



Music Capital Scheme 2025 Piano Award

For arts venues and music presenters promoting excellence in music performance

Guidelines for Applicants

Application closing date: 2pm, Thursday 2nd April 2026

Managed by Music Network, funded by An Roinn Cultúir, Cumarsáide agus Spóirt / The Department of Culture, Communications and Sport.

This award is designed to support the purchase and/or refurbishment of concert standard grand pianos by arts venues and music presenters who are programming in a dedicated performance space and promoting excellence in music performance.

Instruments purchased under the award may be new or second-hand.

About these Guidelines

There are 5 parts to these guidelines:

Part 1: An overview of the award (page 1)

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Part 1: An overview of the award

We welcome applications from organisations that provide a year round high quality music programme, support the work of professional musicians (for example via professional development opportunities such as artist residencies, masterclasses etc.), and have a strong track record in audience and community engagement.

The total funding available for The Music Capital Scheme 2025 Piano Award is €300,000.



Part 2: Who can apply – and who can't

Who can apply

- ✓ Arts venues
- ✓ Music presenters programming in a dedicated performance space.

Note: applications may be submitted in partnership with a Local Authority where the venue or presenter is the lead partner.

Applicants must:

- be based in the Republic of Ireland
- not currently have a concert standard grand piano in performance condition in situ
- be managed at a professional level and uphold best practice in relation to their governance and operations
- be able to demonstrate that they provide **all** of the following:
 - ✓ concert programming of the highest professional standard
 - ✓ a year-round music programme for audiences
 - ✓ support for professional musicians in their work (for example, professional development opportunities such as artist residencies, masterclasses etc.)Note: current and future plans will be taken into consideration
- have a strong track record of engagement with their local community.

Who can't apply

- × Individuals are **not** eligible to apply for this award.

Music Network is committed to equity and inclusion and welcomes applications from arts venues and music presenters within culturally diverse communities. Music Network encourages prospective applicants with disabilities or access requirements who wish to submit an application on behalf of their venue or organisation to make contact with us as early as possible so that every effort to provide reasonable accommodation can be made.

Part 3: What you can apply for - and what you can't

What you can apply for

Pianos may be new or second-hand, and applicants may apply for:

- ✓ up to 75% of the cost of purchasing a concert standard grand piano
- or
- ✓ up to 70% of the cost of refurbishing a grand piano to bring it up to concert standard (unless the refurbishment cost is €15,000 or less, in which case the percentage will reduce to 50%).

Note: Any additional refurbishment costs required to bring a second-hand purchase up to concert standard can also be included along with the purchase price.

What you can't apply for

- × Minor repair work or tuning alone are **not** eligible under this award.

What we mean by 'concert standard grand pianos'

We mean high quality grand pianos (such as Yamaha, Steinway, Kawai or similar) which are of a suitable size, power and volume for the space they will be played in.

In the case of a proposed purchase, applicants are strongly advised to consult a piano technician when preparing their application, to confirm that the selected piano's size and specifications are appropriate for their performance space.

Part 4: The application and assessment process

Stage 1: Application submission

Applicants must submit an application form online.

Note: your application will be ineligible if it does not include all requested information and support materials.

Those shortlisted to proceed to Stage 2 will be informed via email in April 2026.

Stage 2: Assessment & decision

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an **online interview** with a panel to discuss their application and elaborate on plans outlined. Online interviews will take place during April/May 2026 (dates and times to be confirmed). Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their interview via email.¹

Following their interview, shortlisted interviewees must facilitate a **site visit** by the technical advisor to the scheme and may be asked to submit a revised proposal based on feedback. Second interviews may also be held if required. After site visits and resubmissions/second interviews, the panel will make final funding decisions.

Apply by 2pm, Thursday 2nd April 2026. Late applications cannot be accepted. Please note that lobbying, at any stage of the process, will lead to disqualification of applicants.

¹ Second interviews may also be held if required.

How to apply

Applicants should visit www.musicnetwork.ie and set up their profile on the application portal. They can then complete their application form in stages (filling in the form and preparing and uploading supporting materials) throughout the application period. All application materials must be submitted through the online application portal by 2pm, Thursday 2nd April 2026.

What information should be submitted

1. Details of the applicant's music programme for the past 2 years (to include concert performances and any additional musical activities)
2. Details of current audience engagement levels across the musical genres programmed and any different types of music events
3. Details of future programming plans, showing how having a concert standard grand piano in situ would impact on these, and on audience and community engagement levels
4. Details of where a piano would be housed, and plans for regular maintenance and tuning
5. Confirmation that the arts venue/presenter organisation upholds best practice in relation to its governance and operations.

All of the above information must be submitted in order for an application to be considered eligible. Applicants invited to proceed to Stage 2 of the process will be asked to elaborate on how they intend to source a piano, what experts/suppliers they will work with, to provide confirmation that the necessary match funding can be sourced and may be asked to provide additional information.

Note: Music Network reserves the right not to award funds if insufficient high quality applications are received. Meeting the eligibility criteria alone does not guarantee funding. The decision of the panel will be final.

Selection criteria

Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

1. Track record in music programming and audience engagement
2. Future programming plans including concert programmes, support of professional musicians and audience/community engagement
3. Demonstrated need for support from this scheme
4. Feasibility² of proposal.

² Feasibility considerations will include the ability of the applicant to deliver on future programming plans, source the required funding, comply with public procurement requirements and take appropriate care of the piano (i.e. housing, ongoing maintenance and tuning).

Note: it is important to consider all criteria carefully when preparing your application as this is a competitive process and all four will be taken into account during the assessment process.

Feedback

Unsuccessful applicants may request feedback from Music Network within 2 months of receiving results, and may re-apply in subsequent years.

General Enquiries may be made to Music Network, capitalscheme@musicnetwork.ie / 083 0162718.

Part 5: Successful applicants – conditions of the award

Awardees agree:

- to fund a minimum of 25% of the purchase cost or 30%/50% of the refurbishment cost of the selected grand piano. The awardee contribution cannot include a discount from the supplier / instrument technician i.e. any discount must be deducted in advance of calculating the percentage breakdown.
- to abide by public procurement guidelines when sourcing a piano/refurbishment service i.e. depending on the overall cost of the instrument or service, proof in the form of three quotations from separate suppliers or that an e-tender process has been undertaken must be submitted to Music Network prior to drawdown of an award.
- to provide bank account details in the name of the organisation to draw down the award. In the case of awards of €10,000, tax clearance details (Tax Reference Number and Tax Clearance Access Number) in the name of the awarded organisation must also be provided.
- to provide a copy of related receipts for the purchase/refurbishment of the selected piano to Music Network within 6 months of award drawdown. Where such documentation is not received, the awardee will forfeit the award and refund the funds to Music Network. If the final cost is lower than anticipated, the awardee will refund the unused portion of the award to Music Network to be added to the Music Capital Scheme award fund for subsequent years.
- to sign a Declaration Form confirming they accept all conditions related to the award and uphold best practice in relation to governance and operations.
- to operate a clear policy for use of the piano, including making adequate provision for its housing, insurance, care, maintenance³ and repair.

³ Maintenance plans should include tuning prior to concert performances as well as an annual consultation with an appropriately qualified instrument technician to ensure the piano remains in concert standard condition.



- to acknowledge the support of Music Network and the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport in publicity material, from the date of the award, for the lifetime of the piano. The relevant logos and a template for the acknowledgement text will be sent to awardees following confirmation of the award results. Awardees will be required to submit proof of acknowledgement with their annual reports i.e. provision of sample concert programmes, website screenshots, posters, flyers etc. which carry the acknowledgement.
- to provide annual reports to Music Network on the use of the instrument for five years from the date the piano is installed.
- to accommodate Music Network site visits during the assessment process and/or subsequent to an award being made.
- not to sell or otherwise dispose of the instrument funded under this scheme. If the instrument is no longer in use for performance, or if the awardee intends to cease operations, Music Network must be informed as soon as possible. In negotiation with Music Network, the awardee will then transfer the instrument to an appropriate venue/organisation (to be discussed and agreed with Music Network) or sell the instrument and refund the relevant percentage of funds raised. This will then be added to the Music Capital Scheme fund for subsequent years.
- to be bound by the conditions of the award. Where an awardee is in breach of the conditions, the awardee will be required to refund the amount awarded to Music Network. This will then be added to the Music Capital Scheme fund for subsequent years and the arts venue/music presenter will be ineligible to apply to the Music Capital Scheme Piano Award in subsequent years.