



# 2026-27 ONTARIO MUSIC INVESTMENT FUND MUSIC COMPANY DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

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## 1. Overview: Ontario Music Investment Fund (OMIF)

**IMPORTANT:** Updates have been made to OMIF parameters for the 2026-27 program year that may impact eligibility. Please review these guidelines thoroughly prior to starting an application.

The Ontario Music Investment Fund (OMIF) is an economic development investment fund designed to support Ontario-based music businesses and organizations in maximizing growth, increasing return on investment (ROI), and fostering a balanced, vibrant and diverse music ecosystem.

### **Key Program Goals:**

- Provide targeted investment to increase revenues and support job creation, retention and growth
- Maximize ROI and enhance opportunities for innovation & competitiveness (domestically and internationally)
- Optimize support for new, emerging and diverse companies across the province's music ecosystem

### **Key Performance Indicators:**

- Revenue growth
- Job creation/retention
- Increased capacity & innovation
- Balanced music ecosystem including established, emerging & diverse-led companies

### **Anticipated Outcomes:**

- Increased revenue, profits, job creation/retention, 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
- Enhanced profile and prestige of Ontario on the world stage as the next generation of breakthrough artists are discovered and developed to their full potential

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

### **Music Company Development:**

Supports established businesses (revenues over \$125K) that take risks discovering and developing talent and bringing it to market through recording and production, marketing and promotion, publishing and business development activities.

### **Live Music:**

Supports businesses and organizations (revenues over \$125K) that produce or promote live music events in Ontario (featuring Canadian artists), with the goal of increasing the number and quality of live music experiences for residents in and visitors to Ontario.

### **\*NEW\* Music Futures:**

Invests in high performing music companies with growth potential (revenues between \$25K and \$125K) to increase access, advance competitiveness, and accelerate success.

### **Global Market Development – Music:**

Provides eligible music companies with investment to expand international market share and create high ROI export opportunities.

### **Music Industry Development:**

Invests in established music trade associations to deliver initiatives that strengthen Ontario's music ecosystem, enhance its competitiveness, and support sustainable industry development.

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 **Music Company Development** stream of the OMIF.

## **2. Introduction: Music Company Development (MCD)**

The Music Company Development (MCD) stream supports the development of competitive, sustainable music companies in Ontario that take risks discovering and developing talent and bringing it to market.

MCD provides funding to eligible domestic record labels, multinational record labels, domestic music publishers and music management companies to support business activities that are focused on: expanding artist rosters; investing in professional recording and production; facilitating job creation; enhancing business capacity; and increasing and strengthening diversity within Ontario's music industry. OMIF investment will support competitive, evolving and innovative business models while enhancing company sustainability and workforce capacity.

Funding is provided in the form of direct grants towards the costs of eligible activities. The MCD 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 this stream.

## **3. Deadlines & Eligible Activity Windows**

Applications must be submitted electronically through the Online Application Portal (OAP) at **<https://apply.ontariocreates.ca>** to either of the following two deadlines:

Thursday, April 23, 2026 by 5:00 PM ET

for activities taking place between April 1, 2026 and August 31, 2027 (recipients will have a maximum 12-month spending window within this period depending on the date of their first expenditure)

**OR**

Thursday, September 10, 2026 by 5:00 PM ET

for activities taking place between August 1, 2026 and January 15, 2028 (recipients will have a maximum 12-month spending window within this period depending on the date of their first expenditure)

Applications and documentation received after the deadlines listed above will not be considered.

Decisions will be communicated to applicants approximately 14 weeks after the deadline.

**Eligible Activity Window:** Applicants may begin incurring expenses related to their activities no earlier than April 1, 2026 (for the April 23, 2026 deadline) or August 1, 2026 (for the September 10, 2026 deadline), pending funding approval and provided a valid certificate of insurance is in place. Funding recipients will have 12 months to execute their activities. The eligible activity window will commence on the date that the first expenditure is incurred for any activity within the company's application. Please see the **FAQs** (on the Music Company Development page) for more details and examples that demonstrate the options available to applicants in terms of the starting and ending dates for their activities.

Activities must be completed with all expenses incurred and all deliverables provided by the recipient's final report date, and no later than September 30, 2027 (for recipients from the April 23, 2026 deadline) or February 15, 2028 (for recipients from the September 10, 2026 deadline).

## [4. Eligible Applicants](#)

**Domestic Record Labels, Multinational Record Labels, Domestic Music Publishers, and Domestic Music Management Companies** in addition to companies deriving revenue from any combination of these three applicant categories.

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 the application deadline;
- 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 over \$125,000 from eligible music business activities;

- Be in good standing with Ontario Creates at time of application submission.

*\*excepting Multinational Record Labels*

Please review the Ontario Creates [Program Policies](#) document for information on financial statements and other requirements/logistics.

First-time applicants **are encouraged** to contact the Ontario Music Office (OMO) a minimum of two weeks ahead of the application deadline to discuss their eligibility. Applicants that fail to do so may have their application deemed ineligible/incomplete if eligibility is not clearly established in the application.

## [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.

**\*NEW\*** Eligible applicants may request up to 40% of their two-year average annual revenue to a maximum of \$125,000 per funding cycle, and up to a maximum of \$250,000 over three consecutive cycles.

## [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.

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

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

- Recording, editing, mixing and mastering of music performances at an Ontario facility by a Canadian artist signed to an Ontario-based, Canadian-controlled music company.
- Master licence fees for Ontario-based recordings.\*
- Video Production incurred in Ontario (e.g., music videos, videos for online marketing purposes, and video recording of live performances for promotion or sale).
- Marketing and promotion activities for new recordings and/or online performances by Canadian artists signed to the applicant company.
- Direct tour costs for an artist signed to the applicant company (including marketing, promotion, audio/visual and stage design, technical services, travel, transportation, and Canadian crew employed by the artist or applicant). Applicants may include a maximum of \$40,000 in total tour support costs per artist (for a maximum OMIF contribution of \$20,000 per artist).

- Artist development activities focused on acquiring and registering copyrights in musical compositions (e.g., song camps) and promoting and authorizing the use of these compositions in recordings, on radio and television, in motion pictures, live performances, print, multimedia or other media.
- Business Development activities: External-facing activities that create and advance growth opportunities (e.g., strategic partnerships, rights monetization).
- Capacity Building activities: Internal activities that strengthen the organization's ability to deliver (e.g., staff training for skill development and professional growth).
- Innovation: Developing and implementing new concepts and/or solutions to optimize revenue generation and/or enhance customer and audience experience.

**\*NEW\*** Export and travel-related activities must be applied for separately in the Global Market Development - Music stream.

*\*Note: While master license fees are eligible costs, applicants must provide evidence that the original recording was recorded in Ontario, within the past 24 months. Applicants wishing to include master license fees in advance of the recording process must provide a clear rationale for the valuation of the proposed costs, assurance that the recording will occur in Ontario, and identify the timeframe in which the recording will take place. Recipient companies may be required to provide additional documentation at the interim and/or final reporting stage.*

### ***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, and 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 company.

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, recipient companies will be required at the interim and/or final reporting stage to provide tangible details (e.g., full name, job description, hours worked) regarding new employees/contractors. Please include 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.

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 and the benefits to the applicant company.

### *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*

- \*NEW\* Expenses related to business travel (See Global Market Development – Music);
- \*NEW\* Expenses related to catalogue acquisition;
- 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;
- Foreign producer fees;
- Manufacturing fees;
- Staff & labour costs not directly related to the activity;
- Staff benefit costs;
- Real estate costs and leasehold improvements, or capital costs related to permanent structures;
- Cost of alcoholic beverages or cannabis-related products;
- 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, and *anticipated* funding from government or other funding bodies – including the request for Music Company Development stream funding.

The OMIF contribution can comprise a maximum of 50% of the total budget. Financing from public 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 Music Company Development 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.*

- Applications must be submitted 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/> 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](mailto: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 may be saved as it is entered. Once saved, the applicant may edit and/or add information up until the time when the application is submitted.
- Prior discussion with Ontario Creates regarding the eligibility of an activity does not guarantee funding.
- Late applications will not be considered for funding.

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.

## Summary of Application Requirements

A complete list of required application materials is outlined in the application form on the Online Application Portal (OAP). In addition to the application questions, the Music Company Development stream requires the submission of the following components:

- Activity Budget (template provided);
- 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 proposed eligible activity window.
- Business Plan (see below for requirements);
- Articles of Incorporation;
- Financial Statements for the two most recently completed fiscal years.
- Artists' contracts/certificate and undertaking (if applicable);
- Back up confirmation to support confirmed or pending financing;
- Documentation indicating that eligibility requirements have been met (e.g., proof of release dates, proof of sales, management or recording/licensing agreements);
- 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 OAP application schema.

Business Plans should include forward-looking information on plans for company growth, supported by a discussion of competitive strengths, artist development strategies, human resources, corporate financing and other key details. It is recommended that this document range between 10-25 pages. Please do not include financial statements within your business plan.

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

- Applicant track record, including profile(s) of key personnel;
- Company strategy and business model (revenue model);
- Market Overview;
- Overview of general business activities and short/long-term goals;
- Company SWOT analysis; and

- Case for OMIF Support.

## 9. Assessment Criteria

The Music Company Development 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 quality and quantity of the activities selected, and the individual request of each applicant.

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

<p><b>Track Record</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Degree to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the track record and organizational capacity (financial, human resources) to effectively execute the activities</li> <li>- Presence of diversity* among senior leadership, staff, or contract employees and/or meaningful engagement and collaboration with equity seeking/underrepresented communities in the music industry</li> </ul>	<p>15%</p>
<p><b>Financial Risk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effective articulation of the applicant's financial capacity to undertake the proposed activities</li> <li>- Stability and strength of the applicant's financial position based on company's financial statements</li> </ul>	<p>10%</p>
<p><b>Overall Proposal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality of application including the strength of business case, appropriateness and feasibility of activities, value of initiatives, general clarity and completeness</li> </ul>	<p>25%</p>
<p><b>Economic &amp; Critical Impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Degree to which expected economic development 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)</li> <li>- Applicant's potential to drive broader economic impact for the Province of Ontario</li> <li>- Applicant's potential to achieve measurable commercial and/or critical success from the proposed activities</li> </ul>	<p>25%</p>

<p><b>Resilience &amp; Sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Degree to which the application shows strategic, forward-looking planning focused on long-term growth, sustainability, and innovation</li> <li>- Degree to which the company can leverage the investment to strengthen its profile, capital, and/or talent base to support future growth.</li> </ul>	15%
<p><b>Strength of Artist Roster</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extent to which the artist roster composition aligns with the company business model</li> <li>- Degree to which diversity* is reflected within roster</li> </ul>	10%

\*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 final report(s) 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 Template

On acceptance into the program, the recipient company will be required to sign a standard Ontario Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) covering the terms of their 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 Music Company Development 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](mailto:omo@ontariocreates.ca).

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## 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 Types

### Record Labels

To be considered eligible for OMIF, domestic and multinational record labels must:

- have two or more musical artists signed to their roster;
- derive the majority of their revenue from the exploitation of master recordings of which they own or have licensed the copyright;
- hold the master copyright, or license, for a minimum of three Canadian-artist releases (by different artists) or three Canadian releases as defined by CRTC Canadian Content regulations; and
- have released at least one Canadian-artist recording within the last 12 months.

### Music Publishers

To be considered eligible for OMIF, domestic music publishers must:

- have an active roster of at least two Canadian songwriters;
- are primarily engaged in acquiring and registering copyrights for musical compositions;
- derive the majority of their revenue from authorizing the use of these compositions in recordings, on radio and television, in motion pictures, live performances, print, multimedia or other media; and
- own a minimum of 100 original works in the catalogue (with a significant portion of Canadian content).

### Music Management Companies

To be considered eligible for OMIF, music management companies must:

- Have core business activities that:
  - guide the professional careers of artists in the domestic and international entertainment industry by overseeing their day-to-day business affairs;
  - advise and counsel artists concerning professional matters, long-term plans and strategic decisions which may affect their career; and
  - engage in marketing, promotion and consulting on all facets of an artist's career.
- Be managing at least two artists (although exceptions may apply to managers with one artist should the artist's career be at an advanced, international level);
- Have a current artist roster that is at least 50% Canadian; and
- Manage at least one artist with commercial release within the last 24 months.

Companies deriving revenue from any combination of the three applicant categories need only meet the eligibility requirements of one category to apply. Activities included in the application may relate to any, or all, of the three categories. Eligible revenues must align with core business activities of the applicant categories listed above.

## Appendix 2 – Measurable Outcomes

Anticipated outcomes for the Music Company Development 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 – Music Company Development
Number of artists supported
Fees paid to artists
Number of new recordings supported - domestic artists
Number of new performance opportunities for artists (including online)
Online and social media impact (metrics)
Traditional media impact (metrics): radio/video plays, interviews, articles, reviews, etc.
Critical success of supported projects
Sustainability of activity outcomes (including increased capacity and/or innovation)
Sales success of supported activities: units sold, streams, ticket revenue, etc.
Company growth / Increased revenue
Number of international markets targeted
Increased revenue from international sales
Jobs created / retained
Tangible initiatives to improve or further embedding diversity, equity and inclusion within company operations (i.e. staff training, hiring practices, artist signings)