New Music Creator Fund – Overview and Guidelines

*Music Creator refers to any individual composer or artist who creates original music. Some music creators may also be performers; some may only create music for other people to perform. All of these individuals are eligible to lead applications for this fund.*

About
The New Music Creator Fund offers **grants to individual music creators working in any genre** who need support to get to the next stage of their creative practice. The program will support costs which relate to **collaboration with other artists and practitioners**. Individual performers may also apply as long as their collaborator is a music creator. Our aim is to enable music creators to take the lead in the development of new and existing ideas and projects. Projects should be in progress or be developed in the next year.

Program Approach
This year, we have made some minor changes to the Creator Fund to streamline our application process and be more transparent in separating out New York-based funding. This means that the application review will be split into two stages, the first stage being solely an artistic review of applicants’ music samples and the second stage review involving the full application. In addition, applicants will be asked to identify their location by selecting either the **Creator Fund New York** or **Creator Fund National** strands of this program.

Program priorities
We aim to support and represent a broad range of individuals across the country and musical spectrum. We expect the applicant pool to be very diverse in terms of genres and music styles. Our commitment to an equitable ecosystem for new music means that we are particularly interested in receiving proposals from BIPOC and other under-represented artists, and in accordance with our definition of new music, “anyone who is influencing the future of music creation and sound”.

Given the large volume of applications our process will prioritize the following in making determinations:

- **Artistic quality, ability, and skill in creating or performing music**
  - Projects that display originality of sound, music, and artistry, shaping the future of music creation and sound.
  - Music creators who have evidence of experience making music professionally and are engaged in music on a professional level. Generally we do not support students.
  - Projects that involve artistic growth or stretch, creativity, and innovation
• Projects with the most potential to have a significant impact on creative practice. We are interested in hearing how this project will help provide a breakthrough or help you advance in your career.
• Projects involving new collaborations, which are in progress and will be developed in roughly the next year
• Projects that do not already have funding or have limited funding. We are interested in hearing why funding for the project is needed now, and the urgency for support.

What we mean by collaboration:
This fund encourages new collaborations. We are leaving the nature of the collaborative practice to applicants to define – it may revolve around existing work that you want to bring to life, record, or transform for a new medium. It could focus on the creation of new work, the R&D time you need with your artistic collaborators, and/or a live or virtual performance of some kind.

What the program supports:
Applicants will be able to seek support for a variety of activities which may form part of their collaboration. Applications must be led by music creators and can involve creative collaborators from any discipline. We are open to hearing from you about the support you need to initiate or sustain collaboration with other artists and to help you keep creating.

If awarded, the funds could be used in many ways. We envision that costs incurred through your collaborative work may include:

• Support for the time you need to create new material and initiate new collaborations with your proposed artist(s)
• Creation fees for a work in progress that does not have additional support
• Performer or other collaborator fees
• Project specific equipment
• Recording costs
• PR/marketing
• Technical assistance/skills building
• Support for digital presentation/creation of music videos
• Workshopping
• Joint R&D (research and development) into new project ideas
• Other costs you consider to be essential e.g. childcare for yourself or a collaborating artist

What the program does not support:
• Benefits or fundraisers
• Competition Fees
• Projects that are already 100% funded
• Projects that have already been completed
• Funds for international collaborators

Awards
We plan to make a total of 50 to 60 awards of up to $5,000 each (with the average grant being $3,000) with funding from New Music USA’s endowment and annual funders.

Creator Fund New York
This strand is open to artists who live in New York state only. Approximately 40 to 45% of our funding for individual creators will be allotted and we anticipate awarding roughly 24 to 25 artists in this strand.

Creator Fund National
This strand is open to artists living outside of New York state including US territories. Approximately 55 to 60% of our funding for individual creators will be allotted and we anticipate awarding roughly 33 to 36 artists in this strand.

Funding transparency
Both the New Music Creator Fund and the New Music Organization Fund are made possible by the generous funders who either donated to our endowment or generously donate to New Music USA annually. Some of these funders had or have specific requests regarding the kinds of work we support because of their geographical location or specific area of interest. We are providing the facts and figures below so that all applicants have a better insight into these restrictions, which influence the applications our advisors select. Please note that applications may cover a number of the categories listed below; others may not fit with any.

• Award rates are generally between 5% and 10% of the overall applicant pool (this means we support around 1/10 of the applications we receive each year)
  o Roughly 25% of the applications we fund must include the creation of new work (e.g. commissions and facilitation of brand-new pieces of music)
  o Roughly 25% of the applications we award must include creation or programming of live music for dance (creation, performance, choreographer, and dancer fees)
• Geographical restrictions are as follows:
  o 54% of our grants budget is available without geographical restriction
  o 37% is restricted to New York City based artists/organizations
  o 7% is restricted to New York State based artists/organizations
  o 2% is restricted to California Bay Area based artists/organizations

Equity and Inclusion
New Music USA is committed to inclusive and equitable treatment across all of our activities. We serve a diverse community of applicants and grantees and we welcome
the unique contributions that all artists bring in terms of their education, opinions, religion, culture, music genre or lack thereof, ethnicity, race, gender, gender identity and expression, nation of origin, age, dis/ability, sexual orientation, languages spoken, religious beliefs, and geography. We encourage applications from all people including Black, Indigenous, People of Color, LGBTQIA+ artists, and artists with dis/abilities.

 Eligibility

- The lead applicant must be a US/territories-based music creator
- This is for individuals only; organizations cannot apply
- Each lead applicant may only submit one request
- If the lead applicant appears on another application as a collaborator, only one project containing the applicant may be selected for an award
- If a collaborator appears on more than one application, only one project containing the collaborator may be selected for an award
- Lead applicants may not have been funded in the previous round of the New Music Creator Fund (December 2022 deadline, announced in May 2023).
- The applicant must be pursuing music on a professional level – we do not support creators who are completing their studies
- Activities/use of the funds should be in process and/or planned as of April 2024.

 Review Process

Applications will be screened first by staff for eligibility and completeness. Applications will then move forward to a peer review process completed by roughly 30 to 40 panelists working from around the country. The panel process will involve two stages.

 Stage 1 – Artistry

This stage of review will consist of basic information about the applicant and project and will focus solely on the artistry of the submitted work samples. Approximately 20 to 30 panelists will each review a subset of the applications submitted based solely on artistry. The panelists' scores will be averaged with the top-ranking applicants moving on to the next stage of the process. Please be sure to submit the very best examples of your music as this stage will focus almost exclusively on the clips you submit.

 Stage 2 – Artistry, Impact, Need, Collaboration

Applications in this stage will be reviewed on artistry, impact, need, and collaboration by a panel of approximately 10 to 20. All criteria will be weighted equally and averaged. The panelists' overall scores will again be averaged and ranked with the top scoring applications recommended for funding. We anticipate around 250-300 applications to move from stage 1 to stage 2.

Award determinations will be made using the final ranked list, program priorities, and taking into account any funding restrictions as necessary.
**Review Criteria**
Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria. Given the volume of applications, Stage 1 review will focus solely on Artistry. Stage 2 review will focus on all of the criteria.

- **Artistry** – projected artistic merit of the collaboration based on existing body of work
- **Collaboration** – strength of the collaboration proposed
- **Need** – how you want to use the money and the urgency of support right now
- **Impact** – the difference this project will make to the next steps of yours and other participants' careers

PLEASE SEE FAQS FOR MORE DETAIL ON THE REVIEW PROCESS AND CRITERIA

**Deadlines and Timeline:** Application Deadline: December 14, 2023

Application period: The application portal will open on November 30th at 10 am and will remain open for two weeks.

The application deadline will be December 14, 2023 at 11:59 pm (Eastern Time). Decisions will be made in late April 2024. Projects may be in progress or recently beginning. They can be process or performance oriented, rather than leading to a definitive final outcome. An outline of your progress and experience will be required by the end of August 2024.

Apply at [https://newmusicusa.smapply.io/prog/new_music_creator_fund](https://newmusicusa.smapply.io/prog/new_music_creator_fund)

**Application questions/requirements**

**Work Samples**
Project Samples demonstrating artistic quality for music creator/key collaborator(s)
- 2 to 3 work samples demonstrating recent work by you and your collaborating artists
- You may provide links to YouTube, Vimeo, or Soundcloud, or upload via mp3/mp4

**Narrative**
The application narrative can be completed by a written response (up to 500 words) or a video/audio response (maximum 5 minutes). You are not required to submit a video/audio response, but you must please choose only one of these approaches as our review panel won't have time to assess both. In order to be eligible and move forward in the review process you MUST answer the following four questions:
• **Question 1:** Please tell us about the strength of the COLLABORATION proposed. (around 250 words or less)
  
  o Some questions you might consider in your response:
    ▪ Tell us about the collaborative work you’d like to lead including who you’re proposing to collaborate with.
    ▪ Why are you choosing this collaboration?
    ▪ Why is this collaboration important now?
    ▪ Is this a new collaboration? If an existing one how is this moving in a new direction or contributing to artistic growth?
    ▪ Would this collaboration happen without support from New Music USA?

• **Question 2:** Tell us about the IMPACT this project will have and the difference this project will make in advancing yours and other participants’ careers. (around 100 words or less)
  
  o Some questions you might consider in your response:
    ▪ How will this advance or help you move forward to the next stage of your creative practice?
    ▪ What will happen once the project is completed?
    ▪ Why is it important for you to lead this work right now?
    ▪ How will this work impact or contribute to your community (e.g. your community of artists, the community you are in, etc.)

• **Question 3:** Please outline the NEED for support, how you want to use the money, and the urgency of support right now. (150 words or less)
  
  o Some questions you might consider in your response:
    ▪ How would you use the money you are applying for?
    ▪ Why do you need our support and why is this important right now?
    ▪ Does the project already have support? If so, why is funding from New Music USA crucial at this time?

• **Question 4:** When will you do this work (please include any relevant dates)? (150 words or less)

**Budget**

Budget breakdown:

- Please outline how you plan to use the funds
  
  o Your budget can include individual costs for you and/or your collaborator, funds for performers, equipment, recording, or other fees. Please be descriptive.

- Please outline any funding received or projected to date for the proposed project

**Further questions or information:**

- Please see the [FAQs HERE](#)
- Please email [grants@newmusicusa.org](mailto:grants@newmusicusa.org); please note that due to the high volume of inquiries please allow a few business days for a response.