

OPERATING ASSISTANCE: COMMUNITY ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Program Guidelines 2022/23

Acknowledgement

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

About the BC Arts Council

For more information about the BC Arts Council's mandate, vision, values, and strategic directions, visit the [About](#) and [Priorities](#) sections on the BC Arts Council website.

In the [Extending Foundations: Action Plan for 2022-2024](#), the BC Arts Council reaffirms its commitment to principles of reconciliation, equity, diversity, inclusion and access in all of its programs and processes. The Council conducts its own operations and funding activities in accordance with legislation such as the [BC Human Rights Code](#), [Accessible BC Act](#), [Accessible Canada Act](#), the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) and Action Plan, and the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), as well as the [Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#).

In addition to the integration of equity criteria across all funding programs, consideration will be given to [designated priority groups](#) identified by the BC Arts Council. These groups have been identified in order to achieve strategic direction commitments and correct funding gaps illuminated through recent evaluations and consultations. The designated priority groups consist of applicants who are:

- Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit);
- Deaf or experience disability;
- Black or people of colour; or
- Located in regional areas (outside [greater Vancouver or the capital region](#)).

Organizations whose statement of purpose includes support for and who are led by arts and cultural practitioners rooted in communities as listed above are considered a designated priority group.

About Operating Assistance: Community Arts Organizations

Operating Assistance: Community Arts Organizations provides funding to assist the general operations of established community-based non-profit arts organizations working in community engaged arts through a range of artistic and cultural programming. The program is intended for organizations that sustain an annual community-based artistic program encompassing creation activities, organizational / artistic / cultural development, production, dissemination, exhibition and public presentation.

The Operating Assistance program supports organizations' operations over a funding cycle of two years. Your organization must meet the specific eligibility requirements within these guidelines.

When and How to Apply

Applications can be submitted through our online system at any point before **September 15, 2022, no later than 11:59 p.m.** We are unable to accept any applications after this date. If you have any questions, contact a Program Advisor. The BC Arts Council office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Submit your application through the Grant Management System. Ensure that all information (including address verification) and documentation in your organization's online profile is up to date before submitting an application.

New applicants [must register and create a profile](#) in the online system. **Once the registration request is submitted, it may take up to four business days to process your request.** BC Arts Council will email you once your registration is processed and you are able to access grant applications.

Ensure the email address **bc.artscouncil.noreply@gov.bc.ca** is on your safe senders list and check your spam folders.

Applicants can submit a portion of their application by way of an audio or video recording. See instructions within the application on this option.

Application Assistance

Organizations with a primary purpose to serve Deaf or disability arts practices may be eligible for the BC Arts Council's Application Assistance, which pays for support services for creating and submitting grant applications.

Application Assistance requests are confidential and will not be part of assessment panels evaluating grant applications. Contact Accessibility Coordinator, Clayton Baraniuk, at 250-978-9839 or clayton.baraniuk@gov.bc.ca to request assistance.

Find out more about accessibility support at bcartscouncil.ca/accessibility

Who Can Apply

If your organization does not meet the eligibility criteria, your application will not be forwarded for assessment. **To be eligible, an organization must:**

- Provide an annual program of year-round, community-based arts and cultural programming and engagement and have done so for a minimum of one year.
- Fairly compensate artists, arts and cultural practitioners, technicians, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers. Compensation must align with community contexts or sector standards within the field of practice, including adhering to international intellectual property rights standards and cultural ownership protocols.
- Adhere to the Criminal Records Review Act which requires that people who work with or may have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults must undergo a criminal record check by the Criminal Records Review Program.
- Have received **at least one Project Assistance grant** from the BC Arts Council within the past seven years. Grant programs that fulfill this eligibility criteria include Project Assistance: Community Arts Organizations; Arts-Based Community Development; and Arts Impact Grants. Grant programs that do not fulfill this eligibility criteria include but are not limited to: Pivot Program; Arts Infrastructure; Resilience Supplements; Community Arts Festivals; Professional Project Assistance; Touring; Early Career Development; Youth Engagement; or Co-op Placement.

Applicants must also:

- Be a Community Arts Organization, registered and in good standing as a non-profit society or community service co-op in B.C. for at least one fiscal year prior to application, with a dedicated arts and culture purpose.

For the purposes of eligibility for this program, Community Arts Organizations are:

- non-profit community arts councils;
- community driven, generally non-professional, volunteer-managed arts and culture organizations; and
- community-based arts and cultural centres, whose primary purpose is community centered engagement and access to the arts.

They offer a range of programming focused on enriching a specified community through a range of arts disciplines and experiences, using a grassroots approach to providing wider service to the community beyond their membership. Although generally community-led, community arts organizations may also engage and collaborate with professional artists and arts practitioners, arts administrators and Elders or Traditional Knowledge Keepers.

OR

- Be an Indigenous Friendship or Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) cultural centre offering dedicated arts and culture programming, with a community-based board of management that sets policy for the centre's public programs and services.

AND

- Demonstrate a range of membership and engagement that is representative of its constituency or community, including diverse cultural and Indigenous populations;
- Receive cash support from local and regional governments (i.e. cash for operations or annual programs, not in-kind), including First Nations Band Councils and Trusts where applicable.

In addition to the above eligibility criteria, organizations should have stability in current operations, both administratively and financially. Stability would be demonstrated through:

- Having appropriate board leadership and, if applicable, skilled artistic or administrative leadership (paid or volunteer) that maintains consistency in operations and programming;
- Ongoing and diverse sources of revenues outside of BC Arts Council programs;
- Ability to plan programming and activities up to two years into the future; and
- The capacity to compile annual financial and statistical information.

Confirmation of eligibility and intention to apply should be established with a Program Advisor prior to submitting an application. Ineligible applications will not be forwarded for assessment.

Exclusions

Operating assistance is not available to support:

- Budget deficits;
- [Capital expenditures](#) (construction, renovation, or purchase of property or equipment);
- Start-up costs or seed money;
- Community-based arts groups solely focused on engaging members through a single discipline (i.e. community choirs, bands, theatre or dance groups, art and craft clubs, etc.);
- Community service non-profit organizations that do not have arts and culture as their primary purpose and the majority of their programming/activities are not arts-centred, even if they offer some arts programming or activities;
- Organizations that solely operate venues or facilities without the primary purpose of artistic programming and production (i.e. solely operating shared studio / maker space);
- Private or for-profit entities; or
- Industrial / archaeological / heritage sites or historic places or organizations dedicated to archives.

Program Components and Grant Amounts

There are **three components** to Operating Assistance: Community Arts Organizations:

1. Basic Assistance

Award level is a minimum of \$5,000 and a maximum of \$20,000 annually.

Award levels for Basic Assistance are allocated by a peer-assessed ranking within a band determined by:

- The size of an organization's total operating budget as demonstrated by the submission of financial statements of the last two (2) completed fiscal years; and
- If the organization holds facilities, the costs associated with operating those facilities may be considered (i.e. rent, own, lease, fee-for-service agreement) including how they are managed, and as related to the programming provided by the organization.

2. Local Matching Funds

Community Arts Organizations that receive financial assistance from local and regional government sources, including First Nations Band Councils and Trusts, may be eligible for 100% matching funding to a maximum of \$5,000 annually.

Support levels are determined by:

- Amount of funds received from local sources in the most recently completed fiscal year;
- Requested Local Matching Funds must correspond with the previous year's financial statements that are required with this application; and
- The organization meets all qualifications for Basic Assistance, as above.

Note: Donated services and in-kind contributions from local sources are not included in Local Matching Funds request as they are not eligible under this funding stream.

3. Capacity and Program Development

Award level is a maximum of \$10,000 annually.

Award levels for Program Development are competitively assessed by considering the organization's plans for developing programming, engagement, community access, and organizational and/or artistic capacity. Consideration may also be given to organizations aligned with designated priority groups as stated above.

Applicants are required to describe specific initiatives they will undertake over the next two funding cycles.

Not all organizations who apply to this component will receive an award. Neither the funding level nor future awards are guaranteed from one program intake to the next.

As part of the [Extending Foundations: Action Plan for 2022-2024](#), the BC Arts Council is working towards more equitable distribution of funding within its stable budget.

Priority for requests for increases to past grant amounts will be given to organizations aligned with designated priority groups as stated above. A clear rationale for why additional funds are needed must be provided.

Organizations that are placed on Concerned Status under Council's Fair Notice Policy may be subject to reductions of up to 20%.

What is Needed for the Application

You are responsible for submitting a complete application. The BC Arts Council will not contact you to address errors or missing requirements, other than as required to determine eligibility. Eligible applications are assessed as submitted.

A complete online application must include:

- Your organization information, including purpose, history, mission, values, main activity(ies), COVID-19 impacts, organizational capacity, governance, and facilities;
- A programming overview addressing questions based on this program's assessment criteria;
- All required financial statements to be submitted and uploaded to GMS by the application deadline; and
- All required support material as per the list below.

Support Material

Review and adhere to the [Upload Requirements for Support Material](#).

Required support material includes*:

- Up to 5 current planning and policy documents, such as:
 - Strategic plans, human resource policies, anti-racism policies, or cultural safety policies.
 - This should include documents detailing the current approach to equity across your organization, if available; if stand-alone policy documents are not available, you will be provided with an opportunity to describe.
- Up to 5 links to electronic materials, such as: (if applicable)
 - Brochure or seasonal programs, online materials, current publications, or program from recent event.
- Facility description/floor plan of current location(s) (if applicable);
- Up to 5 images illustrating your programming or presentations. For example:
 - a sample image of the exterior of your facility;
 - a sample image of permanent exhibitions;
 - a sample image of a temporary exhibition; or
 - a sample image of a public programming activity.

***NOTE:** Excess support material, including multiple links to materials within a single uploaded document, will not be reviewed.

Additional Information

To apply, your organization's online Organizational Profile must be up to date and include:

- A current list of the organization's board of directors, editorial advisory board, trustees, or board of management, including their board position, occupation/expertise and start date.
- A current list of administrative and artistic/editorial staff or significant contractors, including name, position, and employment status (e.g., permanent; part-time; paid; volunteer).
- A copy of the constitution if the applicant is a not-for-profit organization, OR a statement of the primary purpose of the organization for all other applicants.
- Voluntary self-identification as a designated priority group, in order to be considered a designated priority group.
- Signed financial statements for the two most recently completed fiscal years, as per below.

Financial Statements

For all applicants, Financial Statements must include:

- Balance sheet, income statement and notes, following standard accounting formatting.
- An itemized list of grants identified by funder, either in the income statement or attached schedule.
- A breakdown of operating net assets, distinguishing between unrestricted net and capital assets.
- Signatures of the preparer and of two Board members affirming Board approval.

For applicants currently receiving Operating Assistance, Financial Statements required are based on the previous Operating Assistance grant received, as per the table below.

For applicants not currently receiving Operating Assistance, Financial Statements requested are based on the single largest grant received in the organization's previous two fiscal years, excluding Resilience Supplements, Pivot, and Arts Infrastructure Program grants. If you did not receive any applicable grants in your previous two fiscal years, internally prepared financial statements are acceptable. Applicants not currently receiving Operating Assistance will not be required to restate already completed previous year Financial Statements into higher level reporting types.

For organizations operating under the umbrella of a local government, an Indigenous government, or a post-secondary institution, financial statements must include a statement of income and expenses for the applicant's activities alone, signed by the umbrella organization's financial officer, and notes indicating if the applicant entity may accrue assets, surpluses or deficits from one year to the next.

BC Arts Council staff reserves the right to request audited financial statements if deemed appropriate, regardless of the amount of the applicant's previous funding.

Previous BC Arts Council Grant Received (as per above)	Minimum Documentation
Up to \$15,000	Internally prepared Financial Statements
\$15,001 - \$40,000	Independently prepared Financial Statements: Notice to Reader/Compilation Engagement Report
\$40,001 - \$100,000	Independently prepared Financial Statements: Review Engagement
Greater than \$100,000	Independently prepared Financial Statements: Audit

How Applications Will Be Assessed

In [Extending Foundations: Action Plan for 2022-2024](#) the BC Arts Council commits to placing reconciliation, equity, diversity, inclusion and access at the centre of its activities, with the intention to rebalance historic funding distribution and modernize peer assessment. Assessment criteria are designed to speak to the diversity of ways organizations across the province can be achieving and contributing. The areas of assessment are described below along with their relative weight. While your submission should address how your activities fulfil each area of assessment, you should expect to be stronger in some areas than in others.

RECONCILIATION, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESS (30%)

The assessment panel will evaluate the organization's alignment with the priorities of Extending Foundations by considering:

- The relevance of the organization within equity-deserving communities;
- The organization's contribution to and established presence in communities located outside major urban centres, as applicable;
- The level at which the organization shows commitment to advancing opportunities for and service to equity-deserving and under-represented communities;
- The organizations engagement with reconciliation, as applicable;

- The significance of steps the organization has taken to pursue equity, diversity, inclusion, and access depending on its region, community served, size, and mandate; and
- The strength of the organization's policies in upholding equity in its human resources, governance, and operational practices.

ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION, ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT (40%)

The assessment panel will evaluate the organization's overall artistic and cultural contribution, engagement, and impact by considering:

- The relevance of the organization to the communities it serves, as demonstrated through programming, audience development, outreach, editorial, or curatorial choices;
- How well the organization can identify the communities it serves;
- The level of artistry, risk, originality and community engagement achieved in programming, in accordance with the organization's purpose;
- The integrity of the creative and artistic processes; including research, collaborative processes, the ethical treatment of contributors, and source/physical materials;
- The level of accessibility and engagement, including but not limited to physical spaces, cultural safety, affordability, and support for diverse participants or those who experience barriers or disability; and
- The effectiveness of practices that eliminate cultural appropriation and support meaningful representation, using appropriate protocols and practices.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND GOVERNANCE (30%)

The assessment panel will evaluate the sustainability and resilience of the organization by considering:

- The relevance of the organization's governance, leadership and organizational structures to the organization's purpose, community, lifecycle and size;
- The achievability of the proposed programs as determined by sound budgets, planning, resource allocation, and the organization's overall financial health;
- The role of leadership, management, and the board in good governance and fostering inclusion and a healthy, sustainable workplace for all participants, paid and unpaid;
- The rigour of human resources practices, in relation to providing fair remuneration, professional development, equitable employment, cultural competency, cultural safety, and a safe and respectful workplace for all participants, paid and unpaid; and
- Organizational ability to negotiate change, adapt to new circumstances, and tolerate risk.

Assessment Process

Merit-based, independent peer assessment is the primary method of evaluation for all applications to this program. Assessment panels are comprised of individuals with broad professional knowledge, experience, geographical representation, and diverse aesthetic, institutional, and cultural viewpoints, including those from Indigenous perspectives.

The following process is used to evaluate applications:

- Staff receives online applications and reviews each one for eligibility;
- A review is then completed through an equity advisory structure;
- The assessment panel then evaluates the applications using the assessment criteria outlined above and recommends the level of funding and conditions on payment of awards;
- Funding allocations are approved; and
- Staff informs each applicant of the final decision in writing.

Applicants are encouraged to contact staff for feedback after results have been released.

Notification of Awards

Decisions will be made within sixteen weeks of the application deadline. Notification will be sent via the online system to the contact linked to the online application, and to the organizational and governance leadership contacts provided in the organizational profile (as applicable). Results cannot be requested in advance.

Ensure the email address **bc.artscouncil.noreply@gov.bc.ca** is on your safe sender list and check your spam folders.

Funding Status

Organizations funded through the Operating Assistance Program are subject to the BC Arts Council's Fair Notice Policy. The Fair Notice Policy warns poorly performing organizations of the possibility of a phased loss of all operating funding, unless significant improvements are achieved, through the designation and application of Concerned Status criteria.

Organizations that are placed on Concerned Status under Council's Fair Notice Policy will:

- Be required to submit a complete application on an annual basis; and
- Be subject to annual adjustments to grant amounts, including reductions.

Payment of Awards

Award payments are subject to an authorizing appropriation under the *Financial Administration Act*.

The BC 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.
- 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.

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. Your organization's information will be shared in confidence with members of the assessment panel. 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 Revenue Agency through the issuance of T4As.

Recognition of Assistance

In recognition of funding, BC Arts Council and the Government of British Columbia's support should be acknowledged in all promotional materials, both print 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.

The BC Arts Council encourages funded applicants to add a link to the [BC Arts Council](#) website.

Contact Information

Program Advisor: Krista Patterson | Community Arts Organizations

Telephone: (236) 478-2550

Email: krista.patterson@gov.bc.ca

For general information or further assistance, please contact:

Telephone: (250) 356-1718

Email: bcartscouncil@gov.bc.ca

Program guidelines are reviewed and updated regularly.

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