

Applying for Support from the MOBO Help Musicians Fund

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Who is Help Musicians?

Help Musicians is a charity that loves music and for 100 years has been working hard to make a meaningful difference to the lives of musicians across the UK. We want to create a world where musicians thrive.

Who is MOBO?

The MOBO Trust is the charitable division of the MOBO organisation and was established in 2016 to provide life-changing opportunities and support talent in music and beyond plus those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

What is the MOBO Help Musicians Fund?

The MOBO Help Musicians Fund, a partnership between Help Musicians and MOBO Trust, provides financial support for artists and groups creating and performing music of black origin. It specifically supports artists making Hip Hop, Grime, R&B/ Soul, music of African origin, Reggae, Jazz and Gospel to achieve their creative ambitions and forge a path in the business.

What Can the MOBO Help Musicians Fund Do for you?

Music creators really benefit from support which enables them to focus on three key areas of their career at the same time: making music, business development and health & wellbeing. Which is why our support covers each of these areas.

Financial Support to Help You Create Music

To help you create and release your music, you can apply for up to £3,000 to assist with the cost of creating a new body of work and getting it out to the world. This could cover your costs for:

- Time to create (writing, composition, rehearsal)
- Session musician fees
- Recording (studio hire, engineering, mixing, mastering)
- Content creation (video, audio, promotional photography, artwork and design etc)
- Manufacture and distribution
- PR & Marketing
- Musical equipment, production and composition software/hardware*
- New technology including enhanced digital or remote collaboration tools*
- Software to enable digital distribution and live streaming*

*Equipment costs should not make up any more than 50% of your budget. Please note we are unable to fund the purchase of musical instruments, including laptops.

Support to Build Your Business

As part of this support, you'll receive six hours of dedicated one-to-one business advice from industry experts, who are there to help you to shape or rethink your business plans. You may be wondering how to promote your next release, be looking to find new ways to distribute your music or build an online fanbase.

Delivered in collaboration with ThinkMusic, we'll pair you with up to two expert business advisors who can help you with a range of topics. You can check out the full details of these sessions on [our blog here](#).

Support to manage your health and wellbeing

Through our partnership with British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM) and from our own Health and Welfare team, you'll be able to speak to someone if you need support with your health and wellbeing at any time. Depending on your circumstances, we may be able to help you with a range of issues, including:

- A health assessment and short-term treatment for performance related conditions
- Specialist hearing assessment and bespoke hearing protection via the Musicians Hearing Health Scheme (delivered in conjunction with Musicians' Hearing Services and the Musicians' Union)

Eligibility

Who Can Apply?

Musicians working in music of black origin, 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. This is not financial support for organisations.

To apply you must:

- Deliver your supported activities within 12 months of accepting the grant – please note, your activity should not start any earlier than three-months from the submission of your application
- 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)
- Have control over one or more aspects of your career (e.g. self-managing, self-releasing or self-producing)
- Already have an active career and be able to clearly demonstrate your work to date
- Be a UK resident*

*We refer 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 Applying as a Group

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

Ineligible Activities

There are a number of activities we are unable to support, listed below. Please read through this section thoroughly before applying

- If you have received financial support for recording and releasing music of black origin from Help Musicians in the last twelve months, you are not eligible to apply at this time
- Activities that take place within 3-months of a submitted application
- 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 are already receiving significant financial backing
- Activities that are not primarily music or career development focused
- Formal courses of study, training or research
- Attendance at any showcases already supported by the International Showcase Fund or (SXSW CMJ, A3C, WOMEX, Reeperbahn, Folk Alliance International, MIDEM Canadian Music Week)

- 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, this support 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 retrospectively so please check the deadline dates)
- Over 50% of costs relating to the purchase of musical instruments (including laptops) and/or the upgrade/maintenance of existing instruments

Making an Application

To apply for this support, you can start your application [here](#).

We understand that musicians will have different preferences in how they communicate their ideas, so you can choose to answer some of the key questions either in writing or by video upload. [Check out our blog](#) to understand more about video applications.

What Are We Looking for in the Application?

• Biography

We're looking to understand your career in performing or creating music so far. Show us your achievements and career highlights, share what you're proud of. Bear in mind that we won't know you or your music, so the clearer you can be and the more examples you can give us the better! This can include performances, collaborations, tours, festivals, showcases, commissions, recent releases, reviews (inc. press quotes & radio play), evidence of your growing fanbase (mailing list subscribers, social media followers) and prizes or awards. Remember to share links to any websites or socials you want us to see.

• Your Activity

The details of the activity you're applying for financial support towards. Remember to include a timeline and double-check that it's achievable.

• Impact

Our support is here to help you make the next step, so we're looking to understand why this activity is crucial for your career at this point. Help us to understand what you are trying to achieve in the short and long-term through the activity and how it will benefit your progression as a music creator.

• Business Advice

When considering your business support options let us know why support in these areas will help your personal and professional growth.

• Musical Submissions

You will be asked to provide examples of your music in the form of recordings, videos and weblinks. At least one must be from within the last 12 months and you should submit the music you feel best demonstrates your creative direction at this time. Does the musical quality of this recording best represent your creative potential?

• Budget

We know a budget can be tricky but it's also incredibly useful for focusing and understanding your plans. Try to think about the costs associated with each activity. Make it clear where you require financial assistance from Help Musicians, as well as elements that may be supported by other organisations or yourself.

Please note: 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.

After Applying

Applicants will be shortlisted internally and may be presented to a panel of industry experts. The final decisions will be based on the strength of your music and what you've told us in your application. You will be notified of the outcome within 8-10 weeks.

You will receive a confirmation email once you submit your application. If you haven't received this then please get in touch with creative@helpmusicians.org.uk who can check for you.

Please also email the team if something has changed in your plans after having submitted your application.

If your application is not successful you are able to re-apply as soon as you are ready. We advise you to read the guidance notes and blogs and book a phone call with a member of our Creative team [here](#).