



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA



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ARTS COUNCIL  
An agency of the Province of British Columbia

## IMPORTANT FACTS AND FIGURES

- Since 2001, the Government of British Columbia has allocated \$658 million in support of the province's arts and culture community.
- In 2017/18, the provincial government will invest more than \$60 million in arts and culture, including \$24 million through the BC Arts Council.
- The BC Arts Council has granted more than \$283 million to artists and cultural organizations in communities throughout the province since 2001.
- The budget for the BC Arts Council was increased in 2013/14 from \$16.8 million to \$24 million, and represents the highest level of funding in the Council's history.
- In 2015/16 the BC Arts Council approved 1,455 grants to applicants including:
  - Major arts and cultural organizations;
  - Artists and practitioners in more than 200 communities throughout British Columbia;
  - More than 200 regularly-funded professional arts and cultural organizations;
  - 70 community arts councils;
  - 46 presenters representing every region of the province; and
  - 59 school districts.

## BACKGROUND

- The BC Arts Council is an agency of the Province of British Columbia, created in 1995 through the *Arts Council Act*.
- The first meeting of the Council board was in 1996 at which time the funding programs offered under the former BC Arts Board were adopted.

## MANDATE, MISSION AND PRINCIPLES: ARM'S LENGTH AND PEER REVIEW

- According to the *Arts Council Act*, Council's mandate is to:
  - a) provide support for arts and culture in British Columbia,
  - b) provide persons and organizations with the opportunity to participate in arts and culture in British Columbia, and
  - c) provide an open, accountable and neutrally-administered process for managing funds for arts and culture in British Columbia.
- BC Arts Council's work is guided by two principles: an arm's-length status defines its relationship with government, and the peer assessment process defines its relationship with the arts community. Together these principles are the fundamental tenets governing Council's operations and decision-making processes.

- Council is at "arm's length" from government, which means that, within its legislated mandate, it has the authority to independently establish its priorities, policies and funding programs and to make grant decisions.
- Peer assessment refers to the use of independent artists and other professionals working in the field to assess grant applications, advise on priorities, and make recommendations to Council regarding the awarding of grants. Through peer assessment, Council involves the arts community directly in its operations.
- Council defines peers as individuals who, by virtue of their experience, knowledge and open-mindedness, are capable of making a fair and informed assessment of the comparative merits of grant applications.
- As a steward of public funds, Council relies on peer review to make informed decisions in the allocation of resources, to ensure freedom of thought and expression, and to engage in collective decision-making.
- The BC Arts Council oversees programs in the following four funding streams:
  - Professional Arts
  - Community Arts
  - Strategic Initiatives
  - Partnerships

## **MINISTRY, BOARD AND STAFF**

- The BC Arts Council includes government-appointed Council members and an administrative branch.
- BC Arts Council staff are part of the Arts and Cultural Development Branch within the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development. The Minister is the Hon. Peter Fassbender and the Deputy Minister is Jacquie Dawes.
- The Arts and Cultural Development Branch is comprised of the BC Arts Council as well as an area responsible for ministry policy. Gillian Wood is the Executive Director, responsible for both areas.
- Fifteen Council members are appointed through Order in Council and represent the regions, cultural diversity and artistic communities of British Columbia. The Chair is Merla Beckerman and Vice-Chair is Lori Marchand.
- For more information please see:
  - 2015/16 Annual Report
  - 2014-2018 Strategic Plan