

# **ECPF How to Submit a Strong Application - Ben Price - PRS Foundation**

[00:00:00] Thank you everyone. Okay.

Okay, so the Early Career Promoter Fund is offering grants of up to three and a half thousand pounds in support for a range of new activities, including the booking, programming and promotion of gigs, concerts, club nights, showcases and other performances. The costs associated with those activities, including venue, higher production, artists and DJ fees, crew fees, administration, and other related costs.

Importantly, it is for capacity building costs as well, and we'll talk about this in some great depth today. It is to make sure you are developing yourselves with things like mentoring, masterclasses and conferences, and it can conclude include any other expenditure, which is relevant to your show and your genre.

There are costs that may not. You may not see described in the guidance, but you will know if there are costs [00:01:00] associated with the type of performances that you're putting on. The story so far, we've had three rounds. We've given out 47 grants so far. Round four closes on Tuesday the 15th of October.

That's next Tuesday at 6 p. m. We've distributed more than 135, 000 in grants so far for people to put on shows and support their own development. One of the key measures of the fund is to make sure we re address a lack of diversity in the live sector. So here's some snapshots. Statistics, 69 percent of grantees are female or gender diverse, 25 percent of grantees are from the global majority, 67 percent of grantees are based outside of London, and 15 percent of grantees identify as having a disability or long term health condition.

And we've given awards to many different genres, as you can see 15 different genres so far are supported. We do pride ourselves here at PRS [00:02:00] Foundation supporting music from all genres and backgrounds. And so you can see there's many different genres there. If you don't see the genre that you promote shows in, don't worry.

This is purely to demonstrate that there is, we are supporting shows. Of all different types and whatever your show is, it will be eligible

in terms of our funding priorities, what we aim to do. And when you are making your application, you should refer back to this to make sure you're ticking all these boxes. We're here to help emerging promoters do what they do best to book and develop scenes, support artists and DJs and to reach and engage audiences locally, regionally and nationally.

To help promoters to build towards sustainable careers in the grassroots music sector, to bolster the local regional and national pipeline, to support music events in all genres across England to help promoters to deliver events and work at a scale beyond their experience levels. We'll talk to that very soon.[00:03:00]

And as I've already mentioned, to address under representation within the life sector. All that's on the application form and the website as well. So who can apply? Eligible applicants must be based in England and be identified as early career promoters. The funding does come from Arts Council England, so you do need to be based in England.

To be able to apply for that. And the activities need to happen in England as well. We do allow promoters to self identify as early career, but we do have the following recommendations that were highly unlikely to support those who are completely new to booking. I have not promoted any shows in the past.

Likewise, we're unlikely to support those deemed as established promoters regionally or nationally, who should instead be applying to arts council, England supporting grassroots music fund. Which is the, this is the same pot as the Arts Council England's Supporting Grassroots Music Fund. This is just for early career promoters.

So it's likely you would have put, you would [00:04:00] be eligible for one or the other if you have promoted a handful of shows. As an example of the level of promoter you would be to apply for our fund, it's most likely that you'd be working part time as a promoter or supporting your income elsewhere, as opposed to working full time as a promoter.

Funding can be for anyone over 18 years old and there's no upper age limit. So if you are under 18, Youth Music, I would recommend looking at their grants. When we say there's no upper age limit, that's because early career does not mean young. It means that you could have done a whole career in something else and you could be moving towards promoting.

So you would still be deemed as an early career promoter. It's likely grantees will be operating on a small scale in terms of the capacity of events they've been promoting. Most eligible applicants will be considered as out of house promoters rather than in house promoters or bookers. That's because we are here to support those who are working, [00:05:00] as sole traders, as self employed.

If you are working as an in house promoter, then we would expect the company or business you are working for to support your development. We will consider applications from artists promoting event, and this is also something I will speak to later, but it needs to be evident that you're developing your own promoter brand and the development of scenes, but not the development as you as an artist.

So not you as a headline artist, as self, as a self promoter. It needs to be more about the promoter brand that you're developing. The only things we can't fund are events and tours happening outside of England for the same reason this is Arts Council England funded capital purchases, including AV equipment and building work.

Of course, we can pay for the higher of production, but we can't pay for the actual purchase of production projects that request funding that will or would be covered without the need for funding. This is also something I'll come to in [00:06:00] my top tip section. We want to hear from people whose shows.

are in a sense, reliant on the funds to, to happen at the scale you want them to happen, not things that are necessarily already on sale. But we can come to that and there are some mitigating circumstances, but that is a strong recommendation. Activities taking place before the funding decisions are communicated.

Decisions can take up to eight weeks, so you need to consider if your activity is happening within eight weeks, it won't be eligible. If it's happening in 10 weeks. It will be eligible, but it might not look the most possible to get a decision and turn around an event within two weeks. And again, that's something that I will speak to later.

We can't pay for attendance for conferences and events taking place outside the UK or the promotion of events taking place outside England. And applicants who have concurrent funding from the Arts Council's Supporting Grassroots Music Programme cannot apply. You have already taken money from this [00:07:00] pot at a higher level.

In terms of the skills building, again, this is a really essential part of the application. I can't stress this enough. There are too many applications coming through so far that focus only on the activities and the shows that you want to put on with the money. It is just as important to our assessors that we see you are making plans to develop yourself as a promoter as well.

It's all about upskilling the promoter, both with shows and with capacity building support. So in your application, you'll be asked what your self development needs are. You should describe them as honestly as possible, but then that should also be reflected in your budget. So it should be, you should have the costs of mentoring, coaching, or shadowing, or any workshops or conferences you want to attend, as well as training.

Any DEI and support relating to sustainability or accessibility, legal advice, accounting services, these are just a few [00:08:00] examples, but you should be thinking about your own development as part of the application. I could just ask everyone to just to make sure they're on mute. I'm just hearing a little bit of minor background noise.

So yeah, if you could just all check, that would be much appreciated. The wraparound support that we will offer is separate to the capacity building that you should be putting in for yourselves. In addition to supporting grantees with funding, PRS Foundation will manage a program of wraparound supports and that will include just come off my presentation just for a second to mute.

It's better. My apologies. So in addition to the support that grantees get with the funding and through their capacity building that they would identify themselves, we will offer ourselves some wraparound support to everybody who comes onto the program, as in the grantees, and that will look like a toolkit and resources for early career promoters [00:09:00] based on things that already exist, things that we create.

I think most interestingly, a series of industry masterclasses, which are going to cover a lot of topics such as deal types, budgeting, licensing, health and safety and inclusive practice. And I have no idea why I chose the most boring topics that there are, but there's obviously a lot of very interesting topics as well, like how to book overseas artists, how to work with agents and lots of other things that we'll be covering.

And every grantee does come on board for an onboarding call after in the group. So we just, yes. They held an onboarding call for all our round three grantees just to tell them exactly what's going to be happening. A quick sort of rundown,

I won't read all of this, but in terms of the application process, I'm going to show you part of the application forms shortly.

But you would, if you haven't already go to our website and that you will be directed to our application portal which is called FlexiGrant. You can check the guidance notes to make sure that [00:10:00] you are eligible, although we've just been over the eligibility and hopefully it's quite loose.

And you should hopefully, if you're here, be eligible and check the deadlines. And once you have set up an account on FlexiGrant, as I say, it's quite a user friendly platform I found. I find so yeah, have a look on that. There are deadlines every month right until February. So we are always open.

We're never closed. If your application falls at one minute to six on the 15th, you're in round four. If it falls at one minutes past, you're in round five. So it never closes. but you do need to make sure you do reach that deadline. Applications are then assessed by experts, industry advisors online, and then the shortlisted applications based on the best scores are discussed at decision panels.

Decisions can take up to eight weeks. If you do get a grant, congratulations, you'll get 80 percent of that upfront, but payments can take up to six weeks. So again, another thing, if you are planning [00:11:00] your activity date, and you are reliant on those funds, you need to think the application is going to take eight weeks, and then going to possibly takes up to six weeks to to get the first part of the grant.

How long does that then leave me to market and successfully put on my shows? All things to be considerate of. If you are successful, don't be discouraged. Our funding is competitive and you can apply up for up to three times for the ECPF. And but please do allow at least one month before reapplying if you are unsuccessful.

So the main point of this this session was because when we first launched the Early Career Promoter Fund, we held a how to apply session before we'd received any applications, and we told people what we expected to see and what we thought the patterns and trends were going to be. And what we thought the assessors and panelists were going to be looking for.

We're now three rounds in nearly at the end of the fourth round. And we've learned a lot. We've seen what people are [00:12:00] putting in. We've seen what we've granted. We've seen what the panelists enjoy and and what they

want, feel they, they want to support and what we are seeing as recurring themes.

So this is really a top level, top tip session. just to give you an idea and a little bit of insight in what we're seeing so far. So I'm just going to go over several strands here. And this one I've gone over already, but plan your dates carefully. The applications do take eight weeks from deadline.

And as I say, payments can take up to six weeks. Now, if your application is, If your events are happening within eight weeks of the application, you will be deemed ineligible. We don't deem your application ineligible if it's say 10 weeks ahead of time, but what we are finding is that panelists are looking at that and saying, is this feasible?

Can you get an okay on this show? And realistically market 200, 300 tickets in the time or however many you're planning to do in the time that you've given yourself. And that is where some applications are falling through. So [00:13:00] plan your dates carefully. If you're thinking of it in the October 15th deadline.

Realistically, your shows should probably be happening from February onwards at this point. You can apply for your dates to happen up to one year after the the date you get the grant. If you applied in October and you're going to get a decision in December, your events could be happening as late as December 2025.

Plan ahead, take your time and see if you can make the best possible application that accounts for the kind of time that you do need to market shows, especially in this climate. Is your show already on sale? We've seen a lot of people applying for shows that we can see are already on sale and the Early Career Promoter Fund is here to support shows that are a scale above the scale that you have been promoting at in the past.

So as an example, if you are applying to go take your capacity up to, in terms of the amount [00:14:00] of audience members you've catered for in the past, then that would be something that would be eligible. If you are trying to book a higher level of artists, or you're trying to enhance the production of your show to then bring a bigger footfall for your shows, That's the kind of application that we're finding the panellists want to see.

When we can see a show is already on sale and will happen with or without our funding, it only suggests that the application is basically to mitigate the loss of the show or to try and help it have a better chance of breaking even. And don't

hear me wrong. We hope all shows can break even and we'd love to support those shows if we can, but it's realistic that the panelists are looking for shows that they feel are not going to happen without our support and that are really going to help that promoter to do something above what they've been doing in the past.

And that goes to this point really, are you upscaling your activities? Are you thinking about doing a show at you've previously done a 100 cap and you now want to scale up to a [00:15:00] 200? That's great. And some of the examples I already gave. Are you thinking about how you can do something in a bigger way?

Or are we've had quite a lot of applications from people who say, run a monthly night for the last year and they'd like the funding to support them running the same event at the same venue for the next 12 months. It doesn't make that application ineligible but as a tip we really are seeing that the best applications and the ones that are getting through are the ones with people who are thinking about if they are taking their career or their passion to the next level and upscaling their activities.

Be ambitious, but measured. Now, this pertains to we're finding decision panelists are sometimes seeing people put in an application that is Not in unfeasible, but is unlikely to succeed based on the experience and the experiences of that promoter. So far, [00:16:00] example, you're selling out a show at a 70 cap and you decide that you're going to book the local 750 cap venue.

And you've only done five or six shows in the past and you don't have experience of going anywhere in that middle ground between there and then. That's quite an extreme example, but we want people to be ambitious and think about upscaling. But our panelists are looking at some applications and deciding that it wouldn't be the best time to give the grant to do this thing, because if you have a bad experience promoting at a level significantly higher to that you've done in the past, then it could set you off.

You could lose more money and you could never return to promoting. Some people have felt it's kinder to, to reject applications if they feel that the project isn't feasible and the applicant hasn't really demonstrated how they would make such a radical jump up in terms of ticket numbers and scale.

Are you addressing your development needs? I've touched on this already, but it's an extremely important [00:17:00] part of the application is making sure that

you are looking at your development needs and saying, am I addressing those with mentorship, with conferences with anything else that helps you to develop your career.

and your needs. A lot of people are describing their needs and saying, and I look forward to receiving the wraparound support from PRS Foundation. These are two different things. You will get wraparound support from from us and you will get generalized support, but we want to hear about the specific things that you want us to spend your money on.

So that could be mentors, conferences, workshops, or marketing courses, it could be legal advice, it could be accounting, it could be business advice, all those things we do want to see. It doesn't have to be a large amount of money, but it should be, a lot of A significant amount of money that will actually help your development needs, so we'd expect to see at least, a conference or a mentor in there and we're finding that well, it is [00:18:00] an incredibly important part of the scoring and panelists and advisors are taking to applications that really do acknowledge what your development needs are.

If you are applying as an artist, that is great, but just to go over that point I made earlier, we're seeing too many applications from artists that are a little bit of a gray area, where the artist is maybe headlining the show as well. And there isn't really evidence that they are putting in development costs that pertain to being a promoter, they might be saying they want to do, they might have put something in their development costs which pertain to their development as an artist.

This fund is very specifically for promoters. And we're seeing in a lot of scenes, especially things like jazz, where artists do generally promote their own brand, and that's the way they put on shows. They, they may also be part of those shows, but they're not necessarily the poster person of those shows.

It's more about developing the promoter brand. And I think, in an ideal world, to [00:19:00] avoid those grey areas, we would I would suggest that the artist should not be part of those shows whatsoever just so there is no grey area because it can cause confusion for the panellists and raise question marks on how much you are looking to develop your own promoter brand.

Don't be frightened by the budget. I'm going to show you the budget form soon. Some of you may have looked at it already and thought, I don't know what this means, I don't know what that means. Please don't be afraid of it. I'm going to go over it in a second. It can be as simple or as complicated as you want it to be.



As long as the budget balances. then there's absolutely nothing to worry about. We're not quizzing you on the perfect budget. We're not saying where's this coming from? Where's that coming from? We just want to see essentially what you plan to spend the money on. And I'm gonna just go from here actually and stop sharing for a minute.

Make sure there's no one in the waiting room. And I'm going to share [00:20:00] my.

application form instead. So hopefully you can all see that. If you haven't already, or I imagine a lot of you are in the drafting stage of applications, but if you're not, this is what you'll find when you come onto the application form. Six sections, three of them very straightforward that wouldn't really need to tell you about eligibility about you.

Numbers one and two are obviously self explanatory. Number six, monitoring, of course, is very straightforward. But your three main sections where you're telling us about what your activities are, the proposed activities section, how you've, how you are approaching our funding priorities, and of course the budget section.

So I'm going to just show you the budget section now for those that haven't seen it yet, or maybe those that are on it, but feel a little bit stuck. So these first two questions, please provide your total project budget. And then the second question, please provide your total [00:21:00] request amount for PRS Foundation.

You don't necessarily need to address those straight away. I would recommend doing your budget below first, and then coming back and entering the numbers that you need. So there's some fairly self explanatory questions here. This is a really important question about why you need funding support. I think, especially if you not that we expect to see applications from people whose tickets are already on sale, but if you do and you're and you feel you can clearly demonstrate that the funding would support that show in a way that accelerates it or that takes it up to another level.

Maybe it's an enhanced production. Maybe it's it's adding some more sort of credible artists to it. But this is a really important box regardless, just to explain why you need the funding support and why you can't fund the shows yourselves. So as I say, there's quite a few boxes here if I scroll down the show slowly.

They are not all required. Don't feel like you have to put something in every box. If you [00:22:00] don't understand these things yet, Don't worry. We understand that people are early career promoters, and a lot of the wraparound support we will offer will go into more depth on these things. So we're not expecting the perfect budget.

For example, you would most likely have artist fees. In fact, you absolutely should because that is a critical part that we are seeing artists paid fairly. And you're most likely going to have venue hire fees because You're putting your events on in venues and we want to make sure that the grassroots music ecosystem is being rewarded with this funding.

So shows that are benefiting multiple artists, multiple venues, or even just a grassroots venue are going to be viewed very favorably. Production costs, you're likely to have production costs. Sometimes these things are included in the venue. Of course, you're going to be marketing and promoting your show.

When it comes to things like. Additional staffing, PRS for music costs, administrative costs, other administrative costs, insurance [00:23:00] costs, sorry. Do not feel you absolutely have to put something in for these. You're not being judged on these numbers. It's not a quiz question about do you understand and are you paying costs for PRS for music.

Sometimes the venues will cover them within them. Sometimes these forms, these parts of the forms are blank. We'll of course be having PRS part of our wraparound support. We'll be telling us a lot more about, how to work out PRS costs. And how to work with them in general insurance costs. Same again.

You should obviously have insurance if you're putting on shows, but if you don't yet know those costs, please don't feel that is a quiz question. It's absolutely not. As well as audience access costs. Obviously, there's a reason audience access costs is in this section of the budget. It is because we expect access costs for the audience to be part of the.

The show, they should be part of your budget. So if you're putting on shows with or without this grant, we do as I [00:24:00] come up, we'll come on to have a separate section where you can request extra money for access top ups. And that could be for yourself, or it could be for the artists you work with, or anybody working the show who does have additional access requirements.

You do not need to put access requirements for you or the artists or people you are working with. In this budget you just have to put the audience access costs

in this budget. But again, please don't think we're judging you if you don't, if you don't have any costs, maybe you're booking a completely accessible venue and it's not a problem.

Again, please don't be put off by that question. In terms of your expenditure still we do expect something to go in these boxes. Please don't leave these boxes completely blank. Think about at least one thing that you want to pay for out of this budget for capacity building.

That could be conferences, workshops, and masterclasses, mentoring, costs of shadowing, costs of developing your promoter brand, or anything that seems relevant to [00:25:00] your organization or yourself. When I say organization, in a sole trader sense, membership fees can be put in here. We see a lot of people just as a reference, putting in a cost for membership of the AIP, the Association of Independent Promoters, that is a free.

networks join. You don't need to put that in, but maybe you just want to put a note in this box here to tell us that you do plan to join the Association of Independent Promoters. When you're putting in your income, please do put in a reasonable estimate. We tell people they should probably think about 70, 60, 70 percent of their capacity.

We don't want you to make a budget that has to break even based on selling out shows because then There isn't scope for profit and there's a lot of scope for loss. So I would suggest you, you budget your shows at 60, 70%. We do like a description in here as to what the ticket price is and how many you are anticipated to sell.

Not just a number where we have to have to guess how [00:26:00] much you are trying to fill fill that room. External funding support, not from Ticket Sales or PRS Foundation. We don't really expect that you would have anything, but please include the details here. It's unlikely, that at this stage you are getting other income sources, but please do let us know.

And you can put in any other income or contributions that you would need to balance out the budget. Now. Your income and your expenditure have to match. So let's say your expenditure as a very rough figure is 5, 000 pounds. And then with ticket sales your income is two and a half thousand pounds then to balance that budget and to make it even.

you would put in this box PRS Foundation request of two and a half thousand pounds because your budget has to match and if it doesn't you will get huge red

writing here which says your budget does not match please revise it. So please put in the figure in this box here, the request amount [00:27:00] which is which is the figure that you will need to balance your book.

So if you did enter two and a half thousand pounds, I guess you would scroll to the top of this section and say in this box here that you are asking for two and a half thousand pounds from PRS. And then your total project budget in this example was the five thousand pounds. So you're saying the whole project has a cost of five thousand, but I only need two and a half thousand pounds from you because I'm making two and a half thousand pounds from ticket sales.

Hopefully that's clear. And the budget needs to balance. And then as I say at the bottom, you are then asked if you have any access requirements, which is a separate budget, and you can put in here if you have additional access related requirements. And that can include if you are a promoter who has child care needs, that is an access requirement that prevents you from doing shows, then you can put in here.[00:28:00]

If you have artists who have additional access requirements, if you yourself have access requirements, but please don't put in there. If you are simply trying to think of access for your audience, because that should be included in your in your main budget. So I hope that makes sense. I'm going to go back to the presentation.

Just for one second.

Here are the dates remaining. As I say, we are only a few days away from the next deadline, the 15th at 6pm. If you do have any access requirements, you can email me in advance, and we will extend that by up to 48 hours, to the 17th of October. [00:29:00] If you do apply slightly late, and it's a, it's an accident, then please do email me if it's imperative that you are in round five, and if a round six deadline would mean that your show would no longer be viable, please just drop me an email, and I'm sure we can sift you into round five, but we do try and say, try and make the 6pm deadline if you can.

As I say, five remaining deadlines, you can apply up to three times. I've talked a lot there, but there's quite a lot to get through and a lot of tips that I wanted to impart. I'm going to stop talking, stop sharing, and I'm going to invite questions from the room. This is an ask us anything.

I will stop the recording there.