige of Ontario on the world stage as the next generation of breakthrough artists are discovered and developed to their full potential.

Ontario Creates is committed to fostering increased diversity, gender parity, accessibility, and environmental sustainability within the creative industries. Please review the **Program Policies** document for additional important information.

The following guidelines outline the eligibility requirements and application details for the **Live Music** stream of the OMIF.

2. Introduction: Live Music

The OMIF Live Music stream supports businesses and organizations that produce or promote live music events featuring Canadian artists, including eligible music festivals and concert series. The Live Music stream will provide funding to increase the number and quality of live music experiences (e.g. events, festivals and concerts) that can be experienced by residents in and visitors to Ontario.

Key Objectives:

- Increase the number of opportunities for artists in Ontario to develop their careers by reaching new and larger audiences and increase their income through performance-related revenue streams;
- Advance the calibre of live music experiences in Ontario in communities across the province;
- Expand employment and career opportunities for promoters, presenters, live event technical crews and other professionals in the live music sector; and
- Create opportunities to drive revenue growth and economic development in Ontario through live music events.

Funding is provided in the form of direct grants towards the costs of eligible activities. The OMIF Live Music stream requires applicants to provide a matching contribution to ensure that maximum ROI is achieved from provincial investment. Applicants must demonstrate clear, measurable outcomes which align with the objectives of the Live Music stream.

3. Deadline & Eligibility Activity Window

The deadline for complete submissions is **Thursday, October 16, 2025, by 5:00 PM ET**, through the Ontario Creates Online Application Portal (OAP). Applications and documentation received after the deadline will not be considered.

The eligible activity window is from December 1, 2025 to November 30, 2026.

Decisions will be communicated in February 2026.

4. Eligible Applicants

Domestic Music Promoters and Presenters (including festivals) must have revenues under \$1M. Please see Appendix 1 for more detail re: eligibility criteria by company type.

In order to be eligible, applicants must demonstrate the following general criteria:

- Be Ontario-based;
- Be in operation for at least two years prior to application;
- Be able to demonstrate that the company's principal place of business has been in Ontario for at least one year prior to the deadline;
- Be Canadian-owned;
- Be incorporated in Ontario or federally (or prepared to incorporate immediately if the application is successful);
- Be in a sound financial position;
- Have minimum annual revenues of \$25,000 from core business activities as a live music presenter and/or promoter; and
- Be in good standing with Ontario Creates at time of application submission.

Exceptions to the above eligibility requirements may be considered for applications from companies that are led by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) or Francophone individuals and applicants that otherwise meet the provincial definition of diversity (see page 11). If applicable, please contact the Ontario Music Office a minimum of two weeks prior to the application deadline to discuss.

Applicants with revenues under \$1M who meet the eligibility criteria for OMIF as well as Experience Ontario may not receive funding from both programs for the same event in the same activity window. First-time applicants and applicants intending to apply to both OMIF and Experience Ontario **are encouraged** to contact the Ontario Music Office (OMO) a minimum of two weeks ahead of the application deadline to discuss their eligibility and/or funding restrictions. Applicants that fail to do so may have their application deemed ineligible/incomplete if eligibility is not clearly established in the application.

NOTE: Domestic music promoters and presenters (including festivals) with revenues over \$1M who meet the eligibility criteria for Experience Ontario are NOT eligible to apply for OMIF. Domestic music promoters and presenters with revenues over \$1M who do not meet eligibility criteria for Experience Ontario may be considered eligible for OMIF support.

5. Funding Levels

Funding is provided in the form of direct grants towards a share of the costs of eligible activities. Contributions are non-refundable except in the case of recipient default. The OMIF contribution may not exceed 50% of the total approved budget.

Eligible applicants may apply for up to 40% of the company's two-year average of total annual revenue (to a maximum funding cap of \$125,000) per funding cycle. The minimum OMIF amount that can be requested is \$10,000.

6. Eligible Activities & Costs

Applicants may submit only one application but may include multiple activities within the application. Each activity should be properly detailed, and the budget should also provide a detailed cost breakdown by activity.

For all activities supported in the Live Music Stream, artists must be professional musicians and remunerated for their performances.

While expenses relating to all Canadian artists will be eligible for support, a focus on support for emerging artists should be considered*.

Applicants proposing a higher percentage of Ontario-based expenses will also be considered more favourably.

Eligible activities/costs may include, but are not limited, to:

- Canadian artist fees.
- Venue or site rental.
- Production and presentation costs, including audio and visual support, technical and stage crews.
- Designing and producing video and multimedia stage shows, including special effects and onsite signage.
- Costs associated with live-streaming and virtual performances.
- Advertising costs, in all media, that is directly related to eligible performances.
- Engaging public relations services for activities directly related to the promotion of the performance(s).
- Business development/capacity building activities (e.g. staff training and development, market intel/analysis, business/financial planning, digital innovation).
- Costs related to accessibility improvements to comply with the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)** directly associated with the event programming (e.g. ramping, accessible viewing areas).

The application should include a list of artists to be engaged, accompanied by artist contracts or documentation that supports current contractual relationships. If final details/contracts are not available at the time of application, applicants should provide evidence to support the likelihood of securing the artists, performances and/or venues (as indicated in the proposed live music activities).

*Note: For the purposes of the OMIF, an emerging artist is defined as an artist or group that has not achieved Gold Album status in Canada in the past six years and has had no more than three gold albums in their career (Gold Album threshold is currently 40,000 Album Equivalent Units sold).

Note: A Canadian group is defined as having more than one member, at least half of whom are Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

Eligible Administrative & Overhead Costs

- Costs for items such as staff salaries, office space and corporate services that are directly used in the delivery of the planned activities (to a maximum of 25% of the total activity costs).

*Eligible Labour Costs **

- **New Position:** The cost of a new position that is being created as a result of the proposed activity (salaried or contract) may be included as a distinct line item in the activity budget. In the description of the activity, applicants must include an explanation of why the new position is necessary for the undertaking of the proposed activity. If the position is intended to continue beyond the initial OMIF-supported period, a rationale must be provided for how the position will be sustained by the applicant.

The Ontario Music Office recognizes that the specific individuals to be hired for proposed roles may not be known as of the time of application. As such, OMIF recipients will be required at the interim and/or final reporting stage to provide specific details (e.g. full name, job description, hours worked) regarding new employees/contractors included in activity budgets. Please provide as much detail as possible at time of application submission.

- **Current/Ongoing Position:** A portion of salaries or wages for existing staff or ongoing contract employees (whether part-time or full-time) that are assigned to work on the proposed activities may be included as part of the “administrative and overhead expenses” section of the budget. Please list separate budget lines for each position.

All labour costs included must be undertaken by Ontario-based staff or contract employees, and must be directly related to the proposed activities. Costs related to consultants based outside of Ontario may be considered where a business rationale is presented to demonstrate the necessity of hiring from outside Ontario.

Eligible Capital Costs

- Budget allocations towards capital expenditures such as the purchase of equipment, materials and/or software are eligible if required for an activity (such as digital infrastructure and innovation).
 - Equipment, Materials, and Software: if purchased, amortization value for inclusion in budget must be calculated using the straight-line method with a prescribed useful life of 24 months; if rented, actual rental cost can be included.

Ineligible Expenses

- Expenses incurred outside of the approved activity period;
- Expenses not in the original budget and which did not receive pre-approval by Ontario Creates;
- Costs relating to international artists;

- Costs related to musical theatre and other theatrical performances;
- Staff & labour costs not directly related to the activity;
- Staff benefit costs;
- Occupancy costs, unless otherwise stated in the guidelines;
- Real estate costs and leasehold improvements, or capital costs related to permanent structures;
- Cost of alcoholic or cannabis-related products;
- Touring/performance activities supported through the OMIF Music Creation stream;
- Fees relating to the compilation engagement report, review engagement, or audit of applicant financial statements;
- Fees relating to the procurement of services of grant writers for preparing government funding applications;
- Cost of General Liability insurance (the cost of event-specific insurance is eligible);
- Taxes that are recoverable by the recipient (such as GST/HST, PST, VAT); and
- Related party transactions which did not receive pre-approval by Ontario Creates.

7. Budgets and Financing

Eligible costs directly associated with the proposed activities must be included in the Activity Budget template provided in the application. The Activity Budget must contain complete information as to how the company will pay for the activities.

The total amount of financing must match the total cost of all eligible activities. Specifically, the financing component of the Activity Budget must indicate all sources and amounts from corporate investment (cash in the bank), financed investment (e.g. line of credit, investors), projected revenue derived from execution of the activity, confirmed funding from government or other private funding bodies, and *anticipated* funding from government or other funding bodies – including the request for Live Music stream funding.

The OMIF contribution can comprise a maximum of 50% of the total budget. Financing from public/private funding agencies/bodies does not need to be confirmed at the time of application. However, unconfirmed funding from these sources should be supported with information, timelines and documentation to demonstrate the applicant's level of confidence in receiving such funding. Please see the Live Music activity budget template for more details on financing parameters.

Applicants that contribute a higher percentage of non-government funding will be considered more favourably, as will activity budgets that prioritize Ontario-based expenses.

8. Application Process

IMPORTANT: First-time applicants are encouraged to contact the Ontario Music Office at least two weeks ahead of the application deadline to discuss eligibility. Applicants that fail to do so may have their application deemed ineligible/incomplete if eligibility is not clearly established in the application.

- Applicants must submit their applications electronically through the Ontario Creates Online Application Portal (OAP) at <https://apply.ontariocreates.ca>.
- Applicants that do not have a user account on OAP should go to <https://apply.ontariocreates.ca/login.aspx> and click on “Register.” For assistance, please see Ontario Creates’ website for the “[OAP Quick Start Guide](#)”.
- For technical assistance, please contact the OAP Helpdesk at applyhelp@ontariocreates.ca.
- Applicants are encouraged to begin the application process well in advance of the deadline to allow ample time to compile and complete the necessary information. The application can be worked on over time and information can be saved as it is entered. Once saved, the applicant can go back to edit and/or add information up until the time when the completed application is submitted.
- AI Disclosure:
- The use of AI technology must be disclosed and outlined in your application. This applies to (1) the use of AI to prepare content for the application form and supporting documents and (2) submitted projects that involve the use of AI technology in the creation of content or otherwise. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all applications and projects have access to all underlying rights including content that is created with the assistance of AI technology.

Late applications will not be considered for funding.

Prior discussion with Ontario Creates regarding the eligibility of an activity does not guarantee funding.

Summary of Application Requirements

A complete list of required application materials is outlined in the application form on the Ontario Creates Online Application Portal (OAP). For the Live Music stream, the following application components are required:

- Activity Budget (template provided);
- Activity Details and Plans for each proposed activity (questions provided in OAP application);
- Year-Over-Year Operating Budget; for comparative purposes, this budget must include both actual revenues and expenses for the previous fiscal period as well as a forecast of revenues and expenses that correspond to the current fiscal year, and/or to the end of the applicant’s approved eligible activity window
- Business Plan (see below for requirements);
- Articles of Incorporation;
- Financial Statements for the two most recently completed fiscal years;
- Back-up confirmation to support confirmed or pending financing;
- Signed Related Party Transaction form; and

- Signed Applicant Affidavit.

Please see **Program Policies** document for guidance regarding financial statements requirements and additional program information.

Business Plans

A company Business Plan is required for all applicants requesting \$50,000 or more. Applicants requesting less than \$50,000 have the option to either submit a business plan or answer the business plan related questions within the application.

Business Plans should include forward-looking information on plans for company growth, supported by a discussion of competitive strengths, event development strategies, human resources, corporate financing and other key details. It is recommended that this document range between 10-25 pages.

The business plan must contain, at minimum, the following components:

- Applicant track record including profile(s) of key personnel;
- Company strategy and business model;
- Overview of general business activities and short/long-term goals;
- Company SWOT analysis; and
- Rationale for revenue, expense and profit projections going forward for the next 12-18 months, compared with actual results for the most recently ended fiscal year.

9. Assessment Criteria

The Live Music stream of the Ontario Music Investment Fund is a competitive program. Applicants are advised to ensure that they meet all eligibility requirements before submitting an application.

Applicants should also ensure that their application material clearly conveys the strengths of their proposed activities with respect to the program guidelines and evaluation criteria. The number of applicants that will receive funding and the amount of funding awarded is dependent on the quantity and quality of the activities selected, and the individual needs of each applicant.

After applicant and activity eligibility have been confirmed, applications will be assessed according to the following criteria:

| | |
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| Track Record <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Degree to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the track record (program planning and delivery, site logistics, security) and organizational capacity (financial, human resources) to effectively execute the activities - Presence of diversity among senior leadership, staff, or contract employees, particularly underrepresented communities within the music industry | 15% |
|--|-----|

| | |
|--|-----|
| Financial Risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness of the applicant's articulation of its financial capacity to undertake the proposed activities - Stability and strength of the applicant's financial position based on company's financial statements | 5% |
| Overall Proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thoroughness of the applicant's description of the proposed activity and its anticipated impacts - Extent to which proposed activities are thorough, clear and provide adequate supporting documentation, including the presentation of feasible budgets, achievable activities, realistic timelines and demonstrating innovation and creativity - Demonstration of thoughtful consultation, collaboration, and participation of equity-seeking communities, particularly underrepresented communities within the music industry | 25% |
| Economic & Cultural Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Degree to which expected results are well documented in the application, including a description of tangible, measurable, and realistic goals and a clear explanation of anticipated return on investment (ROI) - Applicant demonstrates the staging of new or expanded live music experiences - Extent to which activities have an accessibility plan that outlines steps to remove barriers to accessibility - Applicant's potential to drive broader economic impact for the Province | 25% |
| Resilience & Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent to which the application demonstrates forward-thinking strategic planning and focus on long-term growth and sustainability - Degree to which the company can leverage the investment to strengthen its profile/capital/human resources pool for future investment and growth | 15% |
| Support for Emerging Talent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Degree to which the applicant focuses on programming emerging artists (see emerging artists definition on page 5) - Degree to which diversity is reflected in the programming | 15% |

The provincial definition states: the dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to: ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion (creed), sex, sexual orientation and socio-economic status.

Applications will be assessed for completeness and eligibility by Ontario Creates staff immediately following the deadline and a jury of industry professionals and Ontario Creates staff will review and assess the eligible applications.

All Ontario Creates decisions are final. Ontario Creates reserves the right to alter program guidelines with general public notice to all potential applicants and to refuse any application for any reason. The number of awards and amount awarded is contingent on confirmation of Ontario Creates' annual budget. Ontario Creates is not required to make any minimum number of awards. Subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, all information contained in the application will remain strictly confidential. All inquiries pertaining to Ontario Creates Funds are to be directed to Ontario Creates staff only.

10. Successful Applicants

Successful applicants will be required to deliver an interim report and final report through the Online Application Portal by the identified deadline(s).

Generally, the following milestones will trigger payments:

- Execution of the Ontario Creates transfer payment agreement (please see the **Program Policies** for a copy of the template agreement);
- Delivery of interim report(s) and subsequent approval; and
- Delivery of the completed activities and all deliverables outlined in the funding agreement and subsequent approval.

Insurance

Recipient companies will be required to carry Commercial General Liability Insurance on an occurrence basis for Third Party Bodily Injury, Personal Injury and Property Damage, to an inclusive limit of not less than \$2,000,000 per occurrence, \$2,000,000 products and completed operations aggregate. Ontario Creates and His Majesty the King in right of Ontario must be named as additional insureds on all policies. Please budget accordingly. Additional information on insurance requirements is available on request.

Transfer Payment Agreement

On acceptance into the program, the recipient company will be required to sign a standard Ontario government Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) covering the terms of its participation in the program including providing Ontario Creates with permission to use the project and delivery materials for promotional purposes. A copy of this agreement can be found in the **Program Policies** document. Recipients may not amend the agreement template.

Reporting Criteria

Recipients will be required to provide Ontario Creates with a satisfactory report evaluating the completed initiative. Specific report requirements will be outlined in the TPA but generally are expected to include those mentioned in the Measurable Outcomes section of the reporting template and the following:

- Short term actual measurable results against projected original targets*;
- Strategy for capturing longer term results where possible;
- Sustainability of proposed activities; and

- Assessment of effectiveness in meeting the activities objectives and those of the Live Music stream of the OMIF;

A cost report is required as part of the reporting process. Ontario Creates reserves the right to request receipts to demonstrate actual expenses incurred by OMIF recipients.

** see Appendix 2 for a list of OMIF Measurable Outcomes.*

For more Information:

General program inquiries should be directed to omo@ontariocreates.ca.

Ontario Creates

Ontario Creates is an agency of the Government of Ontario that facilitates economic development, investment and collaboration in Ontario's creative industries including the music, book, magazine, film, television and interactive digital media sectors.

<https://www.ontariocreates.ca>

Appendix 1 – Eligible Applicant Details

Eligible Applicants

Domestic Music Promoters and Presenters (including festivals) with revenues under \$1M (based on average of 2 most recent fiscal years) and Domestic Music Promoters and Presenters with revenues over \$1M who do not meet eligibility criteria for Experience Ontario

Companies that are primarily engaged in the development, delivery, marketing and staging of live music events, concerts and tours in more than one venue in Ontario for which they have primary responsibility for music programming. These companies take the primary risk (operational and financial) of programming, promoting and producing live music performances. They contract with multiple musical artists and/or owners or managers of performance venues, arrange for marketing, promotion and ticketing, and stage the events, either supervising directly or through subcontractors.

Eligibility Requirements

- Have core business activities that include developing and delivering live music events; and,
- Program (book) and promote live musical acts and artists at two or more separate performance venues in Ontario.

A music Promoter/Presenter who is currently programming in only one venue may be eligible to apply to the Live Music stream if they intend to program for two or more separate venues (at different physical locations) as part of this application.

Music Festivals may also be considered in the promoter/presenter applicant class provided they meet the following requirements:

- The music festival applicant is independently incorporated; or
- The music festival is the primary activity of the applicant
- The music festival has been in operation for more than one year
- The applicant is taking on the primary operational and financial risk associated with presenting the music festival.

Note: Performing entities that solely self-promote their own events are not considered eligible Promoters/Presenters under the OMIF. Such entities must demonstrate a track record of promoting live music events featuring other artists.

Eligible Revenue

- Net earned revenues from the staging of live music events (in any location)
- Any other earned revenues from music-related business activities, including sponsorships, commissions and fees (excluding grant revenue)

All applicants are required to demonstrate that their primary business is music-related and sources of revenue are derived from music-related activities. The Ontario Music Office

reserves the right to deem ineligible applicants that do not sufficiently articulate this requirement in their application. Applicants must submit proof that all of the above criteria have been met.

Eligible applicants who meet the eligibility criteria for OMIF as well as Experience Ontario may not receive funding from both programs for the same event in the same activity window. First-time applicants and applicants intending to apply to both OMIF and Experience Ontario are encouraged to contact the Ontario Music Office a minimum of two weeks ahead of the application deadline to discuss their eligibility and/or funding restrictions.

Associated Corporations must apply to the fund under a single application. The annual eligible revenue from each company must be combined to establish an aggregate annual eligible revenue figure for the group of Associated Corporations.

Ineligible Applicants

The OMIF will also not accept applications from the following:

- Festivals, except where music is the primary activity and the festival presenter meets the requirements outlined in this document
- Federal, provincial, municipal governments and/or their agencies
- Universities or Colleges
- Unincorporated or unregistered artists and organizations
- Venues and Clubs (unless acting in capacity of promoter for more than one venue)
- Domestic Music promoters and presenters (including festivals) with revenues of over \$1M (based on average of 2 most recent fiscal years) who meet the eligibility criteria for Experience Ontario.

Appendix 2 – Measurable Outcomes

Anticipated outcomes for the Live Music stream may include any of the following, depending on the type of activity undertaken. **It is not expected that each applicant will achieve all of the outcomes below.** Applicants should provide a list of all anticipated outcomes they will report on in their interim and final reports, should their funding request be successful.

| Measurable Outcomes – Live Music |
|--|
| Promote Ontario as a live music centre |
| Number of artists supported |
| Fees paid to Canadian artists |
| Number of attendees/number of tickets sold/online viewership |
| Social media impact (metrics) |
| Traditional media impact (metrics): interviews, articles |
| Critical success of supported projects |
| Sustainability of activity outcomes |
| Sales success of supported activities |
| Company growth/ Increased revenue |
| Increased sponsorship revenue |
| Return on Investment of OMIF funding |
| Jobs created/retained |
| Number of venues supported |
| Number of new performance opportunities for artists |
| Tangible initiatives to improve or further embedding diversity, equity and inclusion within company operations (i.e. staff training, hiring practices, artist lineup policies/practices) |