

# Professional Development Awards Application Guidelines



These awards are generously supported by the Willis and Grace Grant Charitable Trust

The Musicians Benevolent Fund makes awards to individual professional musicians towards projects which will inspire their musical creativity and enable them to explore new directions in their musical work. Professional musicians of all ages and musical styles are invited to apply. Before completing an application form, a summary of the proposed project (no more than 100 words) should be sent by email to [inspire@mbf.org.uk](mailto:inspire@mbf.org.uk).

Please read the guidelines below for full details of who may apply and how applications will be assessed.

## 1. Excellence

Applicants will be assessed on the quality of musicianship they have displayed in their previous work. They will be expected to have a strong reputation among peers in their particular musical field.

## 2. Artistic development

The aspects of a project which may be funded must develop the applicant's musical skills and creativity. For this reason, we cannot consider proposals for instrument or equipment purchase, recordings, concert opportunities or promotion. The proposal must demonstrate how the project will enhance the applicant artistically.

## 3. Individuals

Projects must focus on the professional development of the individual applying. We cannot consider applications from groups or organisations. If a project is collaborative, the applicant must clearly demonstrate how it will benefit them as a musician.

## 4. Exploration

Projects should be beyond the applicant's usual areas of work.

## 5. Professional Musicians

For the purposes of this scheme, 'professional musician' is defined as follows: someone who is paid to perform, create or teach music, and who makes a living from this. Applicants should be able to provide documentary evidence that they fulfil this definition.

## 6. Stages for application

Applicants should have completed their education (self training or recognised music routes) at least five years prior to applying. Musicians can receive an award no more than once at each of the following career stages:

- Stage one: Emerging musicians who have been professional (see Point 5) for five years
- Stage two: Established musicians who have been professional (see Point 5) for ten years
- Stage three: Musicians who have been professional (see Point 5) for twenty years

## 7. Nationality

Applicants must be British/Irish or have been permanently resident in the UK or Ireland for at least three years at the time of applying. We may need to see proof of nationality.

## 8. Submission dates

There are four submission dates each year: the last day of January, April, July and October.

## 9. Duration and timing of projects

Applications can be submitted for programmes of work lasting from a few weeks to a year.

We will not fund retrospectively.

Projects should commence at least six weeks after the closing date subsequent to their submission. For example, if an application is submitted before the end of October closing date, the project should commence after the middle of December.

Projects should be completed within an agreed timescale.

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## 10. Amounts of awards and budgets

Individual awards will range from £500 to £5,000. Applicants should submit a budget appropriate to their particular project and not based on the maximum award available. The Musicians Benevolent Fund may offer a different amount from the one requested.

In the first year of the awards scheme, the average award was £1,500. It is anticipated that £7,500 in total will be available each quarter.

## 11. Conditions of funding

The Musicians Benevolent Fund will not be sole funder for a project. Applicants will be expected to contribute at least 10% of total budget costs themselves or through other sources of funding. Applicants must indicate how the balance of the costs will be met and this must be confirmed before any award is paid.

## 12. Accounts and earnings

Applicants must submit evidence of their earnings for the previous financial year and be able to demonstrate that they fulfil the definition of professional musician in Guideline 5. They must also be able to demonstrate why financial support is required.

## 13. Reference

Applicants will need to ensure that a referee writes to the Fund in support of the applicant and the proposed project. This referee should be a professional musician who is familiar with the applicant's work and is wholly unconnected to the proposed project. The reference should be sent on the official Reference Form.

## 14. Completed applications

The following must be submitted, preferably via e-mail:

- A completed application form (which can be downloaded from the Musicians Benevolent Fund website [www.mbf.org.uk](http://www.mbf.org.uk))
- An up-to-date CV and any supporting materials relevant to the application
- Evidence of earnings for the last financial year

(If supplied by post, we will need four copies of the above)

## 15. Assessment

All applicants must be able to demonstrate that financial assistance is required for the project to go ahead. Once this has been established, applications will be assessed by an appropriate advisory panel using the following criteria:

- The artistic quality of the applicant's previous work and their musical reputation within their field
- The artistic integrity of the applicant and how their proposed project would develop them musically
- How well thought out and achievable the project is
- How innovative the project would be

An interview may be conducted.

## 16. What happens after a project summary has been sent?

Project summaries (up to 100 words) should be sent to [inspire@mbf.org.uk](mailto:inspire@mbf.org.uk). If we feel we may be able to support a project then we will encourage the submission of an application. We will endeavour to respond to all enquiries within two weeks.

## 17. What happens after an application has been submitted?

Applications will be acknowledged by email. After each submission date, those project proposals which impress the panel most will be offered awards, provided they meet a sufficiently high standard. Applicants will be notified of decisions within four weeks of the submission closing date.

Please submit the completed form by email to [inspire@mbf.org.uk](mailto:inspire@mbf.org.uk) or by post to Professional Development Awards, Musicians Benevolent Fund, 7-11 Britannia Street, London, WC1X 9JS T: 020 7239 9119 W: [mbf.org.uk](http://mbf.org.uk)