

Artist 1

Application Tips

General Tips for Writing Grants

PREP IN ADVANCE!

Review the guidelines. Are you eligible for this program? Does your project fit the description? Does your plan include ineligible expenses?

Email the program officer. Well ahead of a deadline, be in touch to discuss your project and make sure you're on the right track. *Sending drafts is okay!*

Have your pieces ready. Take note of everything you'll need to submit and, as you're prepping, put them all in the same folder. This will speed up the process at the end and ensure you aren't searching for something crucial at the 11th hour.

BE CLEAR, CONCISE, SPECIFIC, AND REALISTIC

Clear: Make a sound argument. The jury should not have any questions about what you are doing or why you are doing it.

Concise: Use short sentences. Get to the point. Make it easy to read. Consider your audience.
E.g.: don't tell the jury why streaming is important, tell them what your plan for streaming is.

Specific: Detail is your friend (so long as it's concise!). Remember the five Ws - who, what, why, where, when? Don't take it for granted that the jury knows who runs the studio where you plan to record or the publicist you plan to hire.

E.g.: Where are you touring and why? What media outlets are you targeting and why?

Realistic: These are programs for developing artists. The jury doesn't expect that you'll be playing Coachella at the end of this project or earn 10 million followers after receiving a \$1,500 investment. However, the programs are designed to help artists "develop" so generally there is an expectation for modest growth. Show the jury your realistic plan to grow your career through the specific activities of this project. Also, remember that Nova Scotia is a small place and often many of the service providers mentioned in applications are on juries. Make sure you are not telling the jury you are working with someone that you haven't secured as part of your project.

SMART Goals

What is a SMART Goal?

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Based

Weak examples:

I will play more shows

I will increase streams

Get more satellite radio play

Good examples:

Play 3 shows this year to a total audience of 300

Increase streams by 20% across all platforms

Earn \$3,000 in Neighbouring Rights royalties by getting 1 song in rotation on CBC Radio 3

BUDGET, FUNDING, AND INCOME PROJECTIONS:

Music Nova Scotia's programs are co-investments between the applicant and Music Nova Scotia.

Artist | Recording - 75% MNS - 25% Applicant

Artist | Marketing Support - 67% MNS - 33% Applicant

Artist | Tour Support - 67% MNS - 33% Applicant

Budget: Your budget should be realistic. If you don't need the full amount, you don't have to ask for the full amount. Look through the application and understand which costs you are being asked to account for and where you will place your costs in those fields.

Funding: Let the jury know if you have other funders on board. It can help demonstrate the financial viability of the project.

Income Projections: Music Nova Scotia's programs are based on return on investment, so these projections demonstrate to the jury that you have thought about how your project may generate income. The jury understands that these are educated guesses and you won't be held to these numbers. The plan that you submit is the most important part of your application.

Letters of Support: While they are not necessary, they are highly encouraged. Juries like to see proof that the key partners you've mentioned in your application are not only committed to your project, but that they are aware of your funding application.

Artist 1 Recording

Your application will be evaluated on the following criteria:

25% Songs (writing, arrangement, composition, etc.)

25% Vocals/Lyrics (style, range, musical dynamic, emotional impact of song, etc.)

25% Musicality (performance, skill, technique, interpretation, etc.)

25% Artist Bio, History, and Recording Plan (and any additional materials submitted)

SONG

Your song(s) is worth 75% of your application score.

Music Nova Scotia funds music of all genres (including instrumental music) and in all languages. Our juries are made up of industry professionals with broad and diverse areas of expertise.

Songs that have generally tended to receive higher scores from juries in the past have been:

- Well recorded and well produced demos
- Shorter songs that capture the attention of the listener
- Tracks with fully developed arrangements (if your chorus is going to have harmonies, have the harmonies in the demo you submit; if you are planning to have strings in the song, use software strings to demonstrate what those will sound like etc.)

You must submit one unreleased demo track but you may include up to a total of 5 songs (3 demos and 2 previously released songs). The purpose of these tracks is to create a complete picture of what your recorded music will sound like at the end of the project.

Your demo track must not have been commercially released prior to your application submission date. If your song has been released prior to your application submission, your application will be deemed ineligible.

ARTIST BIO, HISTORY, AND RECORDING PLAN

This is the written portion of the application. Here are some general guidelines about the information that should be included.

Artist Bio and History: The Artist Bio should be a short bio that focuses on who you (the artist) are and what kind of music you make.

Helpful tips:

DON'T use overly descriptive language. "Artist x sounds like a fall day when the leaves are a cornucopia of colour and there's the slightest chill to the air."

DO be concise and specific. "Artist x is a hip-hop group from Dartmouth with a throwback 90s boom bap sound."

Your Artist History should include relevant accomplishments and career metrics (total sales, social media followers, streams, etc.), if available. If you don't have any career accomplishments or metrics to date, you may want to include any personal history that will help tell your story (music school, previous bands or projects, music industry experience).

PRO TIP:

Bullet points and short paragraphs are your friend. The jury reviews a large volume of applications and the quicker you can draw their attention to important points, the better.

Recording Plan: Specifically describe what activities you will undertake and how you will use the investment from Music Nova Scotia. Provide estimates of the costs of these activities and indicate whether you will be using MNS funding to pay for them.

DO provide specifics:

Where are you recording?

Why is this the best studio for you?

Who is the engineer?

Who is mastering your tracks?

Why are these people a good fit for your project?

DON'T be vague about your recording plan.

Artist 1 Marketing

Your application will be evaluated on the following criteria:

35% Project Concept

The jury will assess the overview of your project, your SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Based), the activities you intend to undertake over the course of this proposed project, and evaluate how your activities will lead you to accomplish your stated goals.

35% Project Execution

The jury will assess the specific details of your strategy and your plan to execute the activities you have identified in your project.

15% Project Partners

The jury will assess the experience and fit of the members of your team and their role in helping you execute your plan. In addition to industry professionals (management, labels, publicists, publishers, etc.), your team also includes any third party who is helping you accomplish the goals of your project (recording engineers, videographers, social media managers, etc.) Letters of support are helpful for this section. They are not mandatory but they are recommended.

15% Financing

The jury will assess your budget and the overall feasibility of your plan.

The jury will score your application according to the information provided in the marketing plan that you submit. A marketing plan should contain the following at a minimum:

Artist Overview

Where are you in your career and where you are going? Briefly describe yourself and any accomplishments you've had to date.

Project Details

A short overview of your overall plan. What you are doing, how you are doing it, and what partners are you working with?

SMART Goals

Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals for your project.

E.g. Earn \$3,000 in Neighbouring Rights royalties by getting 1 song in rotation on CBC Radio 3

Target Markets and Demographics

Who are your fans? How does this plan target those fans?

Team

What partners do you have on board for this project? Letters of support are good here. While they are not necessary, they are highly encouraged. Juries like to see proof that the key partners you've mentioned in your application are not only committed to your project, but that they are aware of your funding application.

Marketing Strategy

Go into detail about all the components of your overall strategy. Describe how they relate to your SMART Goals, how they will help you achieve your career goals, and provide cost estimates where possible

Examples of individual components can include:

- Publicity
- Radio Tracking
- Advertising (print, online, social media)
- Media
- Branding
- Video
- Touring
- Any other marketing activities

E.g. If you are going to hire a publicist, explain what publicist you will be hiring, why they are a good fit for your project, what media outlets they will be targeting, how those outlets will help you grow your career, and how these activities fit one or more of your goals.

PRO TIP!

Letters of support from key partners can help provide more context for your marketing strategy.

Artist 1 Tour Support

Your application will be evaluated on the following criteria:

35% Project Concept

The jury will assess the overview of your project, your SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Based), the activities you intend to undertake over the course of this proposed project, and evaluate how your activities will lead you to accomplish your stated goals.

35% Project Execution

The jury will assess the specific details of your strategy and your plan to execute the activities you have identified in your project.

15% Project Partners

The jury will assess the experience and fit of the members of your team and their role in helping you execute your plan. In addition to industry professionals (management, labels, publicists, publishers, etc.), your team also includes any third party who is helping you accomplish the goals of your project (recording engineers, videographers, social media managers, etc.) Letters of support are helpful for this section. They are not mandatory but they are recommended.

15% Financing

The jury will assess your budget and the overall feasibility of your plan.

A tour plan should contain the following, at a minimum:

- Short career and touring history that demonstrates the value of the tour
- Tour dates, cities, venues, and expected audience
- SMART Goals for tour
- Marketing plan for tour

Eligible Tour: Six performance dates outside of Nova Scotia with no extensive breaks

Your application must also include confirmation of all your tour dates. This must be more than a document that simply lists the dates. All tour date confirmations must include show date, venue, and payment agreement (even if it's just a door split).

Examples of tour date confirmation:

- A tour itinerary from a recognized booking agent
- Contracts from venues
- Screenshots from promoters with the terms of the show
- Official showcase invitation