ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

Program Guidelines
2026-2027

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Resources:
Jury Assessment Preparation Guide
Artist Development Application Questions

Program Intent

This program is intended to provide support towards the professionalization and integration of early career Canadian artists into the music industry.

Program Overview

1. The Artist Development program offers up to $5,000 for 75% of eligible expenses as an investment toward a year of artist development activities such as sound recording, touring, showcasing, video content production, and marketing. This means you must incur at least $6,667 in eligible expenses to reach the maximum amount.

2. Funding is paid at 75% of offer upon applicant's acceptance of the General Agreement.

3. Funding for this program is provided by Canada's Private Broadcasters and the Department of Canadian Heritage via the Canada Music Fund's Individual Initiatives component.

Application Deadline

New applications to this program can be created and submitted as of **April 7, 2026,** and due no later than **May 7, 2026, at 5:00pm ET** for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Incomplete applications will not be retained in the system afterwards.

If you experience technical difficulties which prevent you from submitting your application, you must contact FACTOR by email, with accompanying screenshot illustrating the issue, prior to 5:00pm ET on the deadline date. An application cannot be re-submitted if a report is filed after the deadline.

Who Can Apply

Only artists rated General may apply.

4. Artists may apply to only one juried program (Artist Development, Juried Sound Recording: Single/EP, or Juried Sound Recording: Album) being offered for the 2026-2027 fiscal year (April 1 – March 31).

5. The Artist cannot be a previous recipient of Artist Development funding.

6. Artists must have commercially released at least one track prior to application but are not eligible to apply if they have commercially released music more than three years prior to application date or have received funding of more than $10,000 from FACTOR in the past.

7. Applicants may not be artists signed to companies funded by FACTOR or Musicaction in the company programs already supporting those activities.

8. The eligibility criteria in points 4 through 7 include as a member of bands other than current applicant.

9. Artist managers, producers, and publishers may fill out the application on behalf of an artist; however, the artist must be the named Applicant and they must incur the costs directly. Costs may not be incurred by the manager, producer, or publisher and then charged back to the artist.

10. Record labels may not apply to this program on behalf of an artist. Artists signed to a record label may apply; however, the artist must incur all costs directly. Costs may not be incurred by the record label and then charged back to the artist.

11. Applicants under 18 years of age must submit a signed Parent or Legal Guardian Consent Form with the application.

12. Professional Songwriters are not eligible to apply to this program; proceed to Songwriter Development.

13. Francophone artists who are recording primarily in French and primarily developing their careers in a French-language market should apply to Musicaction. Francophone artists may apply to program if the project is explicitly intended for the English-language market.

How to Apply

14. Ensure your Artist and Applicant profiles are complete and current prior to creating your Artist Development application in the FACTOR online system. First-time applicants will find instructions on creating/sharing profiles and submissions at the How to Apply page on the FACTOR website.

15. As part of your application, you must submit
    a) Current audience information
    b) Artist bio and genre
    c) Project start date
    d) An artist development plan: in 5,000 characters or less, detail where you are in your career and provide an overall strategy/plan for growth in the coming year, describing how the development activities will help you achieve your artist development goals.
    e) One assessment track, which should:
        i. Be a new, recently recorded, original song or composition that has either never been commercially released or was released within three months prior to application. For those in the jazz or classical genre, a new arrangement of a work previously recorded and released by another artist(s) may be allowed with FACTOR pre-approval.
        i. Be uploaded in MP3 format, along with lyrics if applicable;
        ii. Meet MAPL requirements for Canadian content; and
        iii. Not be in French/have primarily French lyrics.
    f) Estimate how much you will spend on development activities (recording, marketing, touring, showcasing and video production) in the coming year. Include all spends, regardless of whether you hope to subsidize them with FACTOR funding.
    g) Total request

16. You may provide additional material, such as letters of support, tour dates, photos, and video links. Up to five documents can be uploaded under Additional Information in the Component Information page of the application.

17. It is your responsibility to ensure all mandatory documents have been uploaded prior to submitting the application.

18. **Other funding sources**: Applicants to every FACTOR program must declare any other public funding received or expected to be received toward the same project costs they are claiming. FACTOR's contribution plus any other public funding cannot exceed 100% of the project's Total Eligible Budget. See Glossary: Public Funding.

19. FACTOR welcomes and encourages applications from people with disabilities. Please contact your Project Coordinator or our general information account to discuss options for accommodations throughout the application process, as well as our Application Accessibility Support Fund.

How Applications are Assessed

20. Applications are reviewed for eligibility before being assessed by a jury. Highest-scoring submissions will be recommended for funding to FACTOR's board of directors, with approvals based on available budget. Failure to secure funding should not be considered a reflection of lack of artistic merit or commercial potential.

21. Jurors evaluate the assessment track and whether the Artist Development Plan is clear and achievable, given the artist's resources and what they have accomplished to date. Please see Business Policies: Assessment Process – Juried Program for more information on the jury process.

22. Processing of applications typically requires 8-10 weeks from the application deadline before notification of outcome but may be affected by volume of applications and juror availability.

How This Program Works

23. This program provides funding support which can be applied toward a broad range of costs incurred over the course of the year (date of application to February 5, 2027) in developing one's artist career.

24. If your application is successful, you will enter into a General Agreement which sets out the terms of the funding. You must also provide your banking information to receive your funding via direct deposit.

25. Once FACTOR's offer of funding has been accepted, all significant changes to one's development plan must be approved by FACTOR to ensure the ongoing eligibility of the project and costs.

26. **Recipient Accessibility Support Fund**: FACTOR funding recipients are eligible for top-up support to their project funding for costs related to accessibility. FACTOR will allow applications in this fund for up to $5,000 each fiscal year, not to exceed $5,000 per project. Eligible costs claimed under this fund will be reimbursed at 100%. This fund is open to artists and staff of music companies associated with the project Artist or Applicant. Support for this fund is provided exclusively by Canada's Private Radio Broadcasters. See more details on FACTOR's Artist Resources page.

Eligible Costs

27. This program allows a wide range of eligible costs, incurred from date of application, including:
    a) Sound Recording: pre-production and rehearsal space rental costs of up to $500 (must be paid to third parties), studio time, production personnel, equipment rentals, and hired musicians.
    b) Touring and Showcasing: travel costs, hired musicians and crew, and conference registration fees;
    c) Marketing: publicity, ad buys, photography, graphic design; and
    d) Video production: producer and director fees (must be paid to third parties), crew personnel, location and equipment rentals.

28. In addition to third-party costs, FACTOR will recognize up to $500 in donated services from the artist or members of the artist band for professional services provided during the Artist Development year, such as recording time, traveling to and playing live shows, and working on the creation of marketing materials. To claim this amount, you must submit the Artist Donated Services Form along with your other expense documentation in your Completion. Beyond that, FACTOR will not recognize any other donated services, in-house costs, or in-kind transactions for this program.

29. The costs below are ineligible for this program:
    a) Any per diems, meals, or hospitality costs
    b) Apart from the maximum of $500 for Artist's Donated Services, you cannot claim your own time or services, nor any other donated services or any in-house costs
    c) Any manufacturing costs including physical music formats and merchandise
    d) Band practices, artist residencies, creative and songwriting retreats, woodshedding, and cost-of-living expenses such as rent and utilities
    e) Voice or instrument lessons
    f) Taxes subject to rebate to the Recipient (such as VAT, HST)

g) Musicians' union dues, penalties, fines, pension contributions, and other union-mandated payments
h) Costs in this program that are being covered by any other FACTOR-funded project. This includes any costs related to an eligible traveler who is being claimed in a Tour or Showcase application.

30. Non-Canadian costs are ineligible in this program, except for:
    a) Costs related to full-time non-Canadian members of the Artist band (including Donated Services)
    b) Costs incurred while traveling outside of Canada on a tour or showcase
    c) Costs incurred in a domestic marketing campaign where the supplier is based outside of Canada and the services cannot be provided by a Canadian entity (e.g., Facebook)
    d) Costs incurred outside of Canada in an international marketing campaign

31. Goods and services purchased from individual Canadians living outside of Canada or Canadian-owned businesses physically located outside of Canada are eligible costs.

32. **Travel costs** – travel costs follow the rates specified in the Government of Canada Travel Directive.
    a) Accommodations are eligible to a maximum of $300 per room, per night
    b) Flight costs at economy rate only
    c) No dollar value will be attributable to air miles, frequent flyer points or similar programs. However, FACTOR may recognize a cash fee charged by the points provider.
    d) Applicants are urged to ensure that each person traveling is covered by trip cancellation, health/medical and accident insurance for where any funded travel occurs. In the event that a trip or any portion thereof is canceled such that any portion of approved eligible costs is forfeit, the Applicant is required to recover the maximum amount available under travel insurance. FACTOR will cover 50% of any remaining non-refundable costs.

33. **Musicians' fees** – where applicable, fees paid to musicians will be recognized as follows:
    a) For sound recording work, musicians' fees will be capped at a rate of $400 per studio session, to a maximum of one session per track. The day rate includes any overtime pay for the session.
    b) "Leader fees" are eligible for third parties only, at up to double the day rate, but only if the session is contracted pursuant to a musician's union contract, and that contract is submitted to FACTOR.
    c) For live performances, musicians' fees will be capped at a show rate of $300 per show. The show rate includes all paid performances in one calendar day.

34. FACTOR reserves the right at all times to allow, disallow, or modify costs. It is advisable to discuss any significant changes to your budget before Completion. If you are uncertain about the eligibility of a cost, please contact FACTOR before incurring that cost.

Project Completion

35. If approved, your Completion Report may be submitted as soon as your project has concluded and no later than February 19, 2027. **No extensions will be granted**. Before that deadline, you must complete and submit all sections of the Completion (including Budget, Results, Activity Information and Public Funding).

36. A cost report and supporting expense documentation must be submitted upon Completion. Failure to comply could result in a lowered offer or default status. Please ensure you keep invoices, receipts, and proofs of payment for seven years for FACTOR and Revenue Canada taxation purposes.

37. Costs must be verifiable with invoices, receipts, and proofs of payment submitted upon Completion.
    a) Receipts must include:
        i. The name and address of the organization or individual who provided goods or services;
        ii. The name of the individual who purchased the goods or service;
        iii. The goods or services purchased in detail, such as item description, quantity, unit price, extended price, additional charges and applicable taxes; and
        iv. The transaction date (including the dates of service or delivery if applicable).

b) Examples of eligible proof of payment include cheque, email transfer, credit card, interbank transfer, wire transfer, and money orders.
c) FACTOR reserves the right to contact the vendor and to reject any costs deemed insufficiently supported.

38. FACTOR reserves the right to remove any ineligible expenses from your final cost report. This may lead to a reduction in the amount of funding for which you are ultimately eligible and can result in the recipient having to return a portion of the advance.

39. If your project has resulted in releasing new sound recordings during the Artist Development year, you must submit any relevant delivery tracks as part of your Completion, which must meet the same criteria as the assessment track. You are not required to submit a new delivery track if your project does not include sound recording activities.

40. The delivery track can be the same song you submitted as your assessment track. If you have made no changes, you may upload the exact same recording on Completion. If you are claiming costs related to the production of the assessment track, or if you have made changes prior to release, the delivery track you upload on Completion must be the newly produced or modified track.

41. You must provide the appropriate Logo and Acknowledgment on any press and promotional material and any digital assets you create with the funding. You must credit FACTOR on all physical copies of the release, and/or wherever production credits for the track are listed, such as in the artwork. Please see FACTOR's Logo and Acknowledgment Guide.

42. Once submitted to FACTOR, the Completion will be deemed by FACTOR to be your true, accurate, and final accounting, and may not be unsubmitted, amended or deleted.