



## **FUNDING PRINCIPLES 3. APPLICATION ROUND 2026**

**(Application deadline 30 June 2026, 6 p.m.)**

### **Next Steps**

A programme by Bureau Ritter to support dance professionals in Hesse. Funded by the Crespo Foundation.

With funding from the Crespo Foundation, Bureau Ritter has been running the Next Steps programme since 2024.

In line with the Crespo Foundation's mission of "Empowering people," Next Steps provides funding for professional dance practitioners in Hesse during all stages of their careers. The funding initiative is aimed at dance artists in Hesse who work professionally regardless of their educational background, graduates of state-recognised dance training institutes, and cultural organisations.

From the very beginning, the programme places strong emphasis on dialogue with key players of the dance scene. Bureau Ritter invites them to various information events to introduce them to Next Steps and answer their questions. During the application process, the team provides intensive consulting services in various formats and works with dance professionals to develop individualised, tailor-made concepts.

The focus is not only on supporting individual artistic projects, but also on strengthening the professional foundations of the sector through the further development and refinement of artistic profiles, qualification in project management and the improvement of production conditions. The programme is divided into two funding lines: Funding line A for smaller projects with a duration of up to one year and a maximum application volume of 25,000 euros, and funding line B for larger, two-year projects and initiatives with a funding volume of up to 50,000 euros per year.

To support the recipients in implementing their projects, Bureau Ritter offers individual consultations throughout the entire funding period. In addition, recipients are invited to take part in needs-based training and professional development measures. Annual project meetings at the Crespo Haus and monthly online meetings promote collegial exchange, networking and mutual consultation. Ongoing impact monitoring supports the dance professionals in achieving the project goals they have set themselves.

Starting in 2027, Next Steps TanzLokal will introduce a new annual event format, which will be designed in collaboration with the funding recipients and the respective local dance scenes and implemented as a one-day event in various cities in Hesse. The aim is to raise the profile of the local dance scene and strengthen the dialogue between dance professionals, cultural policymakers and audiences.

## What funding lines are available?

### Funding line A:

#### What is funded?

Funding is available for projects that serve the artistic and structural development of the applicant's own work. Projects are designed to run for a maximum of one year and should generally be carried out in Hesse.

These may include:

- Research, productions, revivals, guest performances, residencies, training and qualification measures
- Measures to improve production conditions, such as the rental of rehearsal and work spaces
- Measures to promote inclusion and improve accessibility
- Activities that increase the visibility of the applicant's artistic work, such as press and public relations, outreach and engagement

#### What amounts can be applied for?

As a rule, a minimum of 5,000 and a maximum of 25,000 euros can be applied for. The requested amount must be appropriate for the proposed project and its duration.

### Funding line B

#### What is funded?

Funding is available for two-year projects that focus on the scene as a whole and contribute to improving the working conditions of dance professionals in Hesse. The projects should generally be carried out with a focus on Hesse.

These may include:

- Residency programmes
- Support for emerging talent
- Regional, national and/or interdisciplinary collaborations
- Guest performance series and touring
- Development of rehearsal and performance venues
- Measures to promote inclusion and improve accessibility
- Mentoring programmes
- Formats for artistic exchange
- Marketing, press and public relations
- Outreach and engagement

#### What amounts can be applied for?

Projects can apply for up to €50,000 per calendar year (i.e. €100,000 per project). The requested amount must be appropriate for the proposed project and its duration.

## Who can apply?

Professional dance practitioners are eligible to apply, regardless of their training background, whether as individuals, ensembles or collectives, as are graduates of state-recognised dance training institutes, festivals, venues, universities, production centres, production offices and cooperation networks in the dance scene. The prerequisite is a registered office or place of residence (for natural persons) in Hesse.

## What kinds of costs are eligible?

Project-related expenses for the following are generally eligible for funding:

- Personnel costs, fees, social security contributions (KSK)
- Rental costs for rehearsal and work spaces
- Costs for advertising and public relations, fundraising
- Direct costs: equipment hire, furnishing for rehearsal and office spaces (no construction work unless it is to make spaces more accessible), technical costs, props and costumes, research materials etc.
- Travel, transport and accommodation costs
- Other costs such as GEMA and project-related insurance

## In what form is funding provided?

Funding is provided in the form of project funding.

The contribution of own and/or third-party funds is desirable but not mandatory.

Funding is generally granted in the form of partial or full financing as a non-repayable grant.

There is no legal right to funding.

## What are the dates and deadlines?

The following deadlines apply to funding lines A and B:

Start of call for proposals: expected to be 15 April 2026

Application deadline: 30 June 2026, 6 p.m.

Project start: possible from 1 January 2027

Project completion: Funding line A: 31 December 2027 at the latest

Funding line B: 31 December 2028 at the latest

The programme is designed to run for several years. All information on further calls for proposals until 2030 will be published at [www.next-steps-hessen.de](http://www.next-steps-hessen.de). You can find further calls for proposals for both funding lines on the website.

## **How can I apply?**

Applications must be submitted exclusively to Bureau Ritter via the digital application portal at [www.next-steps-hessen.de](http://www.next-steps-hessen.de). Registration is expected to be possible from 15 April 2026. The application can be processed online continuously until the application deadline.

The date and time of submission of the online form apply. The documents available at the application deadline will determine the eligibility of the projects submitted. Applications that are not submitted on time or are incomplete cannot be considered.

## **Who decides which projects are selected for funding?**

An independent jury of experts will decide which projects are selected for funding. The assessment criteria include the following:

- The quality and feasibility of the submitted proposal
- The submitted proposal's expected impact on the applicant's artistic and structural development, or on the consolidation of their previous work
- The quality of the applicant's regional, national or international network, and their collaborations with other artists
- The project's contribution to improving working conditions for dance practitioners in Hesse
- The project's contribution to expanding the diversity of cultural offerings for audiences in Hesse

The jury meeting is expected to take place in September 2026.

## **How will the grant be paid and how do I prove that the project has been delivered?**

Grants will only be paid once the grant agreement has been signed. The schedule of payments is determined by the approved project timeline and the budget.

All funded projects will document their progress via an online tool provided by Bureau Ritter, thus providing proof of the project's delivery.

These funding principles apply from 30 March 2026. Subject to change without notice.

To find out more, download the supporting documents or find answers to the most frequently asked questions (FAQ), please visit [www.next-steps-hessen.de](http://www.next-steps-hessen.de).