

OPERATING ASSISTANCE: Community Arts Organizations

Program Overview 2025/26

Acknowledgement

The BC Arts Council acknowledges it carries out its work on the land of Indigenous nations throughout British Columbia. We pay our respects to the Elders and Knowledge Keepers, past and present, descendants and custodians of these lands and waters. 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 Xwsepsum (Kosapsum) Esquimalt Nations, on whose lands we operate our main offices.

Operating Assistance: Community Arts Organizations Program Extension

NOTE: The Operating Assistance program is not open to new applicants in 2025/26.

The BC Arts Council has extended the grants for existing Operating Assistance program recipients for 2024 and 2025 (in the 2024/25 and 2025/26 government fiscal years). This extension is intended to provide stability for Operating Assistance recipients, allowing organizations to focus capacity and resources where they are needed most.

- All general current Operating Assistance eligibility remains in place and has not changed. The most recent program guidelines are posted on the [program page](#) on the BC Arts Council website.
 - **Note:** Past-year guidelines are for reference only. This Program Overview document provides the most up-to-date information for 2025/26 processes and requirements.
- Community Arts Organizations must continue receiving cash support for operations or annual programs from local or regional governments to maintain eligibility to this program.
 - Local or regional governments may include First Nations Band Councils and Trusts.
- Operating Assistance grants for 2025/26 will consist of three components, including stable funding within the Basic Assistance component. See **Grant Amounts** and **Payment of Grants** sections for more information.
- All current Operating Assistance recipients must provide key updates to access funding. See **What Updates are Needed for 2025/26** for details.
- **REMINDER:** All community arts organizations currently receiving Operating Assistance must complete a Local Matching Funds form. The form is available to download from the [program page](#). See **What Updates are Needed for 2025/26** for details.
- There is no opportunity to request an increase in Operating Assistance funding during the extension period.
- Organizations on Regular Status will not submit an application form in 2025/26 but must provide the required updates for this year. Updates will be reviewed by staff but not be peer assessed. See section **What Updates are Needed for 2025/26**, for details.

- Organizations on Concerned Status are subject to the [Fair Notice Policy for Operating Assistance](#). See the dedicated section below, **Concerned Status 2025/26 Information**, for details.
- Organizations on Concerned Status must submit an application form in 2025/26 in addition to the required updates from all recipients for this year. See the dedicated section, **Concerned Status 2025/26 Information**, for details.
- All recipients of Operating Assistance must inform the BC Arts Council in a timely manner of major changes to the organization's structure, financial position, staffing or activities, or any other significant departures from regular operations.

About Operating Assistance: Community Arts Organizations

Operating Assistance: Community Arts Organizations provides funding towards the general operations of established community-based non-profit arts organizations working in community engaged arts through a range of artistic and cultural programming in B.C. This 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. Organizations must continue to meet the specific eligibility requirements within the program guidelines specific to their regular funding stream. See the Exclusions section in the most recent Operating Assistance program guidelines for details of what funding is able and not able to support at www.bcartscouncil.ca/program/operating-assistance-community-arts-organizations/.

Application Assistance

Organizations with a primary purpose to serve D/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. Accessibility requests are confidential and will not be part of the assessment panel's evaluation of a grant application.

For more information or to request assistance, contact Clayton Baraniuk, Accessibility Coordinator: BCACAAccess@gov.bc.ca - BCArtsCouncil.ca/accessibility.

Grant Amounts

Operating Assistance: Community Arts Organizations grants for 2025/26 are based on three components:

- **Basic Assistance:** Organizations will receive Basic Assistance funding in the same amount as last year.
- **Local Matching Funds:** The Local Matching Funds form will be reviewed to confirm eligibility. The amount will not be updated this year. Organizations will receive Local Matching Funds in the same amount as last year.

- **Capacity and Program Development:** The Capacity and Program Development component is normally a competitive grant separate from base operating funding levels. Neither the funding level nor future grants are guaranteed from one year to the next. During the extension of Operating Assistance, the Capacity and Program Development funds have been disbursed among all community organizations based on a formula. Organizations will receive Capacity and Program Development funds in the same amount as last year.

Grant amounts are subject to the [Fair Notice Policy for Operating Assistance](#) and to the Payment of Awards statement included in this overview document and an authorizing appropriation under the *Financial Administration Act*.

Concerned Status 2025/26 Information

Organizations on Concerned Status remain under review as per the [Fair Notice Policy for Operating Assistance](#), which has been extended to align with the Operating Assistance program extension. The Policy is intended to support transparency and accountability for organizations that receive Operating Assistance funding and ensure recipients continue to meet the eligibility requirements and priorities of the BC Arts Council.

- Organizations on Concerned Status must submit an application in 2025/26.
 - See **What Updates are Needed for 2025/26** and the **Concerned Status Application Requirements** sections below for details.
- For organizations moved into Regular Status as the outcome of this year's assessment process, Operating Assistance grants for 2025/26 will remain stable, based on current grant amounts.
- Organizations who remain on Concerned Status as the outcome of this year's assessment process may have their grant amount reduced as per the Fair Notice Policy.
- Organizations removed from the Operating Assistance program as the outcome of this year's assessment process can continue to access project assistance programs.

When and How to Provide Updates

Organizational Profile updates and Concerned Status applications must be complete in the BC Arts Council [Grants Management System](#) (GMS) by **October 1, 2025, no later than 11:59 pm**.

- **All recipients:** Update your online Organizational Profile information in GMS.
- **All recipients:** Local Matching Funds form completed and submitted.
- **Organizations on Concerned Status:** Application completed and submitted.

What Updates are Needed for 2025/26

All organizations receiving Operating Assistance funding are responsible for completing the profile updates and requirements for 2025/26 described in this Overview document.

Organizations must include:

- An updated Organizational Profile.

- The organization's most recent financial statements.
- A completed Local Matching Funds form.
- **For organizations on Concerned Status:** A completed application form and support materials as per the dedicated section, Concerned Status Application Requirements, below.

Organizational Profile

All organizations receiving Operating Assistance must update their Organizational Profile information in the BC Arts Council [Grants Management System](#) (GMS).

Updates to the following profile sections must be provided:

- Current Artistic Leadership, Governance Leadership, and Administrative Information contact information.
- A current Board Member List: 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 Staff Member List: administrative and artistic/editorial staff or significant contractors, if applicable, including name, position, and employment status (e.g., permanent; part-time).
- A current copy of the organization's constitution document for non-profit organizations, OR a statement of the primary purpose for all other organization types. **Do not include by-laws.**
- A completed Designated Priority Groups 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 (see next section for specific requirements).

Financial Statement Requirements

All organizations receiving Operating Assistance must upload signed financial statements for their two most recent completed fiscal years to their online profile in the BC Arts Council [Grants Management System](#) (GMS).

Following standard accounting formatting, financial statements **should include comparative information for the prior fiscal year**. If a comparative year is not included within a single set of statements, then ensure a set of financial statements for each year has been uploaded to your profile.

Not-for-profit organizations - Financial statements (all types) must include:

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

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 organization's activities alone.
- A signature of the umbrella organization's financial officer.
- Notes indicating if the entity may accrue assets, surpluses, or deficits from one year to the next.
- An itemized list of grants received that are related to the entity, not the entire umbrella organization, and identified by funder, either in the income statement or attached schedule.

The type of financial statements that are required are outlined in the chart below.

The type of financial statements that are required are based on the previous Operating Assistance grant received, as per the table below.

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

Previous BC Arts Council Grant Received (as per above)	Type of Financial Statements Required
\$0 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

Local Matching Funds form

Community Arts Organizations must provide details of cash support received in the most recently completed fiscal year for operations or ongoing support for annual programs from local and regional governments (including First Nations Band Councils and Trusts, where applicable).

- Complete a Local Matching Funds form to provide the details of cash support received. The Local Matching Funds form is in a fillable PDF format, available for download on the program webpage: www.bcartscouncil.ca/program/operating-assistance-community-arts-organizations/
- Amounts listed on the form must match the cash financial support from eligible local sources, as reflected in the financial statements for your most recently completed fiscal year. Financial Statements must include an itemized list of grants identified by funder, either in the income statement or in an attached schedule.

How to submit the Local Matching Funds form:

- **Organizations on Regular Status:** email the completed form to the Program Advisor:
 - **Krista Patterson** at Krista.Patterson@gov.bc.ca
- **Organizations on Concerned Status:** upload the completed form to the Support Materials tab of the application form in GMS.

To maintain a record of the ongoing relationship between organizations with local and regional governments, the Local Matching Funds form is required to be submitted in 2025 (in the 2025/26 government fiscal year) during the extension of the Operating Assistance program.

Application Requirements for Organizations on Concerned Status

Organizations on Concerned Status must fill out an application form as part of their 2025/26 submission. These organizations will be asked to specify what changes have been made to continue addressing the circumstances that resulted in Concerned Status.

A complete application from organizations on Concerned Status must include:

- Responses to specific questions providing an overview of general operations and annual programming.
- Responses to specific questions related to the reasons for the organization's Concerned Status designation.
- Support materials that relate to or show how the organization is addressing the specific areas of concern.

Support Materials for organizations on Concerned Status

Provide up to five items of support materials (PDF format preferred) including:

- Programming and operational information relevant to addressing the concerned status.
- Current planning and policy documents, such as strategic plans, human resource policies, anti-racism policies, or cultural safety policies, as related to the specific areas of concern.
 - If stand-alone policy documents are not available, and this was an area of concern, provide a description of current approaches to reconciliation, equity, diversity, inclusion, and access across your organization.

How Applications from Organizations on Concerned Status Will Be Assessed

Staff will review all profile updates and submissions for completeness. There will be no peer assessment process for the profile updates submitted by organizations on Regular Status. All general Operating Assistance program eligibility criteria continue to apply to all funding recipients in this program.

Concerned Status Assessment Process

To support the extended Operating Assistance program cycle and the extension of the Fair Notice Policy for 2025/26, an internal staff committee will conduct an initial review of applications from organizations on Concerned Status.

- The initial review will take into consideration the criteria under which applicants were placed on Concerned Status and how organizations have addressed these concerns.
- Following the review, the staff committee will make recommendations on Concerned Status designations and further assessment requirements as needed.

Notification of Grant Amounts and Concerned Status Results

The BC Arts Council's commitment is to inform each applicant of the results of the granting process no later than 16 weeks after the submission deadline.

Notification is sent by email to the primary contact linked to the application, and to the organizational and governance leadership contacts provided in the organizational profile (as applicable). Results cannot be requested in advance. Applicants may check the status of their application at any time through the online system.

Ensure the email address **NoReply@BCArtsCouncil.ca** is on your safe sender list and check your spam folders.

Payment of Grants

Grant 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.

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, where applicable. 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 Grants

In recognition of grant funding, the support of the BC Arts Council and the Province of British Columbia should continue to 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. Grant recipients with a website are encouraged to add a link to the [BC Arts Council](#) website.

Contact Us – We are here to help

If you have questions after you have reviewed this Overview document and the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the BC Arts Council web page, contact a program advisor.

Program Advisor: Krista Patterson | Community Arts Organizations

Telephone: (236) 478-2550

Email: krista.patterson@gov.bc.ca

A full list of program staff is available on the BC Arts Council's website.

www.bcartscouncil.ca/about/staff-directory

For general information, contact: 250-356-1718 | BCArtsCouncil@gov.bc.ca

Operating Assistance: 2025/26 Checklist

Be sure you have included or completed the following before **October 1, 2025, no later than 11:59pm**.

Before you start:

- ☐ Review the Overview document for specific requirements.
- ☐ Plan to have all updates and requirements completed at least two days before the deadline to avoid last-minute technological issues.

Organization Profile updates on the BC Arts Council online grant system:

- ☐ Update your mailing address and other contact information, including Leadership Information contacts.
- ☐ Update your Board Member List and Staff Member List tables.
- ☐ Upload your organization's certified constitution (for not-for-profits) or statement of purpose (for all other organizations). Do not include by-laws.
- ☐ Complete the Designated Priority Group section (required for funding prioritization).
- ☐ Complete the Equity Data Tool (required for funding prioritization).
- ☐ Upload your most recent signed financial statements. See Financial Statement Requirements section of the Overview document.

Local Matching Fund form:

- ☐ Download the Local Matching Fund form from the [program page](#) on the BC Arts Council website.
- ☐ Complete the Local Matching Fund form and submit by:
Organizations on Regular Status: emailing to Krista.Patterson@govbc.ca
Organizations on Concerned Status: uploading the PDF to the Support Materials tab in your application. Note: This does not count towards the 5-item limit for support materials.

In your application (organizations on Concerned Status):

- ☐ Review the September 2022 Program Guidelines for your regular Operating Assistance program stream posted on the relevant [program pages](#) on the BC Arts Council website for information about ongoing eligibility criteria and what funding in this program supports.
- ☐ Make sure you have reviewed and understand the [Fair Notice Policy for Operating Assistance](#).
- ☐ Review the Overview document section, Concerned Status assessment, and make sure you understand the assessment process for this intake.
- ☐ Respond to all questions in the application, specifying what changes the organization has made to continue addressing the circumstances that resulted in Concerned Status.
- ☐ Upload support materials that relate to or show how the organization is addressing specific areas of concern (up to 5 items, PDF format preferred).

Pop-out forms to complete in the application (or through the organization profile):

- ☐ Board Member List Table.
- ☐ Staff Member List Table.

Other updates:

- ☐ Add NoReply@BCArtsCouncil.ca to your safe senders list if you haven't already done so. Notification of results will come from this system email roughly 16 weeks after the deadline.
- ☐ Keep your mailing address up to date in your online Organization Profile. Grant payments will be mailed to this address.