NATIONAL INDEPENDENT VENUE FOUNDATION
EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND GUIDELINES

The National Independent Venue Foundation (NIVF) Emergency Relief Fund (ERF) was developed to provide economic relief to independent, live performance venues and promoters across the United States—both for-profit and nonprofit—experiencing a critically severe financial emergency due to circumstances beyond their control. The ERF is a crucial initiative for NIVF and uniquely aligns with its mission to preserve and nurture our national independent, live entertainment community. The fund holistically covers unforeseeable situations beyond recipients’ control, including but not limited to natural disasters, public health crises, or acts of terrorism. This program will be administered by the NIVF Board in accordance with the ERF Committee, along with a diverse panel of partners that understand the needs of independent venues across the United States. These businesses are critical to their local economies and tax bases as employers, tourism destinations, and revenue generators for neighboring businesses such as restaurants, hotels, and retail—live events are also our lifeline for a vibrant and healthy community.

NIVF is committed to inclusivity, diversity, equity, and accessibility in all its programs and decision-making processes, including the guidelines, application, criteria, and review process for NIVF’s Emergency Relief Fund.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year and reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the ERF Committee. This program is designed to assist fund recipients experiencing catastrophic revenue loss due to severe circumstances beyond their control. Please note, NIVA membership is not a prerequisite to apply for a NIVF Emergency Relief Fund grant. Funding will be subject to availability throughout the year. These funds will be distributed according to a grant agreement, which may include an option for the grantee to re-invest their funding back into the foundation if a source of repayment is expected. The grant agreement is contingent on the grantee’s circumstances and at the discretion of the ERF Committee.

The NIVF ERF is a way for our local, regional, and national music community to join together and directly support these critical, independent businesses, helping them survive through the challenges of an emergency. Individuals, foundations, businesses, and organizations interested in contributing to the ERF should visit nivf.org.

ELIGIBILITY

Funding will be provided to independent venues and promoters across the United States—both for-profit and nonprofit—that present music, comedy, and performing arts that meet the criteria of the program. Eligible applicants include:

- Venues and promoters experiencing a critically severe financial emergency due to circumstances beyond their control, including but not limited to natural disasters, public health crises, or acts of terrorism. (NOTE: Normal business operating risks are not circumstances beyond applicants’ control)

- Venues and promoters that are for-profit or nonprofit businesses, which may be corporations, limited liability companies, partnerships, or sole proprietorships. Please note that NIVA membership is not a prerequisite to apply for funding.
• Venues and promoters that program original, live music, comedy and/or similar performing arts as a **primary** driver of their business; factors to be considered in meeting this qualification include:
  o Provide fair pay to artists and do not have artists play for free or solely for tips, except for legitimate fundraisers or similar educational, charitable, or community-oriented events.

• Venues and promoters that meet a majority of the following criteria:
  o Have a defined performance and audience space/venue;
  o Provide mixing, sound, and lighting systems;
  o Utilize sound engineers, bookers, promoters, stage managers, security personnel, box office personnel;
  o Have a paid ticket or cover charge to attend a majority of all performances;
  o Promote performances through advertising and listings in printed and/or electronic publications, websites, email blasts, and/or through social media.

**INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

• Businesses that do not have a place of business located in the United States and do not operate primarily within the U.S.

• Businesses that meet **more than one** of the following attributes:
  o Publicly-traded
  o Multinational corporation
  o Owns, manages, or books venues in more than one state

• Businesses that primarily operate for the purposes of sporting events, karaoke, exotic dancing, fitness, or private events (e.g., galas, weddings), private homes, schools, chain movie theaters.

**FUNDING**

• Funding is limited to one application for relief amount up to $25,000 per physical location or festival per 12-month period, not to exceed a total of $50,000 per applicant-related-owner entities with more than one location or festival.

• Funding will need to be utilized within 60 days of receiving the granted funds.

• A final funding report must be submitted within 30 days of the grant expenditure.

**Funding is available for various expenses, including:**

• Rent and/or mortgage assistance
• Payroll, staff retention, hiring, or employee incentives
• Emergency planning/staff training
• Additional security personnel
• Venue upgrades related to new safety protocols
• Capital improvements, such as interior/exterior emergency repairs
• Insurance premiums
• Licenses, fees, real estate, and other local taxes
• Utilities
• Existing business-related loans
• Recouping deferred expenses due to canceled events as a direct effect of the emergency, including artist deposits, ticket refunds, etc.

Ineligible expenses include:
• Unrelated real estate or loans
• Distributions to partners
• Business acquisitions
• Operating costs incurred prior to the emergency circumstances

GRANT APPLICATION AND DOCUMENTATION
All applicants must provide and demonstrate a financial need through the application process. The information provided will be kept confidential in accordance with NIVF’s privacy policies and will not be shared except in the aggregate for the purposes of evaluation.

• Necessary documentation for your application includes:
  o **Statement of Need** - (listed in the application questions and not uploadable, 400-word limit) illustrating the circumstances that gave rise to the financial emergency; the immediate, short-term, and long-term financial impact; amount requested (not to exceed $25,000 per site/festival and $50,000 total for applicants with multiple sites/festivals); proposed use of funds and their use will mitigate the impacts; and desired date of funding (no sooner than 30 business days from request)
  o **Balance Sheet as of month end prior to application date** – If unavailable, please provide the following amounts. You may be asked to substantiate these numbers as part of the grant review process:
    ▪ Operating Cash on Hand
    ▪ Lines of credit available
    ▪ Pending grants to be received and estimated receipt date
    ▪ Other known receivables
    ▪ Total Operating Bills to be paid and/or past due
    ▪ Debt and other loans to be paid including grants payable
    ▪ Other known payables
  o **Prior Six (6) Months Operating Income Statement and/or Cash Flow Statement** – The organization's actual month-by-month financial activities for the prior six (6) months. This includes all cash inflows (Revenues) and cash outflows (Expenses). Please include any SVOG or other relief grant funding. Do NOT include any loan proceeds.
  o **Six (6) Months Out Financial Projections** – A best estimate of the organization's month-by-month financial projections for six (6) months out from the time of application. This should be in the same format as the prior six-month actuals submitted above. Do NOT include any grants or other relief funding unless it has been secured. For additional details, please refer to the downloadable “ERF Financial Projections Template” found at nivferf.org.
- **W-9 Form** (PDF) which identifies applicant’s current business address, EIN, and dated with a signature of an authorized representative. If granted, this will be used to receive payment from NIVF.

- **Current Certificate of Good Standing** (PDF) with the Secretary of State

- Additional supporting documentation may be required prior to or during ERF Committee's review and/or if approved for funding.

- Funding will need to be utilized within 60 days of being granted.

- Grantees will be required to provide a final update and financial tracking report for the use of granted funds within 30 days of funds being fully expended. This document will be provided by the ERF Committee and include:
  - A written update on the business's financial status and sustainability assessment
  - Listing each use of funds (rent, bills, payroll, etc.)
  - Date funds were spent
  - Total amount spent on each qualifying expenditure

- Fund recipients should keep all documentation for up to five years confirming the use of received funds.

- All documentation provided in your application will be kept in accordance with NIVF's privacy policy.

- Any grants awarded will be made publicly available.

**APPLICATION TIMELINE**

ERF applications are open on a rolling basis and will be accepted beginning January 19, 2022, at 8 a.m.

- Applications will be reviewed as received on a case-by-case basis, subject to available funding throughout the year.

- Once the applicant has provided all the correct information requested for the review process to be completed, they will receive notification on pre-approval or declination within 15 business days.

- If the applicant is approved by the ERF Committee and the NIVF Board, the grantee must sign the NIVF grant agreement for the funds to be dispersed within 15 business days following.

**REVIEW PANEL AND CRITERIA**

The NIVF Board and ERF Committee are committed to creating an inclusive and transparent review and selection process. The review panel will consist of a diverse group of industry peers representing our cities, promoters, and venues across the nation and have waived their ability to apply for the NIVF ERF. The ERF Committee will review and recommend final grantees to the NIVF Board, which has the final responsibility to approve all grants.

All applications will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

1. **Cultural and community impact** - mission; community served; advancing artistic experiences through music, comedy, or performing arts; social interests; minority-owned or operated; inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility initiatives, etc.

2. **Economic impact** - years in business, size of business, staff, location—rural, urban, etc.
3. **Statement of need and severity of loss** - prioritizing by the immediate need, urgent impact the emergency has had on the business operations, current financial status, and strain, how funding will support the business, etc.

4. **Leveraging NIVF ERF with additional opportunities towards sustainability** - ability to advocate for additional dollars or partnership opportunities to keep the business thriving, long-term planning, extended lease terms, etc.

The NIVF Board and ERF Committee seeks to support businesses that meet the mission and values of NIVF, including but not limited to those that can demonstrate:

- Fully operational prior to application
- Currently open or has a reopening strategy
- Purchasing supplies, materials, and/or equipment to support health and safety
- Ensuring diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility
- Building leverage and a more sustainable future for the venue
- Have a meaningful artistic and cultural impact on a local, regional, or national community
- Business owned by, led by, or supporting historically and systemically marginalized communities including:
  - African Americans
  - American Indians
  - Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
  - Latino/x/e
  - LGBTQIA2S+
  - People with disabilities

For more information or questions about the application process, please contact erf@nivf.org.

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**ABOUT NIVA & NIVF**

Formed at the onset of the COVID-19 shutdown, the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) represents venues and promoters in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. NIVA’s mission is to preserve and nurture the ecosystem of independent live venues, promoters, and festivals throughout the United States.

The National Independent Venue Foundation (NIVF), a 501(c)(3), was formed to further NIVA’s mission by supporting a transparent, competitive marketplace serving a diverse and inclusive community of artists, fans, and industry workers. In addition, NIVF seeks to develop programs for a post-COVID future with a spotlight on inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility in the industry.

The National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) and National Independent Venue Foundation (NIVF) are committed to equity in their support and advocacy for independent venues and seek to create and encourage opportunities for venues, promoters, and festivals owned, operated, and staffed by people of color, women, non-binary, LGBTQIA2S+, veterans, and people with disabilities. NIVA is committed to creating and upholding a safe space for its members where respectful conversations around diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility can continue. NIVA and NIVF make an ongoing commitment to prioritizing DEI initiatives, learn more about best practices and approaches to DEI in the live performance industry, and provide resources and professional development opportunities to support NIVA’s members in doing the same for their individual businesses.