

A GUIDE FOR NEWCOMERS



Working in the
Independent Performing Arts



Performing Arts
Programm
Berlin





CONTENT

A GUIDE FOR NEWCOMERS	3
STRATEGY: WHO AM I, WHAT DO I WANT?	7
Working in the Independent Arts Community	8
Vocabulary for the Independent Arts Community	11
Creating A Profile – Profiling Yourself	18
A Brief How-To For Funding Applications	23
Is the system of working independently a good fit for me? Checkbox / Key Questions: Me and the System	26
STRUCTURE: WHAT OPPORTUNITIES ARE OUT THERE?	34
Overview: Funding Opportunities for Getting Started	35
Funding Programs	35
Types of Funding	38
Supplemental Types of Funding	44
Where Do I Find the Funding Programs?	46
AND NOW? THE NEXT STEPS	49
IMPRINT	50

A GUIDE FOR NEWCOMERS

These guidelines are intended for everyone who is looking to begin working in the independent performing arts again, anew, differently or for the very first time and, for example, would like to be able to realize an artistic project. No matter whether it is after completing your studies, after completing a permanent engagement, when changing fields or when returning to the field after a break: these guidelines are intended to serve you as a small, clear source of structure and information on your journey through the funding system.

Being able to work in Germany independently continues to remain a privilege – amongst other reasons, because the financing of artistic projects is generally dependent upon the awarding of funding. To put this into perspective using numbers: in the years 2022 / 2023 alone, Berlin's independent performing arts community had more than 3.6 million EUR made available to it simply within the classic individual project funding program of Berlin's Senate for the independent performing arts and dance. These funds are distributed amongst individual funding models in order to then be made available to the members and independent institutions of the independent art and culture community. In addition to this, there are also stipend programs, additional funding programs for individual disciplines or interdisciplinary funding as well as various funding programs made available by the German

federal government, such as the Hauptstadt Kulturfonds, which alone distributes 15 million EUR each year.

In order to be able to receive funding, it is necessary to submit a funding application. Preparing and submitting a funding application is a skillset that must be tried out and learned and which is accompanied by some bureaucratic efforts. It can indeed be a challenge to achieve an overview of the different and diverse funding programs, the prerequisites for applying for them and the project-specific components – especially at the very beginning, before submitting one's first application for funding.

These guidelines are intended to make it easier for you to become better acquainted with the many different facets of the funding landscape, adapted to your needs, interests and concerns.

Supporting those working in the field of culture to get started who, for example, are affected by structural discrimination can be understood as one of the general concerns within the art and culture community of Berlin since the independent performing arts community is, as well, not (yet) free from discriminating structures. Because, however, a great deal of improvement has already taken place, we are able to take a moment to point out here a number of important points of contact such as Berlinklusion, Platz da!, Making a Difference or Diversity Arts Culture that effectively support artists and culture makers to overcome the existing barriers and also provide support in removing these barriers on a long-term basis.

Submitting bureaucratic funding applications in the German language also generally reveals itself to be a challenge as applicants whose native language is not German often find it twice as difficult to receive funding. Misunderstandings can arise even in the communication about the possibilities for funding as well as in the funding application itself that result from linguistic subtleties and a lack of knowledge regarding bureaucratic details.

At the same time, you really don't need to worry all too much: at the beginning, all of these factors seem to be more significant than they really are. After all, the same is true here as is true for every job: the more that you work away at it and collect experience, the easier it becomes and, most importantly, one really should not shy away from seeking out help.

This document is intended to provide you with a set of guidelines that will allow you to realize your creativity in deeds and that will support active participation. It is intended to encourage and help you to jump over potential stumbling stones and to submit an application for funding for your project.

This document makes no promise of being a guaranteed recipe for success, but it does provide a detailed overview for circumventing the coming hurdles on the path to submitting a funding application and then leaping over them with style.

Alongside an overview of the basic principles operating amongst the different types of funds and funding, you will also find a collection of usable vocabulary in this document that you will en-

counter again and again within the context of submitting funding applications. It contains tips that will help you to expand upon an artistic profile. This entire collection of guidelines, in addition, should provide you with a well-organized summary of the working steps that you can draw up when realizing your future projects. This document is also intended to encourage you to make connections within the network of the independent performing arts community, which continuously dedicates itself to lobbying for fair funding structures. In particular, it should also strengthen your awareness of the fact that working within the independent performing arts community can also be understood as a space for sociopolitical negotiation since actively participating within the community provides the opportunity to help achieve changes, help to shape the image of the city and to make a lasting impression upon the community.

The elaboration of the information that will be found in the following sections has been conducted with an eye toward sustainability, but it is possible that the funding principles could change. The validity of the respective individual pieces of information was last verified in September 2023.

Jaika Bahr, Hannah Schünemann und
Maximilian Hintz



**STRATEGY:
WHO AM I, WHAT
DO I WANT?**



WORKING IN THE INDEPENDENT ARTS COMMUNITY – ONE’S OWN INITIATIVE, NETWORKED IN THE FUNDING SYSTEM

WHAT DOES “INDEPENDENT ARTS COMMUNITY” ACTUALLY MEAN?

The independent arts community refers to all artists, ensembles, institutions and structures that work artistically on an independent basis. They are characterized by the fact that they are not necessarily inherently financed by the state and produce outside of the context of a self-contained institution, that is, independently. This includes all areas of the visual and performing arts, music and literature as well as any interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work.

The independent performing arts community in Germany is diverse and vibrant. The independent arts community is generally characterized as innovative, open to experimentation and flexible. It represents a counterpoint to the repertory of ensemble and state theaters and is often the first place to express new cultural trends and political as well as societal developments.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WORK WITHIN THE INDEPENDENT ARTS COMMUNITY?

“Working independently means working differently and self-suffi-

ciently and thus continually posing questions as to how work, production and creation can be achieved and what framework conditions the independence we seek requires.”

*Sabrina Apitz & Therese Schmidt,
the Berlin Performing Arts Program*

The theatrical work, beyond the stages that enjoy longer-term subsidies, promises independence and the privilege of being able to work under one’s own responsibility and independently, but also means that one will have to deal with the administration, organization and the production conditions.

Independent culture workers also initially lack financial means. It is here that the path to cultural funding tools begins, which can be applied for and, in the best cases, granted. That is, in order to bring one’s own project to life, a structured, informed process of dealing with framework issues is also required in addition to the artistic and creative aspect.

WHAT DOES FINANCING VIA THE PUBLIC FUNDING SYSTEM ACTUALLY MEAN?

A variety of state structures provide funding for the active support of art and culture. In Germany, this is prescribed by the legislators. It is possible for those working in culture to inform themselves of funding opportunities that are advertised and to apply for money that will make it possible to realize an artistic project.

The district / state / federal government takes on the cost factor after inspecting the project and distributes money via a variety of funding instruments and programs. These, in turn, allow all participating parties to actively commit themselves to the development of cultural, political, social and other societal concerns.

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS ABOUT INDEPENDENT WORK

Making oneself aware of the privileges that independent theatrical work can bring as well as the challenges that must be overcome in order to achieve this always allows artists to draw their own individual conclusion based upon their perceptions and their ideal conception.

This means that it is all the more necessary to work with one's own artistic profile and the opportunities that this brings with it. In my work, do I yearn for independence in expression, paired with self-employment, flexibility and self-realization?

The check and key questions beginning on [page 26](#) are intended to help you to draw your own conclusions about working in the independent arts community.

VOCABULARY FOR THE INDEPENDENT ARTS COMMUNITY

ACCESSIBILITY OR REDUCTION OF BARRIERS

Safeguarding of the direct access and the unlimited opportunities for use in all areas of life equally for all participants. Here, this concerns, for example, the performance venues, funding opportunities, digital networking, websites, advertising, et cetera. Many people prefer to use the term “reduction of barriers” rather than “barrier-free” since barriers do, unfortunately, continue to exist within the opportunities available at present.

APPLICATION

This is generally a request for the provision of support that is submitted in writing. In this context, for example, the application for funding which also meets all of the formal requirements that exist. This means, depending upon the funding and the expected scope of the application, a collection of completed application forms, letters, description of the project in short form, complete project description and a budget.

BUDGET (FINANCIAL PLAN)

The funds that are available and/or have been planned for a project. The budget planning is the distribution of the budget amongst the required posts in terms of their expenditures and income in the form of a financial plan.

COFINANCING

Mutual, shared acquisition of capital for a project / financial means that flow into a project from another source alongside the funding that has been applied for.

COLLECTIVE

Community / combination of multiple participants who work, make decisions and organize as a unit. In doing so, the collective stands at the forefront, meaning that shared working processes are set up at the point where conventional hierarchies are usually found.

COOPERATION / COPRODUCTION

Mutual collaboration in order to reach a shared goal. A cooperation distinguishes itself primarily as ideational collaboration, that is, for example, a production being promoted and presented at another theater. A coproduction refers to a larger scale because there is also financial cooperation, that is, for example, a producing institution pays a coproduction contribution, for example, in the form of a cash payment or also by financing time spent using workshops, covering transportation costs or the payment of wages.

CULTURAL EDUCATION / COMMUNITY WORK

The intensive examination and engagement with societal topics, the organization and shaping of art projects with an eye toward the incorporation and participation of different target groups. This is how artists engage politically in a wide variety of collaboration.

DIVERSITY

Diversity, diverseness (e. g. the participants, the opportunities for expression, the social parameters, et cetera).

DOCUMENTATION

The summarization, the (mostly written) recording of the working and production process in the form of, for example, receipts, materials and protocol of the results. This is often conducted in the form of work reports and images, possibly also in the form of videos.

FISCAL YEAR

The accounting year in which financial means are planned. In Germany, this corresponds to the calendar year.

FOUNDATIONS

Institutions that, with the help of an asset, follow a fixed, mostly non-profit purpose (e. g. Berlin's cultural funding for artistic newcomers). These are to be distinguished from funding foundations, whose activities provide financial support for third parties, as well as operative foundations, which conduct projects themselves in order to meet the purpose of the foundation. The funding principles and conditions vary on an individual basis. In these cases, it should be observed very carefully which interests and whose interests are represented. Information and calls for applications are usually visible on the foundation's respective own websites or can also be obtained via telephone.

FUNDS

Financial resources for specific purposes, quasi a reserve of assets with a specific address. An institution often provides money from a fund and is then designated as such itself (for example, Fonds Darstellende Künste e. V., or the Performing Arts Fund).

FUNDING LANDSCAPE

Metaphoric summary of all funding institutions and their funding programs.

FUNDING POOL

Slang for funding program. According to this, money (funds) are disbursed until they are exhausted.

GENDERING

A gender-sensitive use of language in the interest of equal treatment, which is reflected in the written and spoken language. In doing so, in the German language, special characters have increasingly been established in written language such as the gender star or the colon ► e. g., Künstler*innen & Künstler:innen.

INCLUSION

Latin, meaning the natural state of belonging/being involved. In the social context, for example, this means the goal of the living together of all human beings on the basis of equal rights. Those who are deemed affected or disabled should no longer be excluded. They do not have to adapt their needs to the given circumstances,

but instead, the given circumstances will be tailored precisely to their needs. Opposite ► exclusion.

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Similar to “multidisciplinary” or “across the disciplines”. The use of forms of expressions, ways of thinking and methods of working from a variety of artistic disciplines.

MINIMUM FEE LIMITS

The lowest limit of fee (payment), which still guarantees the minimum standard in accordance with the qualification of those being compensated. Their application and use has been made a requirement by Berlin’s Senate and many other funding institutions when drawing up a budget.

PARTICIPATION

Taking part in, sharing, influencing. This often designates the participation of the audience in an art project, for example, through co-creation within the performance or through taking part in the rehearsal process, post-performance discussions, et cetera.

PAY POLICY

The question of payment, remuneration and the resulting planning of the overall financing. Collectives that work independently often set the standard for fair payment with their respectively individually determined pay policy, which also sets the balanced payment levels within the group.

PERFORMANCE VENUE (PRODUCING INSTITUTION)

Auditoriums, rooms, buildings as well as open-air stages that are used as cultural performance locations.

PIPELINE SYSTEM

A description of certain characteristics of the predominant funding system. According to this, those who have previously received funding quickly receive additional funding, but can also end up losing their status.

PR WORK

Communication to target groups using freely accessible routes. Examples are ads, mailings, posters, flyers, websites, blogs, et cetera. The goal of PR work is usually to provide a positive image of one's own work or organization, to provide information about activities and to find new audience members.

PROFILE

Characteristic appearance that shapes the perspective from the outside: artistic approach, forms and content, ideas, desires and goals as well as the social and/or political orientation and the potential brought along.

RESIDENCE

(derived from the Latin *residencia*) Location of the creative process – such as a performance venue, a festival. A certain residence can also be a prerequisite for funding instruments: artists who submit a funding application to Berlin's senate, for

example, must have their residence and the focus of their work in Berlin.

SITE-SPECIFIC

Site or location dependency of an artistic production. Genres such as “site-specific performances” are labeled like this.

SOCIAL CULTURE

The sum of all cultural, social and political affairs, interests and needs of a society. In doing so, the focus is placed just as much on the shared cultural practice. In other words: active culture that is shaped jointly.

STIPEND / STIPENDS

(Latin for “payment of an amount, payment of wages”) is a financial or ideational funding. It includes a voluntary provision for further and continuing education or in order to realize a project. Stipends (plural) are awarded and thus provide a certain aid.

VENUE CONFIRMATION

Confirmation from a performance venue of the permission to use their space. A confirmation from a performance venue is required in order to submit a funding application for the Individual Project Funding program. These can be issued by theaters or other cooperating venues.

CREATING A PROFILE – PROFILING YOURSELF

The profile is understood as the characteristic appearance of one's personal artistic work. The focus of the work, content, forms and different genres are clear characteristics that can be created on the basis of the artistic profile. Defining one's own artistic profile is an important prerequisite for submitting applications for funding.

When submitting funding applications, the goal is to communicate one's own profile in writing, describe it in a catchy manner and thus make it able to be understood. Although submitting a funding application seems to be an administrative task at first glance, it ultimately actually concerns being able to successfully present the artistic ambitions. The elaboration and convincing description of one's own profile should thus especially be regarded an artistic working step. Similar to the conceptualization of an artistic project, the drawing up in writing of one's own profile is an opportunity to define oneself in which one's individual, creative consciousness can be clearly transported to the outside.

Example: She She Pop

The majority of the members of the group are female and work within a collective. The performers see themselves as writers, dramaturgs and the ones who will conduct all of the action on stage. The incorporation of their own autobiographies in doing so is primarily used as a method and is not the purpose of the work. She She Pop practice a form of theater that is committed to experimentation. They use the stage as a place for acute publicness: here, decisions are made, ways of making conversation and societal systems are tried out, language gestures and social rituals are learned or rejected. She She Pop sees its mission in the search for the societal boundaries of communication – and in crossing them in specific and artistic ways within the safe space of art.

For a jury that is tasked with making the decisions regarding the provision of the respective funding, a written elaboration of the profile should provide an insight into the artistic work, but the reference to a well elaborated profile is also of benefit for the own self-awareness of the artist as well as a support for future working processes.

The artistic profile can be marked in many cases by interdisciplinary work, especially when collectives are composed of members who work in different disciplines. Here it can be helpful to focus upon shared goals for the formation of the artistic character. Different sub-areas within a profile should come together to form a uniform thematic focus.

Example: Theater X

Theater X sees itself as an alternative, democratic arts organization. The artistic and operational processes are not viewed separately from each other, but instead understood as equally important elements for emancipatory artistic production with young people and young adults. In doing so, the principle of working at eye level between the different areas of theater and especially between staff members and young people is of central importance.

Alongside the personal profile, education criteria and collected work experience also play an important role. At this point, we would like to point out once again that getting started in working within the independent performing arts is in no way, shape or form conceived solely for those just getting started with working in the profession after studying at an art school. Those coming from another field, those changing careers and those getting started again after a period of inactivity also have the opportunity to begin working within the independent arts community. In light of this, the individual life paths, worlds of experience and artistic socializations are of great interest to the juries charged with making the selections. What does your own artistic career look like? To what extent do certain goals result from your previous experiences? Connecting your personal experiences and sections of your biography with artistic concepts and ideas often helps to create a clear impression of the project.

Example: Flinn Works

The company conducts its work on current topics within the globalized world and poses feminist and post-colonial questions. The productions are based on intensive research and use the political and aesthetic positions of the international performers to create a dramaturgy with multiple perspectives. Working at the interface between ethnology, music theater and documentary theater, productions are created whose form is developed as a consequence of the content and the specific talents of the team.

In order to sharpen your own profile, it is well worth, for example, taking a look at the websites of more established artists, but producing institutions and performance venues also offer great examples for illustrations of an artistic profile.

With a clear profile, artists themselves become institutions as they bundle content-based, structural as well as aesthetic plans here.

Example: Gob Squad

We make performances and videos which search for beauty in the everyday, and look for words of wisdom from a passing stranger. We are an artists' collective, the seven core members working collaboratively on the concept, direction and performance of our work. Other artists, performers and technicians are invited to collaborate on particular projects.

We try and explore the point where theater meets art, media and real life. As well as theaters and galleries, we place our work at the heart of urban life – in houses, shops, underground stations, car parks, hotels or directly on the street. Everyday life and magic, banality and utopia, reality and entertainment are all set on a collision course and the audience are often asked to step beyond their traditional role as passive spectators and bear witness to the results.

Central Questions for Finding an Artistic Profile:

- ▶ Who are the participants?
- ▶ Which positions are represented?
- ▶ Which methods are used?
- ▶ Which contents should be communicated?
- ▶ How does your group define itself?
- ▶ What funding opportunities do I actually have?
- ▶ How do I break up the phases of submitting a grant application?

A BRIEF HOW-TO FOR FUNDING APPLICATIONS

- ▶ Plan **sufficient time** for the application; this seems to be a clear factor to take into consideration and, as such, it should be clearly emphasized from the beginning. Good time management prior to submitting the funding application as well as a sufficiently large time window for the final submission are both absolute musts.
- ▶ **Be sure to note the deadlines** by which the funding applications that come into question for you must be submitted by.
- ▶ If you intend to perform your project at a specific performance venue, you also have to establish contact with the venue in a timely manner so that they can issue you a **Spielstättenbescheinigung** (certificate of confirmation from the performance venue). Sharing the artistic project with a potential venue prior to submitting the funding application is also an excellent opportunity to formulate a precise project description and communicate this to the responsible parties.
- ▶ Be prepared to submit a **brief description** of your project alongside the complete description. Reduced down to approximately half a page, it should be able to provide a first impression that describes your aesthetic plan as clearly and specifically as possible.
- ▶ Here is a warning for **online applications!**
The respective servers often become overloaded shortly before

the end of the submission deadline. This can lead to the application process being interrupted! With this in mind, please be sure not to begin half an hour before the end of the deadline, but instead plan sufficient time for submitting and / or uploading your application.

- ▶ In order to make the application process easier, it is advised that you separately store the requirements before **beginning to complete the online application form**. If the form does not provide the opportunity to temporarily save your data, it is thus helpful to click once through the entire document and copy the information and questions. You can then use this information afterward, saved into a separate document, to complete the form step by step.
- ▶ If you conduct this step in a timely manner, **questions** that may arise during the process of the application might still be answered – either in a quick conversation with the respective funding institution or by one of the numerous **information centers**.
Here as well, please be certain to note the **dates, deadlines and office hours** of advisement opportunities.
- ▶ A **costs and finance plan** has to provide comprehension of how you are planning to financially realize the project. New terms should be clarified here in order to work against formal errors (e. g. *Fehlbedarfsfinanzierung*, or, short-fall financing – what does that mean?).

- ▶ **Additional documents** that you have to submit alongside the completed form should be kept at the ready in the file format requested.
- ▶ Standard documents include your CV, documentation materials about past projects, the certificate of confirmation from the performance venue, a marketing plan, the press response, proof of insurance, ID documents, your certificate of registration and, if required, your residency status.

IS THE SYSTEM OF WORKING INDEPENDENTLY A GOOD FIT FOR ME?

CHECKBOX / KEY QUESTIONS: ME AND THE SYSTEM

Within the diverse funding landscape, a clearly defined artistic profile offers a framework for more easily recognizing exclusion criteria within funding programs and bring clear advantages to the search for suitable funding programs.

If you can clearly describe what makes you and your work unique, you will also have a more precise idea of what funds you require in order to realize your project. After all, the whole point is to take a look at the funding landscape with a focus on certain themes and disciplines that are suitable for your planned project.

For all potential and passionate newcomers, a checklist will be provided here that queries the essential parameters for working independently in order to give the opportunity to visualize yourself within the independent structures and give you a clear picture of the possible future ways of working. After all, in general: being aware of the prerequisites makes it much easier to assess whether you will enjoy working within these structures.

Basic Questions: Is the system a good fit for me?

Do I want to work independently, which is associated with a great deal of personal initiative and personal responsibility?

Working independently in the field of the performing arts has one large advantage: you are primarily independent in the idea-finding process and conceptualization of your own project, you can put the team together yourself and you can determine the underlying structures for the working method. This freedom, however, is accompanied by a great deal of personal initiative so that you are able to organize all of the prerequisites that the work requires: all of the team members need to be found and recruited in order to realize the production (direction, stage design, costume design, technical theater production, dramaturgy, PR work, et cetera), a performance venue has to be found that would like to present the project as well as rehearsal spaces, technical equipment, workshops for the production of the respective designs and the funding, of course, must also be successfully applied for and granted. In addition, you also have to put together the budget yourself, keep it in mind, conduct the accounting and meet the conditions of the funders. With this in mind, you should first of all ask yourself if you are aware of all of these prerequisites and whether you want to take on the completing of these tasks.

Am I OK with the fact that beginning to work independently is associated with financial uncertainty and that it can take some time before I am able to earn my livelihood from it? Do I have other sources of income that can help me to continue to earn money during periods of preparation or interim phases?

The working conditions in the performing arts are fundamentally associated with financial uncertainty. Also within fixed structures

in established institutions, many artists live from gig to gig and even positions that feature full-time employment are mostly associated with limited employment contracts. Nevertheless, you should also be aware that the financial uncertainties are even more pronounced in the independent arts community and that it can take some time before your first funding application is successful and that, afterwards, there will always be periods where you are waiting for your next funding application to be approved. In general, you have to invest unpaid working time again and again in order to create concepts without knowing whether these will actually receive funding. With this in mind, it is highly advised that, before you begin working in the independent arts community, you ask yourself where your livelihood will come from that you will need during preparatory periods and in interim phases. Especially at the beginning, when one tends to still have very little experience with the process, it can be helpful to have other sources of income such as side jobs and half-time jobs that can help one to achieve basic financial security.

In addition to the questions about the content, do I also feel like dealing with structural questions regarding artistic work?

Working independently in the field of the performing arts means that you only move minimally within the existing and prefabricated structures and that, in addition to questions regarding your content, you also have to answer questions regarding structures yourself. How many times per week, during what times and for how long should the rehearsals be? How much should the individual team members be paid and who makes the decision regarding

this? Who can join in the conversation and at what time when it comes to making fundamental or specific content-based decisions?

These questions and many others are guaranteed to come up within independent working structures and should be given serious consideration. Finding solutions to these questions together results in the creation of a good working environment and allows independence from normative, strictly hierarchical systems. Anyone who is excited to pursue answers to these questions has certainly found a good place for themselves within the independent arts community and will be able to make a contribution to thinking dusty old structures anew and forging new ground.

Can I imagine myself doing budget planning and taking on bureaucratic tasks?

Alongside the content-based and political structural questions that definitely play a role in working independently, bureaucratic structural questions and formal thematic areas also must be taken into consideration, including the budget planning. There are certainly artists or members of artistic groups who are well versed in the creation of Excel spreadsheets and even enjoy working with them. If that is not the case with you, that is no reason to panic: even if this area of responsibility seems annoying, it is easy to take care with just a little support. You should just be certain to make yourself aware of the fact in advance that this is an essential part of working independently, one that should be borne in mind from the very beginning. ► Tip: attend training sessions and workshops, ask production companies for help and/or expand the team and incorporate producers or artistic production managers into the work in a specific manner.

Project-related questions: How do I begin planning to submit a funding application?

Do I like to elaborate concepts by myself or do I need collaborators in order to be able to think creatively?

Before you can take on the task of submitting your first applications for funding, it makes sense to consider whether you want to go through processes such as these by yourself or whether you already desire teamwork at this stage. Before receiving your first funding, the application process can provide awareness of future working structures. In general, one does include the planned members of the team in the application, but that does not mean that everyone involved already work together on the concept and application. Both options are possible, it actually depends upon how you like to work and whether there are agreements regarding this within the group. If you are generally more creative and more efficient in a team, then you should consider right at the very beginning in which constellation you would like to conduct the first working steps so that nothing can stand in the way of a working process that is fun to do.

Example: Ringtheater

At Ringtheater, we are of the opinion that a utopia is something that you should create in the here and now. We are working to change the structures in theater as they are currently known by attempting to work in a manner that is critical of power, transparent and participatory. We work with each other in the group and with the groups that work with us.

In what phase of being a newcomer am I in?

Being a newcomer can mean different things: Have I just completed an artistic course of studies? Have I already worked in the field of theater and do I want to work as a freelancer now? Have I already realized my first small projects but am still at the beginning of things or has some time passed since these small projects were realized and I would like to return to things now? Was I part of an independent group and am I now looking to start working on my own project? Do I want to produce my first project in Berlin? Depending upon how these questions are answered, there are different types of funding available for making the next step. Directly after completing your studies or in order to collect your first experiences, it can make sense to apply for smaller funding programs in the beginning, such as funding through a district of Berlin in order to become acquainted with things on a smaller scale and to be able to complete and verify your first projects for the additional steps. If you already have collected some experience and have access to a good network, there are often larger funding programs that can come into question when it comes to realizing projects. And, in general: ambition and enthusiasm can provide a good motor, but, at the end of the day, it is all about building up a strong foundation and building upon it step by step. Having a good understanding for all of the prerequisites that you must meet is a good protection against disappointment and frustration.

Do I have specific ideas for projects or do I have to develop them first?

Working artistically means having and realizing ideas. You don't, however, always have a whole bag full of mature ideas with you

and, often, it is having a large number of ideas that prevents you from choosing a concept and making it more specific. If there is already a mature idea, for example, a play script, a suitable idea for a production, suggestions for a team, a form of expression and an aesthetic, you are then very well prepared to directly address the transition of the idea to the application form. If the ideas are still relatively broad or an initial phase to find and collect ideas is necessary, this is a wonderful opportunity to formulate the basic interests and apply for a residency or a stipend that will enable you to think about the project further. Literary and translation stipends can also be a good solution here in order to elaborate new texts or elaborate an approach for working with existing texts and to develop everything else for the project from this working method.

Are there thematic points of focus that could help me to find the right funding program?

If there is an understanding present regarding which topics should be dealt with in which way, how the group should be structured and how one's own artistic interests are to be handled, what the initial ideas for a concept can look like or how the motivation for the artistic work has come together, then all of the important thematic points of focus that can be helpful for finding the right funding program have already been touched on.

Have I used the existing opportunities to allow myself to be advised and to plan my next steps well?

Artistic work in general requires, of course, a great deal of perso-

nal creativity and a pronounced urge to create. Nevertheless, you should never shy away from accepting opportunities for support. The various information centers have been established specifically to provide support to independent artists for all imaginable questions, concerns and working steps. From the first basic questions about working independently to the first ideas about content and group structures to the adjustment of funding application drafts and the evaluation of projects, there are experts available that the groups and individual artists can work with free of charge. A wide variety of mentoring opportunities are also specifically created to accompany newcomers and emerging artists for a longer period of time and to stand by their side and provide help and advice. Taking advantage of this large selection of opportunities should become self-evident – not only because the success rate of the funding applications is improved by this, but also because this can help your own network to grow with valuable contacts and connections that will ensure a long-term, fruitful exchange within the community.

**STRUCTURE:
WHAT
OPPORTUNITIES
ARE OUT
THERE?**



OVERVIEW: FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GETTING STARTED

Funding Programs

PUBLIC FUNDING PROGRAMS

Art and culture are often funded using public funds. In Germany, there is funding provided by the individual federal states, through the federal government and also international funding provided through the EU.

FUNDING FROM THE GERMAN FEDERAL STATES

Cultural sovereignty and therewith the financial funding of culture as well in Germany is, for the most part, (90%), the responsibility of the federal states and local authorities. In the State of Berlin, funding is primarily provided through the Senate Department for Culture and Social Cohesion, but also through the Hauptstadt-kulturfonds (the Cultural Capital Fund) or through the municipal district offices.

FUNDING FROM THE GERMAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The funds available for art and culture from the German Federal Government aim toward funding larger-scale national and international projects. The German Federal Government realizes its cultural funding through a German Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, who also represents

Germany in international bodies. The Kulturstiftung des Bundes (the German Federal Culture Foundation) and Fonds Darstellende Künste (the Performing Arts Fund) regularly issue funding and stipends for projects and artists nationwide.

EU FUNDS – INTERNATIONAL FUNDING

The EU supports the cultural landscape in Europe through a variety of funding programs for international and transnational collaboration.

FUNDING THROUGH PUBLIC FOUNDATIONS

Foundations are organizations that are founded with the help of an asset and follow a specific purpose that is determined by the donor. A number of foundations in Germany have bylaws that provide for the funding of art and culture. The realization of the funding takes place on an individual basis that is determined by the respective foundation. There are grant-making foundations that make projects that take place outside of the foundation financially possible and there are operative foundations that realize their own projects within the foundation.

CULTURE SPONSORING

A number of larger, financially independent businesses support the arts and cultural projects over the course of their marketing and image strategies. This can take place through the sponsoring of materials, personnel as well as through smaller and larger amounts of money and is often agreed to in exchange for the acknowledgement of the company name or for advertising support.

CROWD FUNDING

Ever since 2010, crowd funding has developed into a popular method for financing cultural projects as well. Through this, a large number of individual persons provide financing together through what are generally individually determined amounts of money for a project that is presented and promoted online for this purpose. In contrast to fundraising, the funders can also receive something in exchange for their contribution in crowd funding, such as, for example, participation in the project, insider information, a gift or a reward. The most important German platforms for the crowdfunding of artistic and cultural projects are, for example, Startnext, VisionBakery and inkubato. A crowdfunding campaign can generally be launched free of charge, but in some cases the platform will charge a percentage of the funds collected if the campaign is successful. The success of the funding is most of all dependent upon intense PR work.



Types of Funding

Funding systems for the arts and culture generally feature different types of funding that are divided into different levels and distinguish between one-time artistic projects and longer-term plans.

- ✓ *A note on the structure: The number of checkmarks symbolizes which types of funding are especially suitable for newcomers and emerging artists – the more checkmarks, the fewer prerequisites are involved with the type of funding.*

PROJEKTFÖRDERUNG (PROJECT FUNDING)

A project funding refers to a specific plan that must be described and applied for. In this manner, project funding distinguishes itself from an institutional funding that serves to cover the operating costs of a cultural institution. The project funding is provided in the form of a financial subsidy intended to cover the expenses for the individual project, limited both in terms of time and content, and ends with the end of the project. A follow-up financing for the participating artists is generally not foreseen as the funds are specifically earmarked and provided for the project formulated in the application. With this in mind, the classical case would be the funding of a single individual project, based on the production concept formulated as well as a schedule and financial plan.

EINSTIEGSFÖRDERUNG

(EARLY CAREER FUNDING) ✓ ✓ ✓

Einstiegsförderung, or early career funding, is generally designated as the most standard form of project funding for newcomers. This means that an early career funding grant can be awarded for a specific, individual project that is limited in terms of time and content, that is, in the classic case, for the first professional production of artists or groups after completing their studies, after changing careers, after beginning to work in the field again after a time away or to being one's independent artistic work. This means that the applicant may not have received funding from the same funding institution already. In order to apply for early career funding, then, generally no verification of previous artistic works is required, but, however, an artistic course of studies or corresponding experience must usually be provided. This form of funding is intended to make it possible to begin working with the independent arts. With this in mind, the funding amounts provided are generally smaller sums, but sums that, however, do make it possible to create a full-scale stage production. Early career funding programs, therefore, number amongst the most popular funding programs and receive a high number of applications. With this in mind, it can make sense to apply for other, smaller or less popular funding options at the beginning in order to be able to collect your first project experiences.

FUNDING THROUGH A

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF A CITY ✓ ✓ ✓

In most German cities, each municipal funding district of a city has its own office for culture that is equipped with culture funds

for the district which is used to subsidize decentralized cultural work. These also include opportunities for independent artists, groups and culture makers to submit applications for the financial support of artistic and cultural projects. The projects must have a reference to the respective municipal district, meaning that the artists must reside there, the performance venue must be located there or the project must be developed there. In general, these smaller fundings can, for example, provide for the equipment and fees required by the project. With this in mind, this type of funding is very suitable for realizing your first small-scale projects, collecting experience and using these as a basis for larger project applications in the future.

EINZELPROJEKTFÖRDERUNG (INDIVIDUAL PROJECT FUNDING) ✓ ✓

Einzelprojektförderung, or individual project funding, can be applied for as a grant to fund a production, additional performances of an existing production or to fund the further development of projects. The project must be limited both in terms of time and content so that the subsidy of the production costs can be provided. This funding program is not suitable for newcomers who are looking to realize their very first production as, normally, verification must be provided of a production that has already been realized. This verification can, if applicable, also be tied to a local situation, that, for example, the projects that have already been realized were premiered in Berlin. If smaller works can already be verified, then newcomers can also apply to this funding program and receive smaller or larger grants. This type of

funding is especially well suited if the artist or group in question has already collected experience and are aiming to realize their first larger-scale projects.

GROUP FUNDING AND FUNDING FOR INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

Funding programs for groups and individual artists are generally not provided for the realization of specific project concepts, but instead for persons and groups of persons that it will then allow to be able to further develop their content, structural and aesthetic goals over a fixed period of time. With this in mind, this type of funding is generally not issued for a project, but instead for a longer period of time in order to make it possible to expand upon structural, conceptual and artistic points of focus as well as the livelihood of the group or artist, that is, to provide a certain planning security over a longer period of time.

ARBEITS- UND RECHERCHE-STIPENDIEN (WORK AND RESEARCH STIPENDS) ✓ ✓ ✓

Work and research stipends are provided to individual artists or groups in order to develop new ideas and approaches. The stipends generally finance the artists over the course of a few months and allow them to conduct preliminary work for projects and productions. In many cases, it is necessary to provide proof of having completed an artistic course of study or proof of having many years of experience in conducting artistic activities. With this in mind, the stipend is very well suited for recent graduates who would like to begin working within the independent arts community.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE-PROGRAMS ✓ ✓

With the term “artist in residence”, what is understood are programs that make it possible for artists or groups to develop and continue to expand upon projects and to seek exchange about them with other artists, institutions or cultural circles. Often, these are connected with the programs for a stay of multiple weeks or months at a cultural institution in which, for example, the accommodation, board, spaces and materials are included. There are already some established programs that exist and which are dedicated to those just getting started or artistic newcomers. The most well-known include the programs of **Schloss Solitude**, the program **flausen+** and the residency program of the **Fleetstreet Theater**.

BASISFÖRDERUNG / KONZEPTIONSFÖRDERUNG (BASIC FUNDING / CONCEPT FUNDING)

These types of funding (Basisförderung, or basic funding, for groups, Konzeptionsförderung, or concept funding) exist for multi-year projects with multiple productions. In addition, these types of funding generally require that the recipients have already gained artistic experience, which means that they are not suitable for those just getting started.

FUNDING FOR CULTURAL EDUCATION ✓ ✓ ✓

Alongside the standard artistic funding pools, there are also funding opportunities for projects that take place within the field of cultural education. Here, the intention is to fund cooperation projects that provide new access points to art and culture for different

age groups; a classic example of this would be a cooperation with a school in which an artistic project is developed in collaboration with the students. The departments of the Senate and the districts especially provide funding for this, but in addition to this there are also institutions and initiatives that are dedicated to the promotion of cultural education. As these means of funding are subject to somewhat less demand, they present an outstanding opportunity for newcomers for realizing their first projects and trying out the collaboration with partner institutions, specific audiences as well as the focusing of their aesthetic goals.



Supplemental Types of Funding (Good to Know)

The larger-scale types of funding are supplemented by a large number of small and more specific types of funding that are intended to support the production logistics of the independent arts community.

FUNDING FOR GUEST PERFORMANCES

Funding for guest performances can be applied for in the case of international guest performances. The funding is used, for example, for the compensation for transportation, storage, travel, accommodation, assembly, translation or equipment costs.

TRAVEL SUBSIDIES

Travel subsidies also are classified in part as guest performance funding when the travel expenses for the guest performance are compensated for.

WIEDERAUFNAHMEFÖRDERUNG (FUNDING FOR ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCES OF EXISTING WORK)

As generally no repertory operation is possible within independent producing structures, costs are incurred when additional performances of existing work are scheduled after some time, for example, when a production is invited to be part of a festival. Subsidies for the costs of the rehearsal processes and spaces and other relevant budget items can be applied for here. Productions that have found a resonance with audiences in the past have a good chance of receiving funding for additional performances.

LITERARY STIPENDS / TRANSLATION STIPENDS

If a new play is being written for a production or if texts which already exist are being translated anew or for the first time, it can make sense to apply for a literary stipend or a translation stipend. Many smaller and larger foundations place a focus on supporting new literary developments and translation processes. In many cases, these kinds of funding especially benefit young artists who are working on innovative linguistic forms and would like to further develop dramatic or text-based ideas.



Where Do I Find the Funding Programs?

After having received so much information, you may be saying to yourself: Okay, cool. But WHERE do I find these funding programs now that I am interested in?

The answer is really very simple, after all, it usually is **just a click or a phone call away!**

The following pieces of advice can help you on your way: First of all, use the internet to inform yourself about funding opportunities in Berlin. The website of the **Senate Department for Culture and Social Cohesion** is an insightful source of research for the current funds and funding programs of the state, alongside their requirements. The Freie Szene Kompass of the Berlin Performing Arts Program provides a comprehensive overview (in German) of the **funding deadlines and funding opportunities** as well as the **residency stipends** and **showcase formats** for the independent performing arts in Berlin and beyond. With its **Förderfinder**, or funding finder, Kreativ Kultur Berlin provides a database that lists the regional, national and international funding and financing programs for the different disciplines and industries.

While somewhat more general, the website of the **Bundesverband Freie Darstellende Künste**, the German Federal Association of the Independent Performing Arts, provides a good impression of which funding programs could come into question for whom. Alongside state funding programs, foundations and private in-

vestors can also come into consideration. While you are on your search, you can also take a look at other groups and inspiring artists to see which types of funding they have received and been able to use. A glance at the flyer or program booklet can quickly provide you with knowledge and information, on the basis of which one can also come into direct contact with the artists and discuss types of funding with them.

Of course, however, one does not want to challenge other culture makers for their funding. It is precisely because of this that conducting exchanges about opportunities in the independent arts community is of enormous importance, especially for newcomers to the funding system. We would like to emphasize that a competitive attitude is not necessary and the community lives most of all from its shared shaping and its diversity.

The **LAF**T Berlin – Landesverband freie darstellende Künste Berlin e. V., the Berlin State Association of the Independent Performing Arts – is an important point of contact for receiving specific information as the organized representative of the interests of the professional independent performing arts in Berlin. The **Berlin Performing Arts Program**, a program of LAFT, offers **advisement sessions**, workshops and networking opportunities free of charge both for newcomers as well as professionals regarding all central questions relevant to production and distribution that can come up over the course of working independently. In the Freie Szene Kompass, you can find an **industry directory** of the community, a list of **advisement and qualification opportunities** as well as a

[media library](#) with helpful tips in video format. Additional [online services](#) provide insight into legal questions as well as an overview of [festivals, performance venues and industry events](#). In addition, over the course of the program [Guides to the Independent Arts Community](#), a multitude of multilingual advisement opportunities have been created that deal specifically with the needs of international artists and can be accessed via the Information Center of the Performing Arts Program.

Finally, we would like to take the opportunity here to let you know about some additional information centers, including [Kreativ Kultur Berlin](#) and its advisement opportunities that cover all disciplines and fields, as well as [Touring Artists](#) and its opportunities for artists who work internationally. The projects [Berlinklusion](#), [Platz da!](#) and [Making a Difference Berlin \(dance\)](#) provide advisement to cultural workers with so-called disabilities as they get started with working in the independent arts community and support projects with inclusion oriented measures. [Diversity Arts Culture](#) offers, amongst other services, advisement and support in the planning of diversity-oriented measures in practice as well as empowerment workshops for artists who have experienced exclusion within the field of culture up until now.

AND NOW? THE NEXT STEPS

Are you looking for some support in getting started?

On the website of the Berlin Performing Arts Program, you will always find all of our [current events, workshops and other opportunities for newcomers](#).

You can also subscribe to the [LAFT newsletter](#) to stay up-to-date with everything that the Berlin Performing Arts Program has to offer. To do so, just send an email with the subject “Newsletter bestellen” to us at newsletter@laft-berlin.de.

Or would you like to sign up directly for an [initial advisement session](#)? Then just send an email to us at beratung@pap-berlin.de and we will find the right event for you.

We are looking forward to having you join the independent performing arts community!

IMPRINT

PUBLISHED BY

LAFT Berlin – Landesverband freie darstellende Künste Berlin e.V.
Grünberger Straße 39, 10245 Berlin
www.laft-berlin.de

AUTHORS

Jaika Bahr, Maximilian Hintz und Hannah Schönemann

EDITORIAL TEAM & PROOFREADING

Christin Eckart, Marlene Kolatschny, Toni Zahn

CONTENT ADVISOR

Christin Eckart

TRANSLATION

Daniel Brunet

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Grafikladen Berlin

A publication of the Berlin Performing Arts Program. The idea for this publication originated during meetings of the AG Einstieg of LAFT Berlin (the Newcomers Work Group) with Janina Benduski (Director of the Berlin Performing Arts Program).

www.pap-berlin.de

Performing Arts
Programm
Berlin

LAFT Landesverband freie
darstellende Künste Berlin e.V.
BERLIN

The Berlin Performing Arts Program is a program of LAFT – Landesverband freie darstellende Künste Berlin e.V. The Performing Arts Program is supported by the State of Berlin – Senate Administration for Cultural and European Affairs from funds of the European Fund for Regional Development (EFRE) within the program “Promoting the Innovation Potential in Culture II (INP II)” and the European Social Fund (ESF) within the program “Qualification in the Culture Industry (KuWiQ)”.

back to content ▲ ▲ ▲





WWW.PAP-BERLIN.DE