

Designated Priority Groups and Voluntary Self-Identification - FAQ for Individual Applicants

Q.1: What are the designated priority groups?

The designated priority groups have been identified as applicants and arts and cultural practitioners who are:

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

Q.2: Where do I fill out the designated priority groups information?

The Designated Priority Groups section appears when you first register in the grant management system. This same section also appears in your Personal Profile if you are already registered. In this section, individual applicants tell us if they identify as part of a designated priority group or not. This is a different step from assessment of the grant application. You can update the information in your Personal Profile at any time.

Q.3: Why are you collecting information about designated priority groups?

This information allows us to provide equity-based supports and collect data to improve services. For more information visit the [Designated Priority Groups policy page](#).

Q.4: I belong to a designated priority group – why should I identify?

You may be eligible for equity-based supports. Supports for designated priority groups may include funding prioritization and dedicated programs. We also use this information to inform outreach, statistics, and reporting on progress. This information helps us to make our programs better.

Q.5: I don't belong to a designated priority group. Should I fill in the information?

We encourage all individual applicants to complete the Designated Priority Groups section. We use this information for statistical and research purposes to improve our services.

Q.6: Do I need to fill in the Designated Priority Groups section if I've explained my background in the application?

Yes, you need to fill out this section if you would like to be considered for supports made available to Designated Priority Groups. Supports are administered based on the information in the Designated Priority Groups section only. We do not use information in the application to identify members of designated priority groups.

Q.7: Do I need to explain my background in the application if I've filled out the Designated Priority Groups section?

You are not required to explain your background in the application unless it is relevant to the project and helps assessors to determine how your project relates to the assessment criteria. Information provided in the Designated Priority Groups section by individual applicants is reviewed by staff and not by the peer assessment panels.

Q.8: What is Voluntary Self-Identification?

The Voluntary Self-Identification information helps us understand who we are reaching with our programs and services. We collect this information to add to our knowledge about individual artists, including those from underserved communities. It provides important data that we use to reduce inequity in our individual programs. We encourage all applicants to complete the Voluntary Self-identification questions, whether you are a member of a designated priority group or not.

Q.9: Do I have to fill in the Designated Priority Groups and Voluntary Self-Identification when I register, or can I do it later?

You can provide Designated Priority Groups information when registering or at any time afterwards through the Personal Profile. Changes made to your Personal Profile after the program application deadline may not factor into the assessment for that intake.

Q.10: Will this information be used in the assessment of my application?

Assessors are informed when an applicant is considered a designated priority group. They are not told which designated priority group an applicant identifies with. They are not provided with any other details from the Designated Priority Groups or Voluntary Self-Identification answers.

Q.11: Can I still be funded if I am not part of a designated priority group?

Yes. All applications are first assessed against the criteria outlined in the guidelines. Successful applicants come from a variety of communities, fields of practice and organizations, including those that are not from designated priority groups. Prioritization of designated priority group applicants is considered during the peer assessment process when allocating funding.

Q.12: How often do I have to fill out the Designated Priority Group and Voluntary Self-Identification sections?

Once you have completed each section, the answers are stored in your Personal Profile. You do not need to provide the information again unless you want to make changes or provide updates.

Q.13: I've already registered, and I have a Personal Profile, do I need to complete the Designated Priority Group and Voluntary Self-Identification sections?

Yes. We encourage you to revisit your Personal Profile if you have not updated it since April 14, 2023. There is a new section to fill out.

Q.14: How are applications from members of designated priority groups prioritized for funding?

All applications continue to be assessed against the assessment criteria in the program guidelines. Prioritization of designated priority group applicants is considered when allocating funding. Learn more about the BC Arts Council's [peer assessment process](#) here.

Q.15: Why are regional applicants considered a priority?

Through extensive sector research and engagement, we identified regional arts as a priority along with other historically underserved groups. The BC Arts Council's [New Foundations strategic plan](#) recognized that a significant amount of the available funding and programming goes to artists and cultural organizations in the province's urban centres and that many regional and community-based artists and organizations have not historically seen themselves reflected in our current programs.

Q.16: My home base is in a small town, but I travel for school and work. Am I still a regional applicant?

Applicants must maintain a permanent address and usually live in a region outside of greater Vancouver or greater Victoria / capital region to be considered a designated priority group applicant. Individuals attending a school program or residency that requires an extended stay away from their B.C. regional home base are still considered to be regional applicants. Individuals who have taken a time-limited contract outside of their B.C. regional home base, without impact on their B.C. residency status, are still considered to be regional applicants.

Q.17: Who has access to the information we provide?

BC Arts Council staff have access to Designated Priority Groups and Voluntary Self-identification information.

Q.18: Can I change the information on my Personal Profile?

Yes. You can change your information online through the grant management system at any time. We encourage you to review all the information in your profile each time you start a new application. We recommend you make changes prior to submitting an application. Changes made to your Personal Profile may not factor into the assessment for applications that have already been submitted.

Q.19: Who can I speak to about data collection?

You can ask questions about the collection, use, or disclosure of personal information by contacting:

Senior Director, BC Arts Council Secretariat and Strategic Engagement

800 Johnson Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 9W3

Phone: 250 356-1718

BCArtsCouncil@gov.bc.ca

Q.20: I understood that the new Action Plan committed to streamlined applications and reduced barriers. Why are you creating more work for applicants – especially equity-deserving applicants - with these extra registration steps?

In asking applicants to complete data collection questions and to identify whether they are a member of a designated priority group, we recognize that we are asking for additional steps within the registration process. We have weighed the options carefully and have put these measures in place to ensure the stewardship of public funds in alignment with our strategic priorities and to support our ability to provide funds to those who have been historically underserved.

Reach out to us at BCArtsCouncil@gov.bc.ca with your feedback.