

Open Fund for Music Creators webinar 2024

[00:00:00] All right, we're almost at five past so I'll make a start on the workshop now. So hi, for those of the, that have just joined welcome to this funding workshop for PRS Foundation's Open Fund for Music Creators. I'm Becca B, I'm the grants coordinator that works on the Open Fund, as well as a whole bunch of our other PRS Foundation.

In this workshop, I'm going to take you through key information on the Open Fund the application process, we're going to have a look at what the application form looks like, and I'm going to share my top tips with you. And for those watching live on Zoom today, you'll have the opportunity to ask any questions at the end of my presentation.

So let me just zoom in to the presentation. Do bear with me.

Sorry, if [00:01:00] everyone can keep themselves on mute, that'd be great, thank you. There's probably a way for me to do that in the admin mode, but I'm not really a Zoom expert, sorry. I'm just going to give you some background information on PRS Foundation. So we're the UK's leading charitable funder of new music and talent development. We support music creator development both through direct grants like the Open Fund and through organizations that we fund to run talent development programs.

Our grant support covers all music genres UK wide and since the charity was founded in 2000 we've funded over 8, 500 new music projects.

To give you an overview of PRS Foundation funding, we've got grant schemes for music creators and organisations, as I said. For music creators, we offer funding for those at any career level through the Open Fund and Women Make Music. We also then have targeted support through PPL Momentum Accelerator, which is for music creators based in Wales, Yorkshire and Liverpool City region.

Our Next [00:02:00] Steps funding is for music creators who have a strong UK presence and a team around them and are a crucial career tipping point. Our Next Steps funds include PPL Momentum, Hitmaker and the Composers Fund. Once a music creator is awarded Next Steps funding, they can no longer apply to any of our funds except for international support.

And our international funds are the International Showcase Fund or ISF.

And then we also have funding schemes for organizations for projects and programs focusing on music creator development. And those include the New Talent Development Network, New Music Biennial, Resonate, and Beyond Borders. And Robin Rocket, pictured here, is a great example of a music creator who we supported through an organization we fund called Heart and Soul.

And then she went on to achieve open fund direct support last year for her debut album. So look out for that, it's going to be great.

So across all of our funding schemes, whether or not they're for music creators or organisations, [00:03:00] we're looking to support applications that respond to our funding priorities. So our funding priorities are to support the creation, performance and promotion of outstanding music, to enable the UK's most talented music creators to realise their potential.

So this is about how the project you're applying for is going to offer you development. in terms of your career and your creativity. And the third priority is to reach audiences. So we want you to think about who the audience for your project is and how you're going to reach them.

So now you've got background information on PRS Foundation, the funding we offer and what we're looking for in applications. Let's get into the Open Fund. The Open Fund for Music Creators offers grant support of up to 5k for projects. Focus on new music creation and slash all performance. And by new music, we just mean your own original work.

The funds open to all genres, backgrounds, and [00:04:00] career levels. versus our other funding schemes, which look for something a bit more specific. So it makes the open fund a great option to start out on when applying the PRS foundation support, the application form is online on our grants portal, and there are some parts that you need to submit using text, but the main questions can either be submitted by writing or video, whichever you find easiest, we appreciate you guys are artists first and foremost.

So you may find expressing yourself easier on video and that's all right. If you're watching live today. This round of the Open Fund opened a few days ago on Monday and the deadline will be the 8th of April and we'll have a second round later on in the year and that will open on 2nd of September and the deadline is going to be the 30th of September so either deadline has a four week period.

Who can apply to the Open Fund? So this is for UK based music creators, and we would consider songwriters, composers, [00:05:00] artists, bands, and producers who are involved in the writing process, including those working behind the scenes with performing artists as music creators. You'll need to have been making music for at least 18 months and should be 18 plus.

Exceptions can be made for those represented by an adult. But it's it happens in a rare case. And if you are under 18, I'd instead recommend looking into funding from Youth Music. As mentioned earlier, you can't have already had Next Steps funding from BRS Foundation. And we can't support music creators who are in current deals with majors.

You should be a PRS4Music member or in a position to join PRS. And more information on that you can contact PRS4Music directly and their website is PRS4Music.com. So what can be funded through the Open Fund? So any projects containing creation of new music Music creator fees to cover your time and work, touring and live performances, recording [00:06:00] and release, creative residency costs, fees to your creative collaborators, promotion and marketing, but there does also need to be some kind of music creation or performance within the project.

For example, if you're coming in for a project that's around promoting. An EP, maybe you have an EP launch as part of it, so there's performance in there. You can also come in for equipment, but it can't exceed 20 percent of your total request amounts.

So we can't fund projects that contain no element of music creation or live performance. So again, we can't support marketing or promotional costs alone. We cannot support bursaries, tuition slash education costs or scholarships, anything going towards a kind of formal education. We can't fund activity that falls before the decision date, and this date will always be shown on the application form within the first section, which is the eligibility.

So do double check [00:07:00] over it and note it down to make sure. Similarly, we can't fund any retroactive activities or projects that have already taken place. We can't fund the purchase of cars or vans, building a studio, we generally don't fund international activity through the Open Fund unless it's part of a majority UK based project and you can really make a strong case for why that international activity is pretty needed.

We also aren't able to fund a roster of artists on a record label or management company. So ideally you'd represent yourself as an individual music creator or a band, or have a representative represent you. individually.

So to go through what happens during the application process before applying, go to our website, which is prsfoundation.com and read through the funding pages. We have all of this information and more there for you to read so you can make sure your application and project would be [00:08:00] eligible. So on our website there's a funding tab and the open fund is under all career levels within that tab.

So you can click through and all the information will be there. On that page, once you've read through all the information, there'll be an Apply Now button. And if you click that will take you to our online grants portal, FlexiGrants. If it's your first time applying, you'll need to just sign up for a free account.

But if you've already apply to us before everything will live on your FlexiGrant account. So between us opening the fund for applications and the decisions being communicated, that are several steps, which is why it can take up to 12 weeks. As I say, the period applications are open for the open fund is four weeks.

And then after the deadline, applications are assessed by expert industry advisors that are going to be working in a relevant music genre to the application you submitted. These are always anonymous. So your application would be assessed by two experts, and then we put together a shortlist at that point.[00:09:00]

And the shortlist is sent out to a further four industry experts, and the top applications are discussed at decision panel. Decisions can take up to 12 weeks, as I say, after the deadline. So just keep that in mind when you're applying to have an expectation of if you're successful, when that money might come through.

And all decisions are communicated by email. So after you've got your decision, if you've been successful, congrats read your offer letter carefully and take the steps outlined. You'll receive part of the funding upfront. So for grants of up to three to 5k, you'll receive 50 percent and the other 50 percent when you've completed your project evaluation after your project has been completed.

And then for grants below 3k you receive 80 percent upfront and 20 percent after evaluation. And if you haven't been successful don't be discouraged

because the fund is highly competitive. And you'll be told the success rate as well as the total number of applications in your decision email and you can apply to the open fund once per calendar year.

So no matter [00:10:00] which round one or two you apply to you can, it just starts again the next year. So what is in the application form? So the key information across our application forms roughly falls into these categories. So you have an about you section, which is covering your basic details and the details of your project and your contact information.

There'll be a section on your music, which has some background information on your career so far and the kind of music you make. And you've also got to submit two music examples. The main section is about your plan. What actually is your project? Be really clear and concise in this section. We want to know how the project will develop you creatively and professionally.

You'll be asked why support is needed and why now? Who is the audience and how will you reach them? And this plan section responds to our funding priorities I mentioned earlier. You'll [00:11:00] also need to submit a budget and there'll be a template table on the form for you to complete. Not all sections are relevant to every project, so you can leave some areas blank if you don't have costs in those areas, so don't be overwhelmed by the big table.

Where you do add in costs, be sure to break that down, so there'll be an option to add a bit more detail. So for example, if you've got three grand going towards musician fees, how does that break down per person per day? You'll also need to show your income and the income and expenditure for the project need to balance so you're not left with money over and you're not left out of pocket either.

We can't fund 100 percent of project costs, so you'll need to include some other income in there. It can be projected ticket sales for example, or recording income from the project that you're coming in for. Or you can show that you put some previous music related income aside, or that you have.

some other kind of support from perhaps another funder or label, something like that. And now I'm going to give you an overview of what the [00:12:00] form looks like online, and we can deep dive into that. So I'm going to stop this share and Take you to FlexiGrant.

Here we go. So this is what the summary page looks like when you start an open fund application. So the form breaks this down into sections and shows the

approximate time they might take to complete. But please be really generous with yourself, especially if it's your first time applying. And these are really rough estimates.

It will vary. Between everyone, really. So as [00:13:00] you can see, it's got nine sections that might sound like a lot, but some are really short I promise. And there are a couple that are for example, other development needs is optional. Just to have a quick look into the eligibility, we already went into this.

You'll be asked to answer these questions.

correctly and according with our eligibility. And if you're selecting any ineligible activity, you'll be met with this message and you can review our criteria just to make sure.

And here we are. As I say on the eligibility section, it will always say the decision date. So definitely note this down once you've gone through the eligibility. I'm just going to [00:14:00] go into the general details page. So as I say, this is for basic details, like your contact info, music creator name where you're based, and any website or social media links.

It's fine if you don't have a website, you can just leave a social media link, and that's alright.

So we also ask for a short reference in this section or a media coverage link. Don't fret too much about this, and if you're putting a reference it just needs to be a few words from someone you've worked with previously as a music creator who's not directly involved in this project, but it's not an academic reference kind of situation.

It's all good.

So the next section is for the basic details on your project. We just need to know in really basic terms [00:15:00] what the project is. So is it an album recording and release? Is it touring? You just let us know here. You let us know your total project budget, the grant request amount, and which genres you are working with.

And this is how we are gonna match you up with an expert industry advisor and also the reach of the projects.

So the next section is where you're going to provide your two music examples. There is lots of guidance here, as you can see. So when you're submitting these, there's two text boxes here. So you can just input the links directly.

So when you're doing this, please link specific tracks or pieces, not for example, an album or compilation or a really long piece that's say an hour long. Because the people scoring your application are only going to have so long to look at it. [00:16:00] So if your work is on the longer side please just provide a short clip.

If you feel that music videos or live performance videos are the most relevant to what you're applying for or show your best work, definitely use those, that's fine. And you can also use unreleased music and demos using unlisted links. And if you're applying for a recording project and you have a demo for that project, it's a really good idea to include it.

And we'll take into account any demos are not going to be produced to the same standard as a finished and released track. And it's all taken into account, so that's all good. If you are a behind the scenes producer or songwriter working with performing artists you'll also just need to write the share splits information directly into the text boxes just so we have that information.

So This next section, our funding priorities, is the main section of the application form. And as you can see, we've actually got the funding priorities [00:17:00] here for you to refer to when you're answering these questions. So this is where you'll have the choice to submit either a video or audio application or a written application.

The questions are the same, it's just to your preference really. So I've just put written application here just for demonstrative purposes. But if you select video the questions will all be there and then you'll be asked to submit a link to the video.

As this is going to be the kind of main part of the form, definitely make sure you read through all the questions really carefully and respond in full. All of the questions will have extra guidance. Make sure you read through that really carefully. The ones to achievements and track record is just so we can get a sense of where you are so far in your career.

Throughout this section You will need to just include as much relevant detail ideally as you can. So this activity, what would you like, what would you like us to fund and why does this funding need support? We really need to know

specific and clear detail on kind of what it [00:18:00] is, who you're working with, where, when, and why.

Is the activity happening in a studio? Which one? Are there venues involved? Which ones? Who are you recording with or performing with specifically and why?

And the question on how the project will benefit the music creators responds to our second funding priority. So by the main music creators we mean those that are making the original music in this project, not your collaborators or performers that are involved. As I say, our funding priorities is about your development.

The question on why now is the right time can relate to how this specific project is crucial to you right now. So is it your debut album or tour you've been building up and working towards? Or if you've released and toured music before, what sets this apart from that? And do explain what impact you'd expect the project to [00:19:00] have now and in the long term in terms of your creative and career goals as well.

So this audience question responds to our third priority. So think specifically in terms of who the audience is. And if you've got stats on who you're reaching already, write them in here. And if you're using a third party service, such as a PR company, say who they are, why you chosen to work with them.

And think about how the desired audience will be reached.

So this next section is a timeline to show an overview of your project from start to finish. Remember, we can't fund activity that takes place before the decision date. And again, the date is in the eligibility section of the form. So be as specific as you can with these dates and think about a realistic and [00:20:00] achievable timeline.

And if you're applying for music creation. definitely include the schedule for the release and promotion here, even if our funding isn't going towards that specifically. We'll still want to know the timeline of when everything is coming out, being released and therefore reaching your audiences.

You can also put a confirmation status, whether something is confirmed provisional or unconfirmed. So maybe you've started some conversations which would be provisional. You're not sure yet, it would be unconfirmed, or if it's all

good to go pending the funding, you'd be confirmed. You can also add in a bit of extra detail on this concise description.

For example, if the activity is recording, you could say in this description, where, for example.

Or if they're tour dates, you can put more information in with each date. And the activity section is up to six lines.

The next [00:21:00] section is on your budget. Before we go into the budget table, there's a text box for you to detail any other financial support. So where that would be going towards specifically within the project, what that will cover. If you've got label or publisher support, you should briefly explain why our support is also needed.

And then here we have the table. So as you can see, each line allows you to add a description, definitely use it. So again, if the costs break down show that here. Under Music Creator Fees work that out per person, per session.

And you'll also need to check off whether that element is being covered by PRS Foundation Support. If it's being partially covered, you can select yes and expand in the description to say, for example, PRS Foundation Support would be covering 500. And the rest not.[00:22:00]

So then we have the income table. And that will need to add up to the same amount as your expenditure in the end. So as I say your budget balances to zero. So you'll put your requested amount from PRS foundation. Here and then any other income, whether it's confirmed or unconfirmed throughout the rest of the table.

And we can't fund projects to 100% of the costs, so you need to put other income here or your application will be ineligible. So say you're coming in for touring, you could put projected ticket sales in the unconfirmed income section two. And again be sure to break that down in the description of how that would work out.

And it is a good idea to have some income already confirmed. So maybe you've got some cash that you've set aside from merch sales or previous recording income you can put towards the project. Do put that in under confirmed.[00:23:00]

If you've got any other funding, so for example, Arts Council or Help Musicians, you can put it in the confirm section if your bid has already been successful or unconfirmed if you're still waiting to hear on a decision. And if you're successful in our funding but not theirs, that's alright, we're just asking for a resubmitted budget showing how you can make the project work without that income.

It's worth mentioning that you can also add In kind support. This means any support your project is getting, which would otherwise cost money. So for example so you can use a studio for free. You would put that there with the approximate cost of how much you'd have to otherwise pay. If you do having in kind income it would also need to be listed as in kind expenditure so that those two amounts balance as well as your main income and expenditure.

So the expert advisors who are assessing your application, they're going to have knowledge of how much things will cost. So don't make the numbers up get quotes for expenditure, look at [00:24:00] musicians union rates for paying yourself and your collaborators.

So as I say this section is optional. It's just so you can express any interest in These areas that we may pass on to organizations that we fund, if you'd be interested in that,

and the final section is monitoring information. So this information isn't seen by anyone assessing your application. And we just use this data to ensure we're reaching a diverse pool of applicants. But if you're not comfortable providing the information, you can select prefer not to say against each question.

And that's the last section of the form. Once you go through and complete the pages this bar here will complete to 100%. It's worth mentioning you can [00:25:00] save your progress and leave any time. We're definitely not expecting you to do this all in one sitting. And then once it's completed to 100%, a submit button will appear.

Once you submitted your application, you can't make any changes. So definitely make sure you check over everything first. And that is the form. I'm just going to briefly Zoom back into my presentation so I can share my top tips.

All right, just so to summarize my top tips. Make sure your application is eligible by reading the full criteria on our website. If your application is ineligible, it can't be considered and it doesn't matter how good the music is. So please make sure it's eligible. So making sure your activities start after this.

Decision date, making sure the project has some kind of income aside from PRS [00:26:00] Foundation funding, even if that's in kind support or perspective income from the project itself. Don't rush. You've got four weeks from the opening date, the deadline. Definitely have your application read over by a third person that isn't involved in your project.

Just to be sure it doesn't make sense. There's a good chance that the person assessing your application won't know you. Make it clear. The key things are that you've got a clear project plan and understanding of how it will develop you and how you'll reach audiences. As again the person assessing your application may not be familiar with your work.

Cost accordingly as we just went through, definitely research your costs and show the breakdown in the budget and make sure you're paying yourself and your collaborators fairly. It will be difficult to have your application agreed to be funded if you're not paying people. Definitely do your research and check the Musicians Union website for that.

So those are all my top tips. Again, please see our website for [00:27:00] the full guidance info prs foundation.com. We'll always shout about opening dates, deadlines, and anything else. The team are up to you on our socials which is at PRS Foundation across the social medias. If you need to contact us, our general inquiries email is info@prsfoundation.com, or if you've already started an application or received a grant, it's applications@prsfoundation.com.

So thank you for watching the presentation. I'm going to open the floor to questions now. So if anyone has a question, can you please put it in the chat?[00:28:00]

So we have a question on those applying if you are in education. So for example this person is doing a part time master's. So that is fine, but the project itself can't be going towards. your education.

And the reference will be for you as a music creator, vouching for yeah, whether, they think you can deliver the project well.[00:29:00]

There's a question on how important a social media following is Not very, to be honest, because it really vary between genres as well, how relevant that is, but also, as I say, the Open Fund is for music creators of all career levels, so we're not looking for you to be at a specific point.

As long as you're making good music and the project is going to develop you and you're reaching audiences, those are the things that we're looking for.

So your reference should not be involved in your artist project, they should be someone that you've worked with in the past. Maybe you've put a gig on and it's a promoter.[00:30:00]

There's a question on track records and whether this has to be the last 18 months specifically. So for example, if you've taken a career break, that's absolutely fine. And by the 18 months thing, we just mean we need you to have been making music for at least 18 months, but we understand that.

Yeah, you can come back after a career break and that's completely valid. And you can just explain that within that section.

There is a question on how many music creators are awarded [00:31:00] per round, and there isn't a set number, we have a budget, but it will just depend on the grants that sorry the projects that are selected. For example if there are several projects which have quite small budgets, we'd be able to support more.

But it's worth mentioning as well that we announce all of the music creators that we'd support in any round and that's available on our website and our social media.[00:32:00]

So there's a question on projects which contain international elements. So you can apply to our funding schemes for a project which has larger elements, including international, as long as you're only asking for the UK elements to be funded by us. That's totally fine.

And I think if that, if that's the case show within the budget that any international activity is not supported by PRS foundation. It's just the UK based

question on how often you can reapply. As I mentioned earlier in the [00:33:00] presentation, you can apply once per calendar year. So you can choose whether you apply to round one or round two, but you will only be able to apply to one.

I'll stick around in case there's any more questions.[00:34:00]

There's a question on the kinds of projects we can support. For example interdisciplinary projects, or more in the realm of sound art. We definitely do support those. So any projects which are interdisciplinary just make sure that

the main focus of what you're applying to us for is about the the music that's taken place within that.

and about your development as a music creator.

We definitely have sound art specialists industry advisors that can assess your application if you are working in sound art genres.

So there's a question on whether we would be able to see example [00:35:00] application. So it's not something we offer, but really it's gonna be really specific to you and your project. Especially the open fund because it's open to all genres, all backgrounds, all career levels.

And also on budget breakdowns we're not really able to provide a specific budget. However by breakdown I just mean so for example if you've got recording costs. As a lump sum, just explaining how it breaks down, maybe per piece that you're recording. Or if you have musician fees, how that works out per person, per session.

There's a question on receiving feedback for unsuccessful applications. So as we're pretty much two members of staff working across this fund and we get hundreds of applications per round. We're not able to offer one to one [00:36:00] feedback for everybody. There are situations where if you've gotten to the decision panel and we feel The kind of summary of comments left by those on the panel would be useful to pass on to you will contact you to set up a short feedback call.

But just because of, unfortunately, the scale of us as an organization and the scale of the demand, we're not able to offer that to everybody.

There's a question on if you're in a band, do you have to pay yourselves? And so it's something that you can definitely allow yourself to do because you've got you've got up to five grand to apply for. So you can definitely put in your own fees there. But if you really want to focus on say a recording and paying out a producer to work with, and PR, [00:37:00] that's also fine.

Last call for any questions.

I appreciate it's a lot of information, so thank you for listening to all. And I hope it's helpful.

So I guess if there's no more questions I'll just wrap [00:38:00] up by reminding you that the Open Fund is open for applications now. The deadline will be the 8th of April. If there's kind of anything that comes up when you're applying That hasn't been answered within this webinar. You can email us at applications at PRS foundation.

com. It's worth mentioning also, this is being streamed live to our YouTube channel which is PRS foundation. So you'll be able to watch this back at a later date. All right. Thank you so much, everyone.