



# BRITISH COLUMBIA ARTS COUNCIL

An agency of the Province of British Columbia

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## MANDATE

**The British Columbia Arts Council supports the arts and cultural community by providing financial assistance, policy research, advocacy, and public education.**

## MISSION AND CORE VALUES

The mission of the Council is to engage all British Columbians in a healthy arts and cultural community that is recognized for its excellence. In pursuing this mission, the Council is guided by six core values:

1. The value of a vibrant arts and cultural community in the creation of a healthy society.
2. The value of artistic excellence in all art forms.
3. The value of inclusiveness and the fullest possible reflection of the province's Aboriginal and cultural diversity.
4. The value of encouraging artistic practice from traditional to experimental and established to emerging.
5. The value of administrative and adjudication processes which are transparent and that adhere to the principles of accountability, independence, recognition of merit, and equality of opportunity.
6. The value of defining clear goals, developed in consultation with the arts and culture community, to guide long and short-term operations.

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## Operating Assistance – Media Arts Organizations

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Operating Assistance contributes to the support of professional, non-profit media arts organizations that sustain an annual artistic program encompassing creation, development, presentation, collections and dissemination activities. **Media arts are defined as works in film, video, audio/sound art and new media. New media includes new information and communications technologies used for artistic expression.**

## ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

All artists and practitioners strive for excellence in their work. The assessment of artistic excellence is central to the evaluation of requests for funding. The fact that everyone experiences artistic work in his/her own way makes the assessment of artistic quality difficult to discuss.

The Council's approach is to consider three dimensions of artistic work:

1. Idea – the intention or artistic impetus behind the work.
2. Practice – the effectiveness of how the work is put into practice and the impact it has on those experiencing it.
3. Development – the contribution the work makes to the development of the artist, the art form and the arts more widely.

All applicants to the British Columbia Arts Council are encouraged to submit concise, realistic requests, responding fully to the assessment criteria.

An essential element of any application is insightful, critical self-reflection. The Council believes that artists and arts organizations are well placed to assess the quality of the work they produce. Members of advisory committees and juries want to hear the applicant's own assessment of the problems faced and the creative solutions under consideration.

## GUIDELINES

### General Information

Applications are evaluated according to specified criteria. The criteria are grouped into three areas: artistic/curatorial achievement, community engagement and organizational capacity/ governance. An organization that excels in all areas of the assessment criteria will demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Excellence in artistic/curatorial activity, with clear ideas, skilled practice and strong contribution to the art form that is at the heart of the organization;
- Stimulating and varied forms of engagement with artists and the general public, through audience development, artistic/curatorial development, participation, discourse and education, or other opportunities offered by the organization;
- Excellence in leadership and management, resulting in greater sustainability and growing recognition of the organization; and realistic planning supported by informed and active trustees.

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The Operating Assistance program is intended to contribute to a stable funding base for organizations. Applicants are reminded, however, that the adjudication process is competitive. Receipt of funding does not guarantee assistance in subsequent years.

### Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility is determined according to the following criteria:

Under normal circumstances, an eligible applicant must:

- Be registered and in good standing as a non-profit society and professional media arts organization or aboriginal cultural centre in the Province of British Columbia  
or
- Be a media arts organization operated by a local government in BC with a community-based board of management that sets policy for the organization's public program and services.
- If applying for entry into the program, have received at least two Project Assistance awards from the British Columbia Arts Council in the previous three years and have completed at least two full years of operation.
- Be based in British Columbia and offer programming in BC.
- Employ competent curatorial and management leadership as demonstrated in previous achievements, collaborations, partnerships, relationships, etc.
- Compensate artists by paying fees at industry standards and by adhering to the *Canadian Copyright Act* and international copyright law.
- Provide an operating budget that demonstrates a diversified revenue base, with significant funding from sources other than the BC Arts Council, such as earned revenues, federal and local government support, and private funding.
- Not be eligible for, or receiving, funding through other BC Arts Council programs, other than Special Projects.
- Demonstrate the need for financial assistance, as defined by Council policy.

Ineligible applications will not be reviewed by advisory committees.

For organizations that have not previously received Operating Assistance:

- Applicants must establish their eligibility with Council staff at least six weeks before the application deadline.

For organizations that have previously received Operating Assistance:

- Eligibility is reviewed annually.

### **Application Requirements**

**All eligible applicants must discuss their request with the Council staff prior to submission.**

Applications must include:

- A signed, completed Operating Assistance application form that includes program outlines, budgets and statistics for the current and projected years, and that addresses all application questions within the prescribed length.
- A list of current board of directors or trustees, including their occupations.
- A list of principal administrative and artistic/curatorial staff or significant contractors, with job titles.
- Copies of recently prepared planning and policy documents if not previously submitted.
- Two copies of the most recent financial statements:
  - For organizations whose total operating budget is less than \$400,000 or whose last award was \$40,000 or less: independently prepared review engagement,or
  - For organizations whose total budget exceeds \$400,000 or whose last award exceeded \$40,000: audited financial statements.

Only applications containing a self-addressed stamped envelope with sufficient postage will have support materials returned.

### **Adjudication Process**

Merit-based, independent assessment is the primary method of evaluation used to adjudicate requests for operating support.

Advisory Committees are comprised of individuals with expertise in a particular artistic discipline or genre. When selecting jury and committee members, the Council considers broad professional knowledge, expertise, geographical representation and diverse aesthetic, institutional, and cultural viewpoints. Fair-mindedness and ability to evaluate are also taken into account.

The following process is used to evaluate every application:

- The British Columbia Arts Council receives applications for this program once each fiscal year and acknowledges receipt in writing.
- The Council's staff reviews applications for completeness and accuracy, and prepares an analysis of the applicant's administration, financial management, and sustainability.

- The Advisory Committee evaluates the applications with particular attention to critical self-reflection in written statements and responses to the assessment criteria.
- The Advisory Committee submits to the Council the recommendations for funding and conditions on the payment of awards.
- The Council reviews the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.
- The Council informs each applicant of its decision.
- Applicants are encouraged to contact Council staff for feedback on their application.
- Within 60 days of notification of the results, applicants may appeal the decision based on the Council's written appeals policy.

### **Assessment Criteria**

Applications are judged against a number of equally eligible applications, including requests from organizations not currently receiving operating assistance. Throughout the review, the Advisory Committee considers how well the organization fulfills its mandate, mission and values. In addition, the request for support will be assessed against the stated criteria and the degree of critical self-reflection.

Artistic/Curatorial Achievement, Community Engagement, and Organizational Capacity are the three key areas of assessment. In each area, the Advisory Committee considers the organization's reflection on both past achievement and proposed plans.

The points listed below each criterion are prompts that should be used in preparing the submission and will be discussed during the Advisory Committee meeting.

### **Artistic/Curatorial Achievement**

**This area is about identifying excellence in the achievement of professional artistic/curatorial activity. Advisory members acknowledge that the evaluation of excellence must consider a range of different practices in any one discipline. Council's advisors will discuss all or some of the following:**

- The artistic and curatorial activities of the organization's past year of programming and over the past several years; the strength of the artistic/curatorial intention in the organization's work, the overall practice and the development of the discipline of media arts.
- A range of factors affecting the current levels of achievement.
- Critical and/or peer recognition of the artistic/curatorial leadership.
- Commitment to and level of engagement with Aboriginal and culturally diverse artists and curators.
- Vigour, quality and risk taking in the overall artistic/curatorial endeavour.
- Achievability of proposed program.
- The program's effect on those experiencing it.
- Relevance to local and global artistic/curatorial practice.
- Opportunities for the professional development of artists, curators and other media arts professionals.
- Level of professional fees, compensation and quality of working conditions for employees.

## **Community Engagement**

**This area is about identifying excellence in stimulating engagement with an identified artistic community, the broader arts and cultural community and the general public. Council’s advisors will discuss all or some of the following:**

- Engagement with a range of artists, arts organizations and communities in the past year and over the past several years, specifically Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities.
- Engagement with geographically isolated artists, curators and communities.
- Presentation of work by British Columbians and Canadians.
- Employment of British Columbian and Canadian artists, curators and media arts professionals.
- The extent to which the program reaches different audiences.
- Achievability of proposed marketing and outreach activities.
- Relevance to the identified communities.

## **Organizational Capacity**

**This area is about identifying excellence in management, leading to sustainability and growing recognition of the organization. It also refers to realistic planning supported by informed and active trustees. Council’s advisors will discuss all or some of the following:**

- Reflection on the factors contributing to the organization’s current capacity.
- Quality in organizational practice across all areas of planning, communication, audience development, marketing, fund development, financial management and governance.
- Opportunities for professional development for staff and board of directors.
- Achievability of proposed plans to build organizational capacity.
- Realism in budget assumptions and projections.
- Peer recognition of organizational leadership.
- Quality of board and employee recruitment, retention and succession planning.
- Focus, commitment and effectiveness of the board.
- Governance practices and policies.

## **Exclusions**

Awards under this program are not available for start-up costs, seed money, capital expenditures (construction, renovation, or purchase of property or equipment), feasibility studies, budget deficits, or for-profit entities.

Awards under this program are not available to archives-only organizations, organizations dedicated to a single theme or organizations which qualify for operating assistance under other programs.

## **Demonstrated Need for Public Subsidy**

Public funds should be allocated in a manner that benefits the community. For that reason, the British Columbia Arts Council assesses whether each applicant has a real need for financial assistance to realize the project or program for which it requests assistance.

For Applicants in the Operating Assistance program, the Council evaluates need using these guidelines:

- For applicants with budgets under \$50,000: Holding an accumulated, undesignated surplus in excess of 50% of annual gross revenues will influence eligibility for assistance from the Arts Council.
- For applicants with budgets greater than \$50,000: Holding an accumulated, undesignated surplus in excess of 50% of annual gross revenues on the first \$50,000, plus an accumulated, undesignated surplus in excess of 25% of annual gross revenues over \$50,000 will influence eligibility for assistance.
- Surpluses generated for specific purposes (such as endowment funds and capital development) through private or public sector fundraising are exempt from this assessment of need.

### **Changes to Awards**

The British Columbia Arts Council reserves the right to redistribute, delay or suspend payments if the organization:

- Does not carry out its planned program of activities.
- Undergoes major changes in artistic or administrative direction.
- Does not meet its obligations as a grant recipient, including regular submission of reports to the Council.

### **Recognition of Assistance**

In recognition of funding, the support of the BC Arts Council and the Province of British Columbia should be acknowledged in all promotional materials. Approved acknowledgement, along with logo and graphics standards, are available online in a variety of ready-to-use digital formats at [www.bcartscouncil.ca](http://www.bcartscouncil.ca). The logo should be used on posters, brochures, print ads and programs and used where possible on media releases and signs related to the funded project.

For information regarding the provincial logo, please contact the Public Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts.

### **Minimum Assistance Level for the Operating Assistance Program**

Operating awards will not be approved for less than \$10,000. Project assistance may be available for organizations that do not receive operating assistance.

### **Application Deadline**

- September 30, 2009 (post marked)



For an electronic application form or to download a printable version of the electronic application form, go to: <http://bcartscouncil.ca/> and select [Online Applications](#).

You will be prompted for a user ID and password. If you do not have a user ID and password, please contact the BC Arts Council at (250) 356-1718 or [bcartscouncil@gov.bc.ca](mailto:bcartscouncil@gov.bc.ca).