

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you working with a range of external funds instead of disbursing all the monies through Creative Scotland?

We understand the great breadth of practice and professional activity of the freelance community that the Scottish Government has asked us to support in administering these hardship funds, and we recognise the existence of established networks with the potential to offer multiple, trusted access points for different people and their needs. In many instances we recognise that freelancers may be able to access other ongoing support through these networks, and additionally that these networks often have capacity to administer funds in a manner that engages freelancers in administration and decision-making activity. We seek to strengthen these networks as far as we can through the proposed partnership, supplemented by a clearly signposted Creative Scotland process where coverage does not already exist.

What do you mean when you say ‘in immediate difficulty’?

We understand immediate difficulty as an inability to meet essential costs at the present time.

What if I am not freelance?

If you are not freelance you should not apply. We advise you to investigate UK Government provision for wages and salaries threatened by COVID-19 and/or the wider benefits system.

What if I operate as a company?

If you are a sole Director of a Limited Company, you will be eligible if you were not eligible to be furloughed through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and if your business registered address and your home address are both in Scotland.

How will I know which partner will be handling my application?

When you apply, you will be asked to tell us what you do (ie what is your freelance role presently) from a drop-down list of eligible roles. Depending on what the role is, you will be told which partner will handle your application, and given a Unique Reference Number and the URL for the partner’s website.

Is this fund open to actors and stand-ups, comedy writers and promoters?

Yes. Some of these roles are supported by our partners and some by Creative Scotland. We will direct you to the correct fund when you apply.

What if my freelance role isn’t listed on the system?

The roles listed have been developed by Creative Scotland and our partners to help establish the range and type of individuals that these hardship funds can support. If your role is not listed in our system and you believe it is eligible under our criteria, you will be able to tell us what you do and we will then advise you.

What if I have a portfolio practice (ie I am active in multiple art forms)?

In this situation we ask you to select the one role you think best describes the activity from which you derive the majority of your income and/or which aligns with the creative sector in which the majority of work on your CV or statement has taken place. For example, if you are a writer and a musician and work mainly in music, you should select musician. If you are a visual artist and an actor and mainly work in theatre, you should select actor. We have included roles such as actor/dancer and actor/musician in recognition of cross-artform working in performing arts.

What if my role is in retail, catering or other support functions in the creative sector?

We are prioritising support to creative freelance professionals whose primary source of income comes from their creative work. We advise you to investigate UK Government provision for wages and salaries threatened by COVID-19 and/or the wider benefits system.

Can I request funds more than once?

No – this is a one-off bursary designed to meet an immediate financial need. If you wish to apply for a longer-term project to sustain your practice, please refer to the revised Creative Scotland Open Fund for Individuals: Sustaining Creative Development.

Can I apply to both the relevant external fund and Creative Scotland?

No – coverage is made up of a landscape of external funds and direct support from Creative Scotland. If you are eligible for an external fund, please apply to that fund. If your role is listed under an external fund and you apply to Creative Scotland you will be advised to reapply to the external fund. This may delay your application.

Can more than one person in the same household request funds from Creative Scotland and/or external funds?

Yes – we recognise that more than one person in a household may be a freelance artist or freelance creative practitioner. If each individual meets the eligibility criteria and has a separate bank account in their name, they are eligible. Where more than one person is applying from the same household each individual should ensure they are only requesting funds relating to their personal share of costs.

Can I resubmit a request if I have been unsuccessful?

No, you cannot apply more than once to this fund.

Will all funds - whether administered by partners or Creative Scotland - open at the same time?

A number of our funding partners will open their funds on 26 October, along with Creative Scotland. Others will open within a few days of this date. However all applicants should register for your Unique Reference Number as soon as possible. You will then be notified of when the relevant fund opens.

Will all funds - whether administered by partners or Creative Scotland - close at the same time?

Funds will close when they are fully subscribed (and additionally will pause when 60% of funds are requested to allow those who need a little more time to submit their applications, and subsequently reopen). This may mean that partners will close their funds at different times. We encourage you to apply as soon as you can.

What is the overall budget for the fund?

The overall budget for the Hardship Fund for Creative Freelancers was £5m. £700k was used to support the Screen Sector Hardship Fund and £4.3m is supporting this fund.

How is the £4.3m budget split between the partner organisations?

We have reached budget allocations in discussion with partners, based on the scope of roles covered and anticipated demand. The allocations are:

- Help Musicians (covering majority of creative roles in music): £1.1m allocated
- Society of Authors (covering majority of creative roles in literature and a number of roles in comedy and audio): £590k
- Crafts Council in partnership with Craft Scotland (covering majority of roles in craft): £440k
- Visual Arts Scotland (covering majority of creative roles in visual arts): £440k
- BECTU (cross-sector technical and production roles): £410k
- Creative Scotland (covering all other areas not covered by partners): £1.32m

How much can I apply for? And are the amounts you can apply for the same across all partners?

You can apply for between £500 and £2000 (plus access costs) and these amounts will be the same across all partners.

What are access costs?

Access costs are the costs of making sure everyone has access to our support and the work we fund. You can request a contribution to your access costs if you have experienced additional costs over and above your daily living costs during COVID 19 as a result of a disability or need to remain shielding. As a contribution this is expected to be proportionate to the level of the award and is not expected to exceed the level of the award itself.

What if my need is not immediate?

If your need is not immediate, please be mindful of the collective needs of your peers. If you require support to sustain your creative practice, you may wish to consider making an application to the Creative Scotland Open Fund for Individuals: Sustaining Creative Development, which is currently open on a rolling basis.

If I am awarded support through this fund, will it affect my chances of claiming other benefits?

You should make your own checks in terms of the potential impact the award of hardship funding would have on any benefits payments you may be seeking or already in receipt of. It is your responsibility to consider the impact of a request to these funds on any other support you intend to access.

How will you stop lots of people who don't need the money requesting funds?

Our priority in this moment of unprecedented instability for those working in the arts and creative industries is to get funds to those who need them. We are not making the process competitive or and we are limiting the evidence we require of need. Instead we are relying on artists and creative freelancers to be mindful of the collective needs of their peers when choosing to request funds. We trust our artistic community to respect this way of working at this time.

How quickly will I get the money?

Both Creative Scotland and our partners aim for a 6-week turnaround between you making a request and the money being received in your bank account. Where possible we will process requests more quickly, but we are also mindful of the potential volume of requests and the potential of delays within Creative Scotland and our partner organisations due to staff absence or illness. Should published timescales alter we/our partners will be in touch with you.

Do I need to tell you what I want to spend the money on?

No. In this unprecedented moment, where individuals are experiencing a range of financial challenges, we are not being prescriptive about how you use the funds. They are to help you meet essential costs at the present time and sustain yourself as an artist or creative practitioner.

Why are you asking me about impact and other funds I have applied for?

This is to help us monitor and understand the situation and to inform our wider organisational response. Please provide only as much detail as you feel comfortable giving.

Can I apply to the Hardship Fund as well as the Open Fund for Individuals: Sustaining Creative Development?

Yes you can, however please note that both funds are for different purposes. This Hardship Fund is for those experiencing immediate difficulty whereas the Open Fund is intended to support longer term plans and projects.

Do I need to apply for the full £2,000?

No. We are asking people to request only what they need to address immediate difficulty due to loss of earnings directly due to COVID-19. We want to help as many people in immediate distress as we can.

Will you publish the names of people who have been awarded funds?

Yes. As a public funder we are required to publish the names and basic details of all those in receipt of funding through Creative Scotland. These awards will be published as part of our monthly listings, published every month, one month in arrears, on our website.

I've been in receipt of income from the Self Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) since April 2020. Am I still eligible to apply to this fund?

Yes, you are still eligible to apply to this fund if you have been in receipt of SEISS income since April – provided that you have not received more than £10,114 in total SEISS payments during that period. If you have received more than this figure, then you would not be considered eligible. This to reflect the Scottish Government guidance we've been asked to take into that account, that these funds should prioritise those who have not benefited from other government support.

How was the figure of £10,114 calculated, in terms of the limit that someone in receipt of SEISS payments could receive during the pandemic?

We have tried to set a limit which is based on the equivalent of someone being in receipt of the UK Living Wage during the period from April onwards. The figure of £10,114 therefore equates to the Living Wage (£9.30) multiplied by a 37.5 hr working week multiplied by 29 weeks (from April to fund launch) = £10,114. If an individual has received this sum or more, then they would not be eligible to apply for the Hardship Fund for Creative Freelancers.