

ZIRKUS ON OPEN CALL

8th Zirkus ON
Edition
2026/27

Deadline:
29th JAN 2026



8th Zirkus ON Open Call

Important note:

Dear applicants,

Before you start working on your application, you need to know the following:

The 8th edition offers support for your project through the Zirkus ON creative alliance. However, due to a lack of resources, the creative programme for the 8th edition will be reduced to a minimum.

The Zirkus ON creation programme will be implemented in 2026 without funding. The support of professional circus groups will be made possible by voluntary work, commitment and unpaid resources from the Zirkus ON creation alliance.

From 2022 to 2025, the Zirkus ON creative programme was funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media through the 'Promoting Connections' programme of the Federal Association of Independent Performing Arts (Bundesverband Freie Darstellende Künste e.V.). Among other things, this funding has enabled Zirkus ON to establish a professional organisation with a coordination team, to offer good working conditions, and remunerate the (artistic) work of both the accompanied circus groups and the implementors/contributors (mentors, jury, coordination team, professional workers around the circus scene, etc.). Without funding, this is no longer possible. You can read more about what the funding had made possible here: [netzwert publication](#) (in German only).

This is a major step back for the circus profession. Voluntary work can only partially and temporarily compensate for the real decline in funding. Unfortunately, many alliance partners have already reached the limits of their capabilities in this regard. The reasons why we nevertheless decided to continue the creative programme will be explained in a statement to be published here at the beginning of January.

This means: we do not want to abandon circus artists in Germany who are currently working on new creations. We want the resources that the creation alliance has to offer, such as residency spaces, to come to you. We are convinced that Zirkus ON can and will continue to contribute to the increase in visibility, networking and quality of

ZIRKUS ON OPEN CALL

8th Zirkus ON
Edition
2026-27

Deadline:
29th JAN 2026



circus projects. However, the creation programme will be distributed among several contact persons/responsible partners. A little more chaos and unexpected events are to be expected. In the circus, we know how to deal with that. So: apply – if you can – it will still be a great edition and valuable support to your project!

Application period: from now on till 29/01/2026

Application deadline: 29/01/26 22 pm CET

Individual artists and companies can apply with the plan to implement a pioneering contemporary circus art creation in Germany in 2026-2027.

The creation alliance for circus arts - Zirkus ON is looking for new, open-format circus creations that strengthen and inspire the existing and future repertoire of contemporary circus art productions in and from Germany.

Application Conditions

- Professional, freelance solo artists, companies and groups with a billing address or registered office in Germany
- The project deals with circus arts (open format)
- Creation has already begun
- Creation is primarily taking place in Germany in 2026-27
- The work will not be completed before January 2027
- Availability on the following dates:
 - digital ON-boarding 02/04/26 11.00 am - 13.00 pm CET
 - in attendance: 08-09.06.2026 Zirkus ONboard in Pfefferberg Theater in Berlin (travel time to and from Berlin to be planned in addition)
 - in attendance: 23.-24.09.2026 Zirkus ONwork within the ATOLL Festival (travel time to and from Karlsruhe to be planned in addition)
 - availability for up to 3 residencies lasting one week between June 2026 - April 2027

The creation programme 2026-27 offers:

A total of 3 project projects selected by a jury are being accompanied by the creation alliance through:

ZIRKUS ON OPEN CALL

8th Zirkus ON
Edition
2026·27

Deadline:
29th JAN 2026



- **the residency programme:** up to 3 residencies will be offered at alliance partners in the period June 2026 - April 2027.
- **mentoring programme:** individual support of a mentor for the project and the core team in the period April - December 2026
- **Presentation & networking opportunities:**
 - Zirkus ONboard on 08.-09.06.2026 in the Pfefferberg Theater in Berlin
 - Zirkus ONwork on 23.-24.09.2026 within the ATOLL Festival
 - Showings at the end of the residencies - if desired by the circus project and if offered by the residency location
 - ZirkusONstage, the final presentations after the completion of the project or the premiere

Application documents:

- Completed application form
- Work sample of material, concept or prototype as a visual impression of the already started creation (link to the video in the application form, video duration: At least 1 min. - max. 2 min.)
- 2 photos (1x landscape, 1x portrait) and a short description (300 characters) for press release if the project is being selected

Optional attachments:

- Presentation of the creation's contextualization (possible formats: max. 2 DIN A 4 pages graphics as png, jpeg or pdf or max. 2 min. video/audio .wav or mp4)
- Tech Rider (pdf)
- Green/Eco Rider (pdf)
- Access Rider (pdf)

Information on the selection procedure:

The application documents are checked for formal correctness by the Zirkus ON team. Complete applications are made available to the jury.

ZIRKUS ON OPEN CALL

8th Zirkus ON
Edition
2026-27

Deadline:
29th JAN 2026



In a first jury conference, all applications are discussed and a shortlist is selected.

In the second jury conference, shortlisted applications are discussed by the jury and the final 3 projects for the 8th Zirkus ON edition 2026-27 are selected.

The **list of criteria** is public, part of the open call and the basis for the jury selection. (catalogue of criteria as pdf)

The creation alliance's alliance partners will be allowed to read submitted applications if permission was given in the application form.

Jury 2026

The 2026 jury of the Zirkus ON creation programme consists of persons nominated for positions and commissioned by the creation alliance, who fulfil the perspective to be represented by their professional activity/artistic practice in the jury. The following perspectives will be represented on the 2026 jury:

- Perspective of Zirkus ON alliance partner, venue or theatre
- Perspective of Zirkus ON alliance partner, festival
- Perspective of artist / Zirkus ON alumni
- Perspective of circus academia/trade/ Zirkus ON mentor
- Perspective of circus scene-external/expertise from cultural/societal point of view

The jury will be announced in January.

Application and deadlines

Applying for the Zirkus ON call for proposals can exclusively be done digitally via the online form or e-mail: bewerbung@zirkus-on.de

Application period: from now on until 29/01/2026

Deadline: 29/01/26 22 pm CET

Further questions about the Zirkus ON application are answered in the FAQs and during the digital info sessions on January, 8th and 12th 2026.

ZIRKUS ON OPEN CALL

8th Zirkus ON
Edition
2026-27

Deadline:
29th JAN 2026



In the period between 22/12/2025-04/01/2026, the Zirkus ON team will not be available to answer questions about the application via the e-mail address: bewerbung@zirkus-on.de

For the open call of the 8th Zirkus ON edition 2026-27, the following regulations apply: Applications must be submitted by the end of 29/01/2026 22pm CET. Incomplete applications will not be handed over to the jury.

The following are excluded from applying: Graduation pieces, revival and project plans of apprentices/students or of artists and authors who have already been supported by Zirkus ON, as well as projects involving which participation of Zirkus ON employees.

The creative programme will be implemented for the time being without funding in 2026. There will be support for professional circus groups through voluntary work, commitment and non-financial resources from the Zirkus ON creative alliance.

If you value and are satisfied with our work, we look forward to your support!

Contact: kontakt@zirkus-on.de