



Press Release

Berlin, 30 March 2026

Next Steps: Dance Funding Programme in Hesse extended until 2030 – New application round opens on 15 April

Supported by the Crespo Foundation, the non-profit cultural organisation Bureau Ritter has been supporting the professional dance scene in Hesse since 2024 through the Next Steps programme. Next Steps provides artists at every stage of their careers with self-defined development spaces – whether to deepen artistic approaches or to enhance professional skills. The programme funds both individual projects and initiatives that generate structural impact and sustainably improve production conditions.

In March 2026, the Board of the Crespo Foundation approved the continuation of Next Steps with funding from 2027 to 2030, totalling €3.84 million. Four further application rounds are planned during this period.

"Next Steps represents development-focused funding that builds trust and has a lasting structural impact. Rather than aiming for short-term effects, it invests in long-term processes in which artistic work can grow, consolidate, and connect. With this extension, we aim to continue this approach and broaden its reach and impact – aligned with the Crespo Foundation's guiding principle of empowering people." – Christiane Riedel, Member of the Executive Board, Crespo Foundation

New from 2027

Since its inception, Next Steps has combined project-based funding with training, individual mentoring, and targeted networking. In the new funding phase, exchange and professional development opportunities will be further strengthened. A key new format is **Next Steps TanzLokal**: this one-day event takes place annually in different cities across Hesse and provides participants with a public platform for their projects. At the same time, it fosters dialogue between dance artists, cultural policymakers, and audiences.

Another element is **Next Steps PLUS**, designed to provide systematic support for former participants. Next Steps alumni can continue to participate in all programme formats, actively contribute their experience, and pass on their knowledge. In addition, a newly established fund supports alumni in securing further funding. These funds can be requested as a contribution towards co-financing, which applicants must demonstrate when approaching additional funders such as the Hessian Ministry of Science and Arts or local cultural offices. Further information on Next Steps PLUS will follow in autumn 2026.

"The Crespo Foundation's decision to continue Next Steps until 2030 is a powerful demonstration of commitment to artistic continuity in a professional environment often marked by breaks and uncertainty. Formats such as TanzLokal and the enhanced involvement of alumni create spaces that go beyond the immediate moment – spaces for

sharing, mutual support, and sustainable visibility." – Madeline Ritter, Artistic Director and Executive Manager, Bureau Ritter

Applications & Funding Strands

The next application round opens on **15 April 2026**, with submissions accepted until **30 June 2026 at 6 pm**.

The programme offers two funding strands:

Strand A targets projects aimed at artistic and structural development, to be completed within one year. Funding ranges from €5,000 to €25,000.

Strand B targets two-year projects aimed at structural development and improving working conditions for dance professionals in Hesse. Up to €100,000 may be requested.

For both strands, matched funding is encouraged but not mandatory.

Further information on funding, applications, and advisory support can be found on the project website: www.next-steps-hessen.de

Next Steps is a programme by Bureau Ritter, supported by the Crespo Foundation.

For more information, please contact:

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