
PROGRAM GUIDELINES 2019/20

Strategic Opportunities Program

Important Update for 2019/20:

In July 2018, the BC Arts Council (BCAC) released the [New Foundations: Strategic Plan for the BC Arts Council 2018-2022](#). As part of the implementation of *New Foundations*, BCAC will be revising existing program eligibility and assessment criteria over the coming year to fully align with the new strategic directions and priorities. However, in order to best serve BCAC clients, accommodate existing program deadlines and honour the plan's commitment to consultation, BCAC is taking a phased approach in rolling out these changes.

As there have been preliminary changes to the program guidelines and application form this year to reflect the new strategic directions and priorities, please ensure you review all program materials thoroughly.

All applicants are encouraged to review [New Foundations: Strategic Plan for the BC Arts Council 2018-2022](#) in order to acquaint themselves with the BCAC's priorities for the coming years.

Territory Acknowledgement

The BC Arts Council acknowledges that it carries out its work on the land of Indigenous nations throughout British Columbia. We are grateful for the continuing relationships with Indigenous people in B.C. that develop through our work together. We acknowledge and raise our hands to the Lkwungen people, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, on whose ancestral lands we operate our main offices.

General Information

The Strategic Opportunities program assists B.C. arts and cultural organizations to undertake significant strategic projects to address organizational opportunities and challenges, including:

- support for the creation of new work (including commissioning and collaboration);
- innovation in or enhancement of programming activity;
- capacity building;
- organizational transition; and/or
- investment in capital projects (facilities or specialized equipment).

Proposals made to this program should be able to demonstrate a high level of organizational self-assessment and self-representation, clearly articulate the conceptual and strategic rigour, risk and innovation in the project, and define the relationship between the proposed project and the organization's history, mandate, ongoing activity and strategic trajectory.

The proposed projects may be short-term adjustments or lay the groundwork for longer-term commitments. All applicants must be able to demonstrate a history of and commitment to success in the three areas of assessment: Strategy, Impact and Feasibility.

The maximum award available through this program is \$30,000.

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BC Arts Council program guidelines and application forms are revised annually.

About the BC Arts Council: New Foundations

The BC Arts Council is an agency of the provincial government established by the *Arts Council Act*, for the purposes of:

- Providing support for the arts and culture in British Columbia;
- Providing persons and organizations with the opportunity to participate in the arts and culture in British Columbia; and
- Providing an open, accountable and neutrally administered process for managing funds for British Columbia arts and culture.

In July 2018, the BC Arts Council released [New Foundations: Strategic Plan for the British Columbia Arts Council 2018-2022](#), which articulates the following vision:

“Artists and cultural organizations in British Columbia are well-supported, thriving, and able to reach their full potential under principles of equity, diversity, accessibility, and reconciliation. Arts and culture are seen as fundamental to developing vibrant and resilient communities, where the people of British Columbia are highly engaged in the province’s unique arts and culture sector recognized for its innovation and leadership in Canada and abroad.”

Strategic Directions

New Foundations lays out four new strategic directions for the BC Arts Council, intended to facilitate more equitable access to arts funding and informed by the current context facing the arts and culture sector in B.C.:

- Sustainability and Creative Development
- Equity, Diversity and Access
- Indigenous Arts and Culture
- Regional Arts and Community Arts

Values

The BC Arts Council’s values guide all decisions and activities, from program design to the peer review process. We strive for constant improvement under these values in how we serve artists and cultural organizations throughout B.C.

- Artistic Development and Achievement
- Indigenous Engagement and Cultural Vitality
- Equity, Access and Diversity
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Engagement and Participation
- Recognition and Promotion
- Fair and Transparent Governance

About the Strategic Opportunities Program

The Strategic Opportunities Program provides three broad categories of support. Please note you may only apply under one of these three components:

Category I: Artistic Capacity

Supports extraordinary commissioning, research, creation, development, production, and/or public presentation or exhibition costs incurred for projects that demonstrate innovation, experimentation and risk taking in artistic and programming activity. Funding will support projects from organizations engaged in the creation, development, production, distribution and/or public presentation of new work that can demonstrate a clear relationship between the proposed project and the development or furthering of the organization’s overall artistic capacity.

Category II: Organizational Development and Transition

Supports organizations to undertake significant strategic and time-limited projects to address organizational capacity needs and manage transition, including human resources, governance, community engagement and outreach, revenue diversification, and/or development projects. Funding will support projects from organizations that are able to demonstrate a clear strategic and mission-driven approach to the overall development of the proposed activity and that propose specific enhancements or shifts in the organization's overall capacity and position as a result of the project.

Category III: Capital Projects

Supports organizations' capital investments, including specialized equipment purchases or facility upgrades. Funding will support projects that can demonstrate a direct relationship to the deepening of the organization's artistic, engagement, and/or organizational capacity.

The maximum amount that can be requested through this program is \$30,000. Assistance levels for the Strategic Opportunities Program may form up to 100% of the total project budget (not including in-kind); however, proposals demonstrating appropriately diversified revenue streams may receive priority. Applications to Categories I and II may include capital requests of up to \$1,500 to support specialized equipment purchases, etc. that contribute to the overall project.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicant Eligibility

An eligible applicant must:

- Not currently receive Operating Assistance from the BC Arts Council (with the exception of Community Arts Organizations).

AND,

- Be an arts organization, museum, book publisher or Indigenous cultural centre that has received at least one grant from the BC Arts Council since April 1, 2014 through BC Arts Council discipline-specific programs;

OR,

- Be an incorporated non-profit arts and cultural organization that has received a grant through the BC Arts Council's Shared Cost Arrangement programs at BC Touring Council or First Peoples' Cultural Council (Aboriginal Arts Development Awards) since April 1, 2017.

AND,

- Not have any outstanding final reports on previous BC Arts Council grants. (See Final Reports section, page 9).

Applicants may only apply once per deadline.

Exclusions

Awards are not available for:

- Project phases and activities that have begun prior to the application deadline.
- The creation or preparation of performances/exhibitions for competitions.
- Projects which are secondary to other purposes (e.g. fundraising events, conventions, or family, religious or community celebrations).

Application Requirements

All applicants, especially new applicants to this program, are urged to discuss their request with the program officer prior to submission.

Applicants must provide a completed online application, all requested information, and clearly identified support materials.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure applications are complete and all application requirements are included. The BC Arts Council will not contact applicants to address errors in applications or missing application requirements, including support material, other than that required to determine eligibility. Eligible applications and any supporting material will be assessed as they have been submitted.

All applications must be submitted by the deadline and include the following:

- A completed Strategic Opportunities Program online application.
- A statement of intent. Please see application form for full requirements.
- A balanced project budget, using the template provided, indicating whether revenues are confirmed or pending.
- One copy of the organization's most recent financial statements (see below).

In addition to the above:

Category I: Artistic Capacity

- Bios of commissioned or significant collaborating artists, including a listing of major works (max 250 words). Please do not submit CVs.
- Written confirmation of participation from the identified collaborators or partners.

Category II: Organizational Development and Transition

- A one-page separate job description for each position(s), if the project includes hiring new personnel.
- Bios of contracted project leads or advisors, including consultants (max 250 words).
- Written confirmation of participation from the identified advisors, consultants and partners.

Category III: Capital Projects

- Two competitive quotes for the proposed capital improvement(s) or purchase(s). (Please consult with your Program Officer if it is not feasible to secure two competitive quotes due to the availability of suppliers, appropriate contractors, etc.)

Select support material will be circulated to the jury only at the time of the adjudication meeting.

Support material will not be returned.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Financial Statements must include:

- a Balance Sheet, Income Statement and Notes;
- an itemized list of grants identified by funder, either in the income statement or in an attached schedule; and,
- a breakdown of operating net assets, distinguishing between unrestricted net assets and capital assets.

The type of Financial Statements required is based on the recipient's last BC Arts Council award (excluding special projects); in the case of new applicants, internally prepared financial statements are acceptable. Internally prepared financial statements must show two years of activity and be signed by two board members of the organization. Council staff reserves the right to request audited Financial Statements if deemed appropriate, regardless of the amount of the applicant's last award.

BC Arts Council Grant for last fiscal year	Minimum Required Documentation
Up to \$10,000	All Financial Statements must be signed by the person who prepared them (auditor/accountant/bookkeeper/staff member) with Board approval (two Board member signatures)
\$10,001 - \$25,000	Internally prepared Financial Statements
\$25,001 - \$100,000	Independently prepared Financial Statements
Greater than \$100,000	Review Engagement Financial Statements

Considering Cultural Context

In [New Foundations: 2018-2022](#), the BC Arts Council has made a commitment to principles of equity, diversity, accessibility and truth and reconciliation in all of its programs and processes. In its own operations and in the funding and support it provides for arts and culture in the province, the BC Arts Council administers its activities in accordance with the [BC Human Rights Code](#) and strives to foster cultural safety and safe and respectful workplaces for all artists, arts workers and cultural practitioners.

The BC Arts Council is committed to the standards and principles of the [United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(the Declaration\)](#) and the [Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#). We support the Province of British Columbia in its commitment to fully adopt and implement both of these important documents.

The BC Arts Council acknowledges the cultural, geographic and regional diversity of the province, and recognizes the distinct and varied contexts of Indigenous, cultural and regional communities.

In consideration of these commitments, all applicants and assessors should contemplate a variety of factors around cultural context when submitting a proposal. Not all considerations will apply to all applications.

- Consider issues around cultural appropriation and ownership if using the cultural expressions, aesthetics or iconography of various communities removed from their social, political and cultural

roots. Cultural appropriation can also occur when there is insufficient credit given to the sources of artistic and cultural work. Cultural appropriation diminishes access and reduces the opportunity for artists from Indigenous and diverse cultural communities to tell their own stories.

- If working with Indigenous peoples, communities, culture or intellectual property (including but not limited to stories, songs, dance, designs, art, traditional knowledge or other cultural expressions), consider the principles outlined in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the Declaration). The Declaration affirms that Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination and the right to practice and revive their culture and traditions. As stated in Article 11 of the Declaration this “includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.”
- Consider the reciprocity of relationships with the various communities and cultural practices represented in your application, and whose voices and perspectives are being included.

Consider how you have addressed cultural protocols and/or received permissions where required, including appropriate community consent, support, advice and/or collaboration.

Assessment Criteria

The three areas of assessment are set out below, along with their relative weighting.

Throughout the application and assessment, applicants and the Jury should:

- Consider and discuss how the project addresses the applicant’s mandate, mission and values in each area of assessment.
- Consider and discuss how the project fulfills the applicant’s objectives in each area of assessment.

In evaluating each application, the Jury is asked to consider a number of possible criteria under each area of assessment. It is important to note that not all of the criteria will apply to each application; rather, they are examples of aspects that might be considered and should be addressed in the application if relevant to the applicant, the applicant’s history and/or the proposed project. Additionally, some criteria may have implications in more than one area of assessment.

Applications are judged against these criteria alongside a number of equally eligible applications.

In each area of assessment, the Jury considers the applicant’s reflection on both past achievement and proposed plans. Applicants are encouraged to critically assess the challenges faced and the creative solutions under consideration.

IMPACT (40 %)

Applicants should define and demonstrate the impact of the proposed project on the organization’s ability to deliver its mandate or meet its strategic objectives through the enhancement of one or more areas of activity (artistic, engagement, financial, management, etc.). Proposals should clearly describe the anticipated impact of the project.

Jurors may consider the following:

- Knowledge of the organization’s core audience plus insight and strategies that will lead to further audience development.
- Commitment to work created by B.C. and Canadian artists, and new collaborations, including emerging or under-recognized artists, artistic practices and forms.

- The inclusion of and engagement with appropriate protocols and practices, particularly in regard to Indigenous artists and communities.
- Risk-taking with regard to public engagement and creative development.
- Potential benefit to the arts community and opportunities for B.C. artists, including Indigenous and culturally-diverse artists.
- The applicant's artistic/curatorial practice in the context of B.C.'s geographic, Indigenous and cultural diversity.
- The applicant's engagement with its community and how the project will enhance the organization's engagement with audiences and communities.
- Commitment to stimulating and varied forms of public performance or exhibition, audience and artistic development, participation, discourse and education, or other opportunities.
- Accessibility of the project to artists and audiences.

FEASIBILITY (40 %)

Applicants should define and demonstrate the achievability of the project. Applicants should present the related past achievements and current practices and plans in place that demonstrate the achievability of the project.

Jurors may consider the following:

- Abilities in project management, including planning, audience development, marketing, communications (e.g. with collaborators, funders, media, other arts professionals) and financial management.
- Demonstrated capacity to realize the project, including presentation of realistic budget assumptions and projections.
- The diversity and appropriateness of the project's proposed budget, with appropriate levels of funding from sources other than the BC Arts Council, including earned revenues, federal and local government support, private funding, and in-kind support, as applicable.
- The quality of working conditions for artists and cultural workers, including the commitment to cultural safety.
- History of artistic / curatorial and programming achievement.
- Clear statements about compensation to every professional artist, curator or professional practitioner participating in the project including levels of professional fees.
- The applicant's financial position, including appropriate management of surplus or deficit situations, reserve and/or restricted funds, and working capital ratio.
- An analysis of the impact of the current environment on the applicant organization's programming, marketing and development plans.
- An outline of gaps in the applicant organization's knowledge and the training and technical assistance required for staff and members of the board of directors.
- Skills available to maximize the opportunity presented by the project.

STRATEGY (20%)

Applicants should define and demonstrate how the project proposes innovative strategic approaches to the challenges or opportunities identified, within the context of the organization's own history and practice

or broader disciplinary or sectoral practices. Proposals should clearly describe the strategic objectives of the project.

Jurors may discuss the following:

- Clarity, focus, and vitality of the proposed project.
- The level of risk or challenges inherent in, or tackled by, the proposed project.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND AGILITY

Although not a scored assessment criterion, when working with artists, practitioners and communities from a diversity of backgrounds, it is expected that applicants will work respectfully, knowledgeably and effectively. Cultural competency and agility have particular implications in considering reconciliation and the cultural safety and self-determination of Indigenous peoples.

Applicants should consider and speak to, where required, the following factors, which may be considered with respect to the assessment criteria:

- Commitment and ability to foster cultural safety.
- Capacity to acknowledge, negotiate and respect differing cultural perspectives, worldviews and values.
- Reciprocity in artistic, cultural and community relationships.
- Ability to question organizational assumptions in a cultural context and willingness to learn in unfamiliar cultural situations.
- Ability to address cultural protocols and permissions where required, including appropriate community consent, support, advice and/or collaboration.
- Ethical use of material, including issues of cultural appropriation and ownership.
- Consideration of the impact of proposed activity, including who will benefit from it.

Application Deadline and Submission

The deadline for the Strategic Opportunities Program is July 2, 2019.

The deadline for the Project Assistance: Strategic Opportunities Program is **July 2, 2019**.

NEW!

Applications are accepted via our **NEW** online system **no later than** 11:59 p.m. on July 2, 2019. Please note that you will have to register to our new online system *before* you can submit and application to this program. **The registration period can take up to 2 days**, so please plan accordingly.

Applications by mail, email or fax will not be accepted.

Adjudication Process

Merit-based, independent assessment is the primary method of evaluation.

All applications are assessed by peer review juries. Juries are comprised of individuals with expertise in particular artistic disciplines, genres or practices. When selecting jury and committee members, the Council considers broad professional knowledge, expertise, geographical representation and diverse aesthetic, institutional, and cultural viewpoints, including those from Indigenous perspectives.

The following process is used to evaluate every application:

- The British Columbia Arts Council receives applications and acknowledges receipt by email within 2 weeks of the deadline date.
- Council staff reviews applications for eligibility.
- The jury evaluates the applications using the assessment criteria outlined above and determines the level of funding and conditions on payment of awards.
- Council informs each applicant of its decision in writing.
- Applicants are urged to contact their program officer for feedback on their applications.

Grant Amounts

The maximum assistance level for all components of the Strategic Opportunities Program is \$30,000.

Assistance levels for the Strategic Opportunities Program may form up to 100% of the total project budget, not including in-kind; however, proposals demonstrating appropriately diversified revenue streams may receive priority.

Assistance through this program is possible only once per BC Arts Council fiscal year (April 1- March 31).

Notification of Awards

Decisions will be made within sixteen weeks of the application deadline. All applicants will be notified by letter. Results will not be released by telephone or email.

Payment of Awards

All payments of grant monies to the grant recipient are subject to an authorizing appropriation under the Financial Administration Act.

Organizational grant recipients must promptly inform the BC Arts Council of substantive changes to the organization, including:

- Significant shifts in structure, staffing or activities
- Major changes to proposed activities;
- Changes in legal status, ownership, corporate structure, name, or mandate;
- Danger of insolvency, bankruptcy, or credit protection;
- Legal proceedings that pose a financial or reputational risk.

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

- 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 submission of final reports to the Council

- Fails to comply with legal obligations
- Fails to respect the commitment to provide a safe and respectful workplace free from harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct.

Final Reports

All recipients must submit a final report and requested documentation of the completed project to the BC Arts Council within 30 days of its completion date stated in the application for support.

Final Report forms are available at: <http://www.bcartscouncil.ca/forms.htm>.

Future applications to project assistance programs will be ineligible if all reporting requirements are not met. Final reports may be scanned and submitted electronically to BCArtsCouncil@gov.bc.ca or by mail or courier.

Confidentiality and Recognition of Awards

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

The collection, use, and disclosure of personal information are subject to the privacy provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The applicant's information will be shared in confidence with members of the adjudication jury. The names and locations of successful award recipients may be published, along with the amount of the award, in the Annual Report of the BC Arts Council as well as in various communications and promotional vehicles of the BC Arts Council and Government of British Columbia. Social Insurance Numbers are provided to Canada and Revenue Agency through the issuance of T4As.

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, both hard copy and online. The approved BC Arts Council and provincial logo and graphics standards are available online in a variety of ready-to-use digital formats at <http://www.bcartscouncil.ca/mediaroom/logoanduse.htm>. The joint 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.

As well, funded organizations with a website are encouraged to add a link to the BC Arts Council website.

Contact Information

All applicants are urged to establish their eligibility and discuss their proposal with the appropriate program officer prior to submitting an application.

A full list of program officers is available at <http://www.bcartscouncil.ca/about/coordinators.htm>.

For general information or further assistance, please contact:

Telephone: 250 356-1718
Email: bcartscouncil@gov.bc.ca

Program guidelines are reviewed annually.

Please ensure you are working with the most current program guidelines for each intake.