

Do it  
**Differently**  
fund  
COVID-19 round

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## Who are we?

Help Musicians is an independent charity, with an extraordinary history. For nearly 100 years, it has provided a broad spectrum of help, support and opportunities to empower musicians aged 18+, at any stage of their career, from times of great need to times of opportunity, providing a lifetime of support when it is needed most.

## First things first

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We know that now, more than ever before, musicians need vital support for their creative practice, independent business models, and to innovate in response to the ever-changing global situation. We have made some amendments to our normal Do it Differently Fund, recognising that musicians will need to think differently about their sources of income. The fund also acknowledges that promotion and marketing is more important as musicians rethink business models, as supported by our industry experts.

This quick and easy guide gives you all you'll need to help you understand and apply for the Covid-19 round of Help Musicians' Do it Differently Fund. If you applied to a previous Covid-19 round of the Do it Differently Fund but were unsuccessful, you may reapply. However, we strongly encourage you to have a conversation with us first, in order to understand how you can improve your application. If you have already received the Do It Differently Fund, you cannot apply but you are welcome to apply to other Creative Programme opportunities from Help Musicians during this time. If successful in this round, you will not be able to apply for the normal Do it Differently Fund in any 12-month period. We hope to be able to return to the normal Do it Differently Fund later in the autumn.

We know that in the last few months, the very nature of what it is to be a working musician has changed, with numerous gigs and tours postponed or cancelled. We have worked with our industry partners to create a central website for guidance during in these uncertain times, please visit [Corona Musicians](#) for more information, sources and help.

### **Please note:**

- If you applied to previous rounds of the Do It Differently Fund but were unsuccessful on two or more occasions, you may reapply. However, we encourage you to have a conversation with us first. To book your 15-minute advice session with a member of our team, please get in touch with us at [creative@helpmusicians.org.uk](mailto:creative@helpmusicians.org.uk).
- If you are applying for the current round of the MOBO Help Musicians Fund, you are not eligible to apply for this round of the Do It Differently Fund.
- If you have a live grant from either the Do It Differently or MOBO Funds with payments outstanding, you are not eligible to apply to this round of the Do It Differently Fund but you are welcome to apply to other Creative Programme opportunities from Help Musicians.



## What is the Covid-19 round of Do it Differently Fund?

We've already witnessed musicians across the UK respond to the pandemic crisis with resilience and innovation, but we also know this requires energy and resource. The Covid-19 round of Do It Differently Fund offers a bespoke package of funding and expert advice designed to help you adapt and sustain your music through this time. Offering a grant of £3,000, musicians will be supported to navigate the current uncertainty due to the Coronavirus outbreak, and to find new ways of remaining creative and productive during the downtime created by lockdown restrictions.

For example:

- You may need to reshape your current business plans in the context of the changing domestic and global situations.
- You may have lost work you had planned for the coming months and want to repurpose this time to focus on your creative ambitions.
- You may already be exploring ways of using technology to support your next collaboration or recording and need some support to get this up and running.
- You may be wondering how to promote your planned release in a time of uncertainty and change.
- You may want to take the opportunity to adapt to a changing commercial environment and consider new and innovative ways to distribute your music and build an online fanbase.

Usually we ask that marketing and PR should not make up more than 50% of projects. For these special Covid-19 rounds of Do it Differently Fund we are relaxing this requirement, acknowledging that musicians may find this a very valuable time to spend working on their online presence, developing promotional activity and reaching new audiences. Examples might include monetizing a live streamed concert series from home or, developing virtual collaborations with different musicians as part of a new music project.

Successful applicants will be able to access an additional suite of wellbeing and development services including one day of business development support with a music industry expert, online and virtual education tools from British Association For Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM) around staying healthy, as well as membership and access to workshops, mentoring and networking sessions provided by Featured Artists Coalition.



## Who can apply?

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The fund is open to professional musicians of all genres and disciplines, with a focus on independent music creators who are controlling one or more aspects of their career (e.g. self-managing, self-releasing, self-producing). You can be a solo artist, composer, group member, songwriter, producer or a multidisciplinary artist.

To apply you must:

- Not have a live grant from either the Do It Differently or MOBO Funds with payments outstanding
- Be aged over 18
- Be in financial need and without significant backing (by this we mean not receiving significant financial backing from a record label, publisher or private investor and not having over £16,000 in savings)
- Be able to tell us what difference this grant funding will make to your career as an independent music creator. This could be by including evidence for new audiences around the release of new music, how you would go about building an online fanbase, for example.
- Have control over one or more aspects of your career (e.g. self managing, self releasing or self-producing)  
Be an independent music creator or group approaching a career tipping point
- Already have an active career and be able to clearly demonstrate the following:
  - An entrepreneurial spirit and dedication toward a career as a musician i.e. an openness to record, develop your business and consider your wellbeing in a balanced way
  - High quality musical output  
Exceptional ability within your discipline
  - Regularly working (performances, commissions, releases) at a professional level (getting paid for your work)
  - An impressive track record with notable career highlights and the potential to achieve a national or international impact within your field

Help Musicians refers to the UK residency rules noting that you are eligible for our support:

- If you are a UK National living in the UK you automatically qualify
- If you are a non-UK National, you have been living in the UK for at least 183 days and have the legal right to live in the UK
- If you are a UK or non-UK National and have not been living in the UK for at least 183 days, access to grants and funds is discretionary and decisions will be made on a case by case basis. This would be based on the reason for the application, for example, you have had to go abroad to look after a relative for a period of time.



## Applying as a group?

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- 50% must meet the criteria as listed
- You must have been established and playing together regularly for at least 1 year
- The group should be made up of no more than 6 members

## What can we fund?

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Through this special Covid-19 round of Do It Differently Fund we have refocused some of the activity we can fund:

- Recording costs (studio hire, engineering, mixing, mastering)  
Session musician fees
- PR & Marketing (including social media campaigns and radio plugging)
- Content creation (video, audio, promotional photography, artwork and design etc)
- Manufacture and distribution
- Merchandise (design and production)
- Time to create
- Costs of musical equipment, production and composition software/hardware\*
- Costs of new technology including enhanced digital or remote collaboration tools \*
- Costs of software to enable digital distribution and live streaming.\*

\*We request that equipment costs do not make up any more than 50% of your budget and remind applicants that sharing evidence of creative activity with Help Musicians is requested at the end of your funding period.

### **Build your business**

We know that being a musician can be a tricky balancing act between creative output, health and business skills, which is why we offer a package of support. All successful applicants will also be required to participate in our business development sessions to help ensure a path of long-term sustainability in their careers. Delivered in collaboration with ThinkMusic, the offer will provide one day (six hours) of business development advice with an industry expert. This will enable the recipient to work on ideas following an initial consultation with opportunities for subsequent feedback.

Successful awardees must participate in the business development sessions to receive the final instalment of their grant.

### **Build your network**

All awardees of the Do It Differently Fund are automatically provided with one year of PRO [Featured Artist Coalition](#) (FAC) membership. The FAC nurtures a community of artists and provides support, advice and education in order to empower artist entrepreneurs in the ever-evolving music industry. This includes running workshops, mentoring and networking sessions. It also functions as a collective voice,



actively promoting transparency and fairness within the industry.

Artists possess a persuasive voice in influencing political debates, so the FAC ensures that voice is heard by government and policymakers in the UK, USA and EU. All FAC PRO members can access free legal advice, free access to all FAC events, example management contracts, exclusive networking opportunities and much more.

### What we can't fund

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Please note that through the Covid-19 round of Do It Differently Fund we are unable to fund the list of activity shown below. Please read through this section thoroughly before applying. If you are requesting funding for any of the below, your application will be automatically rejected and will not be shortlisted.

- Applications relating to loss of income as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak
  - Applications relating to touring / live activity irrespective of how far into the future these might be planned
  - Applicants who have already received support through the usual 'Do It Differently' Ffund
  - Applicants who are already receiving significant financial backing
  - Activities that are not primarily music or career development focused
  - Organisations
  - Formal courses of study, training or research (this includes undergraduate study, postgraduate study, year-long courses, costs associated with PhD study)
  - Short courses, mentoring or time limited training (for opportunities of this nature, please see our Transmission Fund)
  - Attendance at any showcases already supported by the International Showcase Fund or similar funding opportunities in the nations (SXSW CMJ, A3C, WOMEX, Reeperbahn, Folk Alliance International, MIDEM Canadian Music Week)
  - Regular 1-1 lessons
  - Opportunities already funded by Help Musicians through our network of partners.
  - Ongoing overheads, for example rent, utilities and Insurance
  - Buying or insuring vehicles
  - Although we won't exclude applications that are asking us to contribute to a wider project, the Do It Differently Fund shouldn't be seen as a top-up fund for larger funding bids
  - Costs associated with entering competitions
- Activities that have already occurred (we can't fund activities retrospectively so please check the deadline dates)
- Costs relating to instrument purchase or the upgrade/maintenance of existing instruments, including laptops



## Guidance for applicants

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When putting together your application, it is important that you look carefully at the criteria to make sure that you are eligible. Through your application you need to tell us why we should support you and clearly outline what you have achieved in the past, what the opportunity is that you want to undertake now and why it is crucial for your career at this point. Keep in mind that it is unlikely that we will have any prior knowledge of you, your music and your project so the clearer you can be and the more examples you can give us the better! You can find more advice on making applications on our website.

Our funding is for those who are already actively performing or creating great music; you need to make sure you give evidence of your key achievements.

This could include:

- Prestigious performances, tours, festivals, showcases
- Notable commissions
- Your most recent releases
- Examples of critical acclaim (press quotes, radio play)
- Evidence of your growing fanbase (mailing list subscribers, social media followers)
- Notable collaborations
- Qualifications, prizes or awards

If applying after a break or a change in circumstance we will take into consideration your past achievements, but you will also need to demonstrate that you are committed to reinvigorating and sustaining your career as a music creator. If you would like any guidance with your application or you have any questions, please do get in touch with our team at [creative@helpmusicians.org.uk](mailto:creative@helpmusicians.org.uk) or call **020 7239 9119**.

## How to apply?

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### Round 3 Applications

**Open:** Friday 23 October 2020

**Close:** Monday 23 November 2020 at 9am.

**Outcome:** Applicants will be informed if they have been successful by Thursday 18 December 2020.

Application is by [online form](#). You will be asked to provide a biography outlining your artistic achievements and career highlights to date along with details of the specific project or activity you wish to apply for funding for (including information about the costs associated with this opportunity) and a summary of how this activity will benefit your progression and



future career as an independent music creator. You should also be able to evidence the elements of your career to date in which you have displayed self-sufficiency, and how this creative independence will factor into your upcoming project. Once the deadline for applications has passed, applicants will be shortlisted for consideration by a panel of industry experts who will inform the final decision based on the strength of their applications along with their supporting reference.

Successful applicants will be required to participate in a 'get to know you' phone call upon acceptance of the grant. In this, you will discuss the delivery your project alongside the suite of additional wellbeing and development services and which of these you will be accessing to support you to do things differently. Successful applicants must deliver their funded projects within 12 months of accepting the grant. All grants awarded are exempt from VAT.

### **Forms not your thing?**

We understand applicants will have different preferences in how they communicate their ideas, and therefore, you will have the option of answering some of the key questions either in writing or by video upload. Check out the [blog section](#) of the Help Musicians website to see some examples of these.

You will be required to provide supporting evidence of your music in the form of recordings, videos and weblinks. You must also supply a reference from a renowned musician or industry professional not connected with your application. All materials including your reference must be received by the closing date otherwise your application will be considered ineligible.

### **Understanding a competitive fund**

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The Do It Differently Fund is our most highly subscribed, competitive funding initiative to date. Across the first two Covid-19 rounds of Do it Different Fund we received over 1,000 applications and were able to make 87 awards. It is inevitable that, with all open funding programmes, there are some difficult decisions to be made, and the Covid-19 Do It Differently Fund is no different, but we will do all we can to support as many musicians through this uncertain time.

We understand that preparing a funding application is a very different skillset to that of being an artist, and for some, it may take time, persistence and further support to build on. We want all music creators to be able to submit the best standard of application possible and we strongly encourage you to take the following steps if you are unsuccessful on this occasion:

- As a small team with limited capacity, we unfortunately cannot offer tailored feedback to all applicants. If your application does not proceed to the panel this time round, please take up an



opportunity to have an application development chat with one of the Creative team, in order that you can gather some more advice about applying for funding. You can contact the team during office hours on [creative@helpmusicians.org.uk](mailto:creative@helpmusicians.org.uk). We will arrange a time to speak with you in more detail.

- If your application proceeds to a decision panel but does not go on to receive grant support, we will provide you with some bespoke feedback from the panellists via email. We hope that this feedback is valuable to understanding why it was not successful.
- We regularly offer advice sessions and we will be rolling out the delivery of remote funding advice sessions across the application period, covering the main points of the fund, top-tips on how to apply, with the team on hand to answer your questions. Please email [creative@helpmusicians.org.uk](mailto:creative@helpmusicians.org.uk) to register your interest and find out more details about these sessions.

Please note, the Help Musicians offices are closed, but our teams are working remotely. We will aim to respond to your email within 3 working days, but we are experiencing an unprecedented volume of enquiries for support at this time, so please bear with us while we get back to you.

We have a number of resources on our website that offer advice on how to best approach a Do it Differently Fund application. For general top tips on applying for funding, see the [blog section](#) of the Help Musicians website, featuring a guide to [detailing your budget](#), which should give you an idea of the level of detail expected when breaking down your project costs.

Please note that this fund is not intended to replace lost income and it is not a hardship fund. We have set up a separate hardship fund which you read more about [here](#). Our Health and Welfare team offer structured support to professional musicians in times of personal crisis. Our approach is person-centred; building tailored support around an individual's needs. If you need to speak to the Health & Welfare team about this further, please call **020 7239 9101** or email [help@helpmusicians.co.uk](mailto:help@helpmusicians.co.uk).

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