

# VISUAL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

## Project Assistance Program Guidelines 2023/24

### Acknowledgement

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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 ləkʷəŋən (Lkwungen) people, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, on whose ancestral lands we operate our main offices.

### About the BC Arts Council

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The BC Arts Council is an agency of the Province of British Columbia under the Arts Council Act, nurturing and supporting arts and cultural activity in communities across British Columbia. 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 and other guiding documents 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](#).

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.

### Designated Priority Groups

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The BC Arts Council has committed to targeted investment in underserved and equity-deserving organizations and the development of equity support initiatives, including a policy to support [designated priority groups](#). Support for designated priority groups includes funding prioritization, dedicated programs, outreach, and reporting.

The BC Arts Council's designated priority groups include applicants and arts and cultural practitioners who are:

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

In order to identify as a designated priority group, organizations must demonstrate that the majority of activities, programming content, and financial and human resources are dedicated to one of the groups listed above. This may be demonstrated in one or more of the following areas: purpose statement, practices, practitioners, staffing, leadership, and engagement. Organizations

that would like to identify as part of a designated priority group must complete the Designated Priority Groups and Equity Data Tool sections in their online Organizational Profile.

## About Project Assistance: Visual Arts Organizations

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**Project Assistance: Visual Arts Organizations** supports eligible organizations and arts and curatorial collectives in the development, expansion or enhancement, and creation of new or unique public programming, and community engagement initiatives in contemporary and traditional visual arts and craft.

BC Arts Council supports a wide variety of practices within the visual arts, including (but not limited to):

- Independent critical and curatorial practice
- Studio-based practices (ex. drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, etc.)
- Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and other visual arts practices (ex. installation, video art, performance art, public art, etc.)
- Contemporary and traditional craft practices (ex. beading, carving, ceramics, weaving, etc.)
- Community-engaged practices led by arts and culture professionals.

Grants are not available through this program to support projects that are solely or primarily focused on the creation of new works.

See the *What Types of Projects are Eligible* section below for more information about what kinds of projects this program supports.

## When and How to Apply

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Submit your application through the [online grant system](#).

**Applications will be accepted until May 23, 2023, no later than 11:59 p.m.**

You may only submit one application per program area per intake.

You can receive only one Project Assistance grant per program area each BC Arts Council fiscal year (April to March).

**New applicants:** [Register and create a profile](#) in the online system. **It may take up to five business days to process your registration request.** You will receive an email when your registration request is approved. Once approved, you will be able to access the online application. Add the email address **NoReply@BCArtsCouncil.ca** to your safe senders list and check your spam folders.

**All applicants:** Update your online Organizational Profile (including mailing address and new Designated Priority Group section) before submitting the application.

If you have any questions, contact the Program Advisor for this program. The BC Arts Council office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

## Accessibility Programs

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Organizations with a primary purpose to serve Deaf or disability arts practices may be eligible for the BC Arts Council's Accessibility Programs:

**Application Assistance** – pays for support services for creating and submitting grant applications.

**Access Support** – provides funding to support access costs associated with creating, developing, or executing a project funded by a BC Arts Council Project Assistance grant.

These programs do not provide funding for audience accessibility or day-to-day access costs outside of the scope of a project.

Accessibility requests are confidential and will not be part of the assessment panel's evaluation of a grant application. To request assistance, contact:

- Clayton Baraniuk, Accessibility Coordinator at 250-978-9839 or [Clayton.Baraniuk@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Clayton.Baraniuk@gov.bc.ca)

**Find out more about accessibility supports at [BCArtsCouncil.ca/accessibility](https://BCArtsCouncil.ca/accessibility)**

## Who Can Apply

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All applicants are encouraged to confirm their eligibility with a Program Advisor prior to applying. Applications that do not meet current eligibility criteria within these guidelines will not be forwarded for assessment.

### VISUAL ARTS ORGANIZATION APPLICANTS

#### **To be eligible, organizations must:**

- Be a professional visual 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:
  - The majority of key staff (paid or volunteer) and board members based in B.C. with creative control and decision making for programming and engagement primarily maintained within the organization and by leadership based in B.C.; and
  - A purpose/mandate primarily dedicated to arts and culture programming and activities; or
  - A purpose/mandate to provide services to the arts and culture sector in B.C.

#### **OR**

- Be an Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) community organization or Indigenous government in B.C. that offers dedicated arts and culture activities.

#### **OR**

- Be a professional visual arts organization operated by a local government in B.C. for at least one fiscal year prior to application, that:
  - Maintains an ongoing arm's length, community-based board of management or advisory structure that sets policy for the organization's programs and services;
  - Holds a dedicated programming space and has at least one dedicated staff person in an artistic, curatorial, or administrative leadership position who is responsible for programming and engagement;
  - Offers ongoing public programming by professional arts and cultural practitioners; and

- Primarily operates with autonomy, holding creative control and decision making for programming and engagement within the organization, with separate financial records for operations (see Financial Statements section below for more detail).

**OR**

- Be a professional visual arts organization operated by a public post-secondary institution in B.C. for at least one fiscal year prior to application, that:
  - Holds a dedicated programming space and has at least one dedicated staff person in an artistic, curatorial, or administrative leadership position who is responsible for programming and engagement;
  - Offers ongoing public programming by professional arts and cultural practitioners, the majority of which is not programming of faculty or student works; and
  - Primarily operates with autonomy, outside of curriculum, holding creative control and decision making for programming and engagement within the organization, with separate financial records for operations (see Financial Statements section below for more detail).

**Organizations must also:**

- Provide public arts and cultural programming or service to the arts and culture sector in B.C., as a primary activity, and have done so for a minimum of one year prior to the application deadline;
- Provide programs that benefit the community and not solely its members' interests;
- Engage skilled artistic, curatorial, and administrative leadership (volunteer or paid) for project or service delivery;
- Fairly compensate artists, arts and cultural practitioners, technicians, Elders, and/or Knowledge Keepers. Compensation must align with project and community contexts and industry 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](#);
- Not currently receive Operating Assistance from the BC Arts Council; and
- Have completed and submitted any overdue final reports on previous BC Arts Council grants by the submission deadline for this program.

**ARTS OR CURATORIAL COLLECTIVE APPLICANTS****Arts or Curatorial Collective applicants must:**

- Be established and readily identified as a collective of independent B.C. artists, curators, or arts and cultural practitioners, consisting of three or more individuals who are professionally active in their field of practice, **each of whom must:**
  - Have a minimum of two years of professional practice in their field, within roles that hold creative control of projects, following basic training.
  - Have a demonstrated body of previous work as an individual practitioner, including at least one instance of public presentation of a work for which an artist fee, or equivalent, was received.
  - Be a Canadian citizen or Permanent Resident.

- Have been a resident of B.C. for at least 12 months immediately prior to the application deadline, and ordinarily reside in B.C. See [Determining B.C. Residency page](#).
- Have a demonstrated history of creating or presenting work as a collective and have a clear commitment to a current practice. At a minimum, the collective must have:
  - A demonstrated body of previous work by current members of the collective;
  - At least one instance of public presentation of a work by the current collective, for which artist fees, or equivalent, were received; and
  - Intention to continue working together as a collective with current members on future projects.
- Apply under the name of an individual member of the collective who acts as the key contact person and be listed as the submitting representative or “Primary Contact” within the online grant system. If the application is successful, this person receives payment of the grant on behalf of the group, will be issued a T4A for the full grant amount, and will be responsible for submitting the final report;
- Not be applying on behalf of the activities of a for-profit business;
- Engage skilled artistic, curatorial, and administrative leadership for project or service delivery;
- Fairly compensate artists, arts and cultural practitioners, technicians, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers. Compensation must align with project and community contexts and industry 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 completed and submitted any overdue final reports on previous BC Arts Council grants by the submission deadline for this program; and
- Provide programs that benefit the community and not solely its members’ interests.

Collectives with only two members or ad hoc collectives may be eligible to apply to Individual Arts Grant programs for a collaborative project.

### What Types of Projects are Eligible

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BC Arts Council project grant programs provide one-time grants for specific projects. Project grants are not meant to cover operating or ongoing expenses.

Grants are available in this program to support specific projects for the development, enrichment, and creation of new or unique public programming and community engagement initiatives in contemporary and traditional visual arts and craft.

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- exhibitions, including development and installation;
- publications, documentation and dissemination of artistic works and exhibitions;
- professional skills development for artists, including workshops, artists’ residencies, and activities that develop the arts sector;
- exploration of new artistic or curatorial practices, including practice-based research, collaboration, experimentation and creative development; or

- audience development, collaborations, exchanges, and activities that creatively engage communities.

Examples of activities that are not eligible for support in this program:

- projects with a sole focus on creation or commissioning of new work;
- ongoing multi-day festivals and projects embedded within ongoing multi-day festivals, and other activities eligible within the professional arts festivals program;
- general operating expenses and activities, ongoing expenses, or annual artistic programming plans;
- Equipment and capital asset purchases or maintenance expenses;
- projects or activities that do not involve or benefit artists or arts and culture practitioners and professionals; or
- projects or activities that do not have a clearly defined arts and culture focus.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the Program Advisor to discuss the fit and eligibility of projects looking for support in this program prior to submitting an application.

#### **Required artist fees and compensation within project activities:**

All projects submitted to this program must pay artist fees to the artists and arts and culture practitioners engaged in the proposed activities. At a minimum, artist fees should be paid at the recommended rates set by the arts service organization, professional association, or established practitioners within the field of practice. Fee structures that are not guaranteed (ex. commission-based sales of artworks, cut of door sales, etc.) that risk low or non-payment to practitioners do not meet this requirement.

Compensation to Elders and Knowledge Keepers can be determined according to community context and appropriate protocols. The structure and method of determining the fair rate should be described within the application.

#### **What Will Not Be Funded**

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Grants are not available to support:

- Operating expenses.
- Project phases or activities that have begun prior to the application submission deadline.
- Project or budget deficits or contingency funds.
- [Capital expenses](#) (construction, renovation, or purchase of property or equipment).
- Feasibility studies, start-up costs, or seed money.
- Projects or activities that are not based upon artistic or curatorial decision making, or where arts and culture is not the primary focus, including: pay-to-play activities; fundraising activities; competitions; conferences and conventions; family, religious, or community celebrations; or anniversaries.
- Podcasts and radio programming that are not embedded within established artistic practice or specifically dedicated to the dissemination of artistic works (activities based within journalism, broadcasting, creative industry, or for general interest or commercial purposes are not eligible for support).
- Subsistence to artists or arts and cultural practitioners.

- Costs of producing commercial recordings or demo reels.
- Private or for-profit entities (except in the case of for-profit book publishing companies).
- Member-funded societies.
- Industrial/archaeological/heritage sites or historic places or organizations dedicated to archives.
- Curriculum-based activities or projects related to continuing education or post-secondary programs.
- Projects that are primarily in support of or focused within creative industries or commercial sectors.
- Projects or activities funded through other BC Arts Council grant programs.
- Projects or activities funded with BC Arts Council funds delivered through third-party delivery partners: ArtStarts, First Peoples' Cultural Council, BC Touring Council, or Creative BC.

## Grant Amounts

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The request amount to this program:

- Must be 50% or less of the total eligible project budget; or
- May be up to 65% of the total eligible project budget for projects from applicants that align with the BC Arts Council's designated priority groups as stated above.

Applicant contributions to the project budget can be composed of both cash and in-kind contributions.

There is no maximum request amount, but project assistance grants typically range from \$5,000 to \$25,000. Requests for amounts beyond this range will need to articulate a clear rationale for why the project requires a higher amount. Applicants should discuss such requests with the Program Advisor prior to submitting an application.

BC Arts Council intends to support successful applications at 100% of the request; however, grants may be awarded for less than requested. BC Arts Council programs are highly competitive, and support is not available for all eligible projects. Success rates in BC Arts Council programs are generally between 20% to 40% of requests to programs. Visit the [BC Arts Council Recipients](#) page to review a list of previously successful applicants and the range of grants for this program.

## What is Needed for the Application

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You are responsible for submitting a complete application through the online system. You will not be contacted to address errors or missing requirements. Eligible applications are assessed as submitted.

### **A complete application must include:**

- Details outlining the proposed project including:
  - a summary of the proposed project, including rationale, objectives, and outcomes.
  - project timeline or work plan.
  - a biography for each member of the project's team (maximum 100 words each).
- A balanced project budget using the budget table provided in the online application. Include notes on the budget and indicate whether revenues are confirmed or pending. The project budget must balance in-kind revenues with in-kind expenses.



- All required support material as per the list below.

As part of our commitment to accessibility, the BC Arts Council is now accepting parts of applications in audio and video formats. See instructions within the application.

## Support Material

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

### Required support material includes:

- Letters from partners or collaborators, if applicable, confirming the nature of their participation (maximum two letters, one page each). Do not include general letters of support.
- Examples of previous work relevant to the proposed project, **up to a maximum of\***:
  - **5 images or 5 minutes total of video or audio**, with identified excerpts to be viewed; **OR**
  - **3 pages of critical writing or documentation** (do not submit testimonials or reference letters).

**\*NOTE:** Items in excess of the listed maximums, including multiple links to materials within a single uploaded document, will not be reviewed. Other examples of previous work, such as publications, must be discussed with the program officer prior to submission to determine whether they are appropriate.

### For applicants who have not previously received funding through this program:

- Two letters of reference from established arts and cultural practitioners familiar with the applicant's work.

## Additional Information Needed from Organizations

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### To apply, the applicant'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, location 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).
- 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.
- A completed Designated Priority Group information section.
- Answers in the Equity Data Tool that are relevant to your organization. You are not required to answer every question.
- Signed financial statements for the two most recently completed fiscal years, as per below.

### 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.



Financial Statements are based on the single largest grant received in the organization's previous two fiscal years, excluding Resilience Supplements, Pivot Program, Arts Impact Grants, 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.

**For applicants 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 committed to placing reconciliation, equity, diversity, inclusion and access at the centre of its activities, with the intention to address historic funding inequities. Strategic funding measures may be applied to organizations considered designated priority groups as stated above. Equity considerations are embedded throughout the assessment criteria and the assessment process.

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 and are used to review all eligible applications. Your application should address how the project fulfils each area of assessment. Your application will be assessed using the following weighted criteria. Keep these criteria in mind as you complete your application.

### RECONCILIATION, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESS (20%)

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

- The level at which the project will advance opportunities for and service to equity-deserving and under-represented communities;
- The contribution to communities located outside major urban centres, as applicable;
- The project's potential for advancing reconciliation, as applicable; and

- The significance of the project in pursuing equity, diversity, inclusion, and access depending on the applicant's region, capacity, community served, size, and purpose/mandate.

### ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION, ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT (50%)

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

- The relevance of the project to the communities the applicant serves, as demonstrated through programming, audience development, outreach, editorial, or curatorial choices;
- How well the applicant can identify the communities it serves;
- How the project will contribute to the development of the art form(s) and cultural practices in B.C.;
- The level of artistry, risk, originality and production values achieved in programming, in accordance with the organization's purpose;
- The impact on and contribution to the development of B.C. artists, cultural practitioners, and artistic communities;
- 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.

### FEASIBILITY (30%)

The assessment panel will evaluate the project's feasibility by considering the:

- Achievability of the proposed activities as determined by sound budgets, planning, resource allocation, and the applicant's overall financial health and capacity.
- Role of artistic leadership, including management and the board, as applicable, in fostering a healthy, sustainable work environment.
- Level of experience in realizing comparable projects at a professional standard.
- Rigour of human resources practices related to providing fair remuneration, equitable employment, cultural competency, cultural safety, and safe and respectful work environment.

### Assessment Process

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The following process is used to evaluate every application to this program:

- The BC Arts Council receives applications and reviews each one for eligibility.
- Eligible applications are forwarded to independent assessment panels. 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 assessment panels evaluate eligible applications using the assessment criteria above and determine the level of funding or conditions on payment of grants.
- The BC Arts Council informs each applicant of the assessment panel's decision in writing.
- Applicants may check the status of their application at any time through the online system.

## Notification of Grants and Feedback

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The BC Arts Council informs each applicant of the results of their application no later than 16 weeks after the submission deadline.

Notification is sent by email to the primary contact linked to the application.

Emails are sent through the online system. Be sure the email address **NoReply@BCArtsCouncil.ca** is on your safe sender list.

Results cannot be requested in advance.

You are encouraged to contact the Program Advisor for feedback on the assessment of your application after notifications have been released.

## Payment of Grants

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All 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.
- makes 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.

Grants will be paid by direct deposit or by cheque sent to the mailing address listed in the individual or organization profile in the online system unless registered for direct deposit.

**Grants are taxable income and must be reported.** Individuals receiving grants on their own behalf or on behalf of a collective are issued T4As for the year the grant payment is processed.

## Final Reports

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Recipients must submit a final report with the required documentation of the completed project to the BC Arts Council within 30 days of the Project End Date in the application.

Final Reports must be submitted through the online system.

Future applications will be ineligible if reporting requirements are not met.

## Confidentiality of Information

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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 assessment panel. The names and locations of successful grant recipients may be published, along with the amount of the grant, 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

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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 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.

Funded applicants with a website are encouraged to add a link to the [BC Arts Council](#) website.

## Contact Information

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If you have questions after you have reviewed these Program Guidelines and the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the BC Arts Council web page, contact a Program Advisor.

A full list of program staff is available on [our website](#).

Sheryl Jones – Program Advisor, Visual Arts and Media Arts Organizations  
(778) 698-3522 | [Sheryl.Jones@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Sheryl.Jones@gov.bc.ca)

For general information, contact:  
(250) 356-1718 | [BCArtsCouncil@gov.bc.ca](mailto:BCArtsCouncil@gov.bc.ca)

**Program guidelines are reviewed and updated regularly.  
Be sure you are working with the most current guidelines for each intake.  
Any changes to the guidelines made after the original posting will be clearly highlighted.**

## Application Checklist

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Be sure you have included or completed the following before you submit your application. Review the program guidelines and application for specific requirements.

### In your Organization Profile on the BC Arts Council online grant system:

- update your address and other contact information
- upload your most recent signed financial statements
- update your Board list and Staff list
- upload your organization's constitution
- complete the Designated Priority Group Questionnaire (required for strategic funding)
- complete the Equity Data Tool (required for strategic funding)

### In your Application:

- a project start date and end date
- a request amount that matches the request amount in your Budget form
- precise descriptions of your organization's activities and practices, the project, the participants or specific communities, the creation process, and the intended impacts of the project
- a project timeline or workplan beginning after May 23, 2023

### Pop-out forms to complete in the application:

- Project Team with biographies
- Budget Form with notes explaining amounts

### Documents to Upload:

#### All Applicants:

- an operating budget for the fiscal year in which your proposed project takes place (PDF format preferred)

#### Additional Uploads:

- letters from up to two partners or collaborators, if applicable, confirming the nature of their participation (maximum two letters, one page each). Do not include general letters of support
- For applicants that have **not previously received funding through this program**, two PDF letters of reference from established arts and cultural practitioners familiar with the applicant's work
- Support material as listed in the guidelines