



BRITISH COLUMBIA
ARTS COUNCIL



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

BC Arts Council Annual Report 2025/26



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Territory Acknowledgement

The BC Arts Council acknowledges it carries out its work on the land of First 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 Peoples that develop through our work together. We acknowledge and raise our hands to the ləkʷəŋən (Lkwungen) people, known today as the Songhees and xʷsepsəm (Kosapsam) Nations, on whose lands we operate our main offices.

ON NATIVE LAND, VANCOUVER. Musical written and directed by Corey Payette. Produced by Raven Theatre and Urban Ink presented by The Cultch at the York Theatre, Actors: Dustyn Forbes and ensemble. Photos by David Cooper.

Message from the Minister

On behalf of Premier David Eby and the Government of British Columbia, I am pleased to receive the BC Arts Council's 2025/26 Annual Report, which outlines how public investment supported arts and culture throughout British Columbia and celebrates the achievements of the sector throughout the past year.

Arts and culture are woven into the foundations of our province – they drive community connection, support cultural identity and contribute to economic vitality throughout our province. Artists and arts organizations strengthen community life in urban centres, rural and regional communities and remote areas alike, as well as attracting business investment, directly impacting tourism and creating good jobs throughout the province. The work highlighted in this report demonstrates the creativity, diversity, and resilience of the sector in every part of British Columbia.

Throughout the past year, artists and organizations have continued to navigate rising costs, unstable revenues, workforce pressures and increasing expectations related to governance, safety, and accountability. That's why we remain committed to protecting core services while continuing to support the arts and culture sector in B.C., which strengthens our economy and brings people together.

In 2025/26, the Government of British Columbia provided significant support for arts and culture through the BC Arts Council. This ongoing support reached artists, arts organizations, and communities province-wide and plays an important role in sustaining creative practice, fostering innovation, and expanding public access to arts and culture.

Despite ongoing challenges, artists and arts organizations continue to show resilience, creativity and leadership. Throughout British Columbia, they create work that brings people together, challenges perspectives and reflects the diverse experiences that shape our province.

I want to thank the BC Arts Council, its Secretariat and the many artists, arts organizations and community partners for your contributions. Your work ensures that public investment in arts and culture reflects accountability, care and a long term perspective.

The Government of British Columbia remains committed to working with the arts and culture sector, listening to your experiences and supporting the important role you play in communities throughout the province.

Hon. Anne Kang
Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport
Province of British Columbia



Message from the BC Arts Council Interim Chair

This past year has been shaped by complexity, both within the arts and culture sector in British Columbia and across the wider world. Yet it has also been a year that highlights the strength, creativity, and resilience rooted here at home. Across the province, artists and cultural practitioners continue to respond with care, imagination, and determination.

British Columbia is a place of extraordinary diversity: of landscapes, cultures, and stories. From urban centres to rural and remote regions, the arts reflect the distinct identities and shared experiences that shape life here. Even as global challenges—conflict, climate change, and growing division—touch our lives, the work created across this province continues to affirm connection, belonging, and possibility.

Across disciplines, artists and organizations are navigating a changing environment. Spaces for creation and gathering are evolving, and funding contexts continue to shift. Rising costs, housing pressures, and access to space remain real challenges. Yet throughout these changes, artists and organizations continue to adapt with ingenuity and care, finding new ways to create, collaborate, and share their work.

These efforts are grounded in place. They are shaped by the lands we live on, the people we gather with, and the histories that inform us. They remind us that the arts are not separate from our daily lives—they are woven into how we understand where we are and how we relate to one another.

The arts persist because storytelling is fundamental to how we make meaning. Across all forms, artists continue to reflect who we are, who we have been, and who we might become. The stories rooted here—told in theatres, galleries, community spaces, and public places—help us see ourselves and each other more clearly. They invite us to listen, to learn, and to imagine.

As we look ahead, we know that change will continue. The sector is being asked to evolve, and it will. That evolution will take many forms: in how we create, how we gather, how we support one another, and how we define success. Within that change lies opportunity—not only to sustain what exists, but to reimagine what is possible.

Across British Columbia, artists are already leading this work. They are bringing people together, fostering dialogue across difference, and strengthening the social fabric of our communities. They create moments of connection, joy, and reflection that remind us of what we share.

We are also reminded that this work is ongoing. For generations, Indigenous peoples have sustained and revitalized their languages, cultures, and artistic practices across these lands. Through continued leadership and partnership, the BC Arts Council remains committed to strengthening support for Indigenous artists and organizations, recognizing that these contributions are foundational to the cultural life of this province.

In times of uncertainty, it can be tempting to turn inward. The arts ask us to do something different—to reach outward, to stay connected to place and to each other, and to continue creating with purpose and care.

I would like to close by expressing my deep gratitude to my fellow Council members, whose dedication and insight guide this work. I am equally grateful to the Secretariat of the BC Arts Council for their ongoing commitment, and to Minister Anne Kang for her continued support. Thank you to outgoing council members Haley Basset, Kiran Dhaliwal and Mike Murray and to former chair Stan Chung for the strong foundation his leadership and vision have provided.

Thank you all for your work. I look forward to the coming year and all that we will continue to create together.

Marnie Hamagami
Interim Chair
BC Arts Council



Mandate, Vision, Values

Our Mandate

The BC Arts Council (BCAC), referred to as “the council”, was created in 1995 as an agency of the Province of British Columbia under the *Arts Council Act* (Act) for the purposes of:

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

The Act requires that council:

consult and collaborate with arts and cultural organizations, artists and artists’ organizations, ministries of the government, local governments and other communities of interest in carrying out its purposes,

- allocate the money appropriated annually for the council by the Legislature, and
- support arts and culture in British Columbia through:
 1. public education, research and advocacy;
 2. awarding grants to any person or organization from the money appropriated for the council;
 3. the production and distribution of information about the council and the arts and culture in British Columbia.

Our Vision

Through its current strategic plan, the BC Arts Council has set its course toward an aspirational vision where:

- 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; and
- 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 and are recognized for their innovation and leadership in Canada and abroad.

Our Values

Our values guide our 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 & Achievement

Supporting the development and achievement of diverse practices by artists and cultural organizations.

Indigenous Engagement & Cultural Vitality

Engaging with Indigenous artists and organizations guided by principles of cultural vitality and self-determination.

Equity, Access & Diversity

Striving for equitable access to arts and culture funding and programs for underserved artists, organizations, and audiences.

Engagement & Participation

Facilitating opportunities for all people in British Columbia to engage with and participate in arts and culture.

Collaboration & Partnerships

Collaborating and co-creating with arts and culture communities throughout the province to improve the council’s programs and practices.

Recognition & Promotion

Improving access to and visibility of British Columbia’s artists and cultural organizations locally, nationally, and internationally.

Fair & Transparent Governance

Using fair and transparent processes guided by principles of accountability, independence, merit, and equity.

BCAC Renewed Strategic Vision and Action Plan

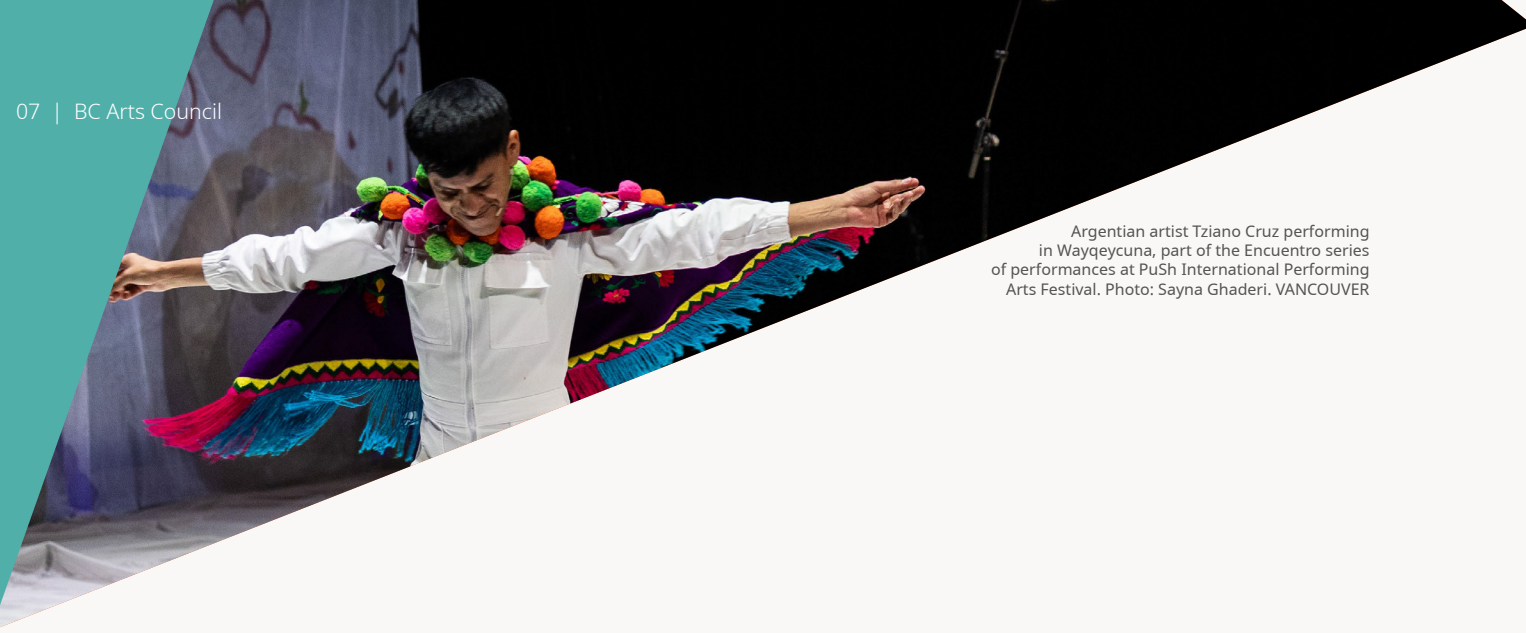
Throughout 2025/26, the council continued its work on a renewed strategic vision to guide its future direction and ensure it remains responsive to the evolving needs of British Columbia’s (B.C.) arts and culture sector. The vision is being developed as a practical and adaptable framework reflecting BCAC’s role in reconciliation, regional engagement, and in fostering a resilient and innovative cultural ecosystem. The council expects to complete this work in 2026/27 and will report on its conclusion in next year’s annual report.

Building on the emerging vision, the council is working on the next phase of strategic planning - developing a new multi-year strategy and action plan. This work will identify priority areas, actions, and measurable outcomes for the years ahead.

Engagement with artists, cultural organizations, Indigenous partners, and stakeholders across B.C. will help shape these priorities and ensure the strategy reflects current realities and opportunities in the sector. The strategy and action plan will provide a roadmap for implementing the renewed vision and guiding BCAC’s work.



Arts Umbrella Post-Secondary Dance Program students working on a new creation in Arts Umbrella's Granville Island studios. Photo by Michael Slobodian. VANCOUVER



Argentinian artist Tziano Cruz performing in Wayqeycuna, part of the Encuentro series of performances at PuSh International Performing Arts Festival. Photo: Sayna Ghaderi. VANCOUVER

Status of the Arts in B.C

Now, more than ever, B.C.'s arts and culture sector is operating within an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing global environment. Economic uncertainty, rising costs of living and doing business, shifting social dynamics, and evolving public priorities continue to shape the conditions in which artists, cultural practitioners, and organizations create and operate. Global events have direct consequences for communities throughout B.C., influencing funding environments, audience engagement, workforce stability, and cultural participation.

Despite these challenges, the sector remains a vital contributor to the province's social, cultural, and economic well-being. Arts and culture foster creativity and strengthen community connections, support local economies and provide spaces for dialogue, reflection, and belonging. During periods of uncertainty and change, the sector plays an essential role in community resilience, promoting social cohesion and collective understanding.

In 2025/26, the arts and culture sector in B.C. demonstrated remarkable adaptability. Organizations and artists responded to ongoing pressures through innovation and collaborative approaches that prioritized reconciliation, inclusion, diversity and accessibility. Throughout the province, communities continued to invest in cultural expression as a means of strengthening relationships and celebrating the rich diversity of B.C.

BCAC continued to support the sector in 2025/26 with stable funding of \$36 million. Funding was distributed through grants to individual artists, cultural practitioners, and arts and culture organizations, as well as through community partnerships. These investments reflect council's commitment to supporting diverse artistic practices, expanding access to arts and culture, fostering creative excellence, and ensuring that cultural opportunities are available to people in all regions of the province.

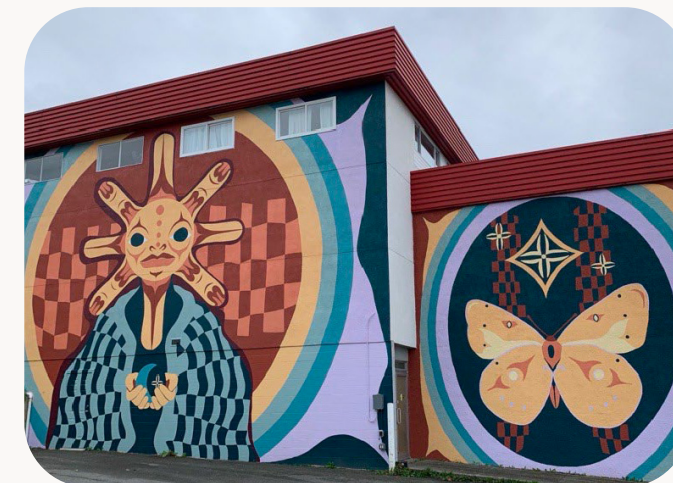
Cultural Sovereignty and Reconciliation

Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and upholding cultural sovereignty remain key priorities for BCAC. In alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and British Columbia's *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA), BCAC recognizes and is committed to supporting the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples to maintain, control, protect, and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, languages, and cultural expressions.

Indigenous arts and culture are foundational to B.C.'s identity, reflecting the richness of the 204 distinct First Nations whose homelands are located within what is now known as British Columbia, and who represent more than half of the Indigenous languages spoken in Canada.

The province is also home to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples living away from their home communities and ancestral homelands, whose cultures contribute to the rich diversity of urban, rural and remote communities throughout British Columbia.

This cultural vitality contributes to resilient communities and creative excellence, strengthens our arts and culture sector, and advances reconciliation by fostering greater understanding, respect, and appreciation of the diversity of Indigenous histories, cultures, languages, and artistic expression in the province



Tla'amin Nation, k'ak'w'em - To Be Alive, completed mural. POWELL RIVER

In 2025/26, BCAC made significant progress in the development and early implementation of its Indigenous Arts Strategy, strengthening partnerships and increasing supports for Indigenous-led arts and cultural activity throughout the province. This included:

- Sustaining and deepening partnerships with the First Peoples' Cultural Council to support arts and cultural revitalization initiatives led by BC First Nations.
- Enhancing targeted investments, including \$700,000 to support Indigenous artists, arts organizations and cultural practitioners.
- Continuing leadership-based initiatives, including support for the Elder-in-Residence, Roy Henry Vickers, to provide artistic and cultural guidance and mentorship.
- Advancing collaborative governance, through the Joint Indigenous Arts Advisory Circle, since it first convened in 2024. The Circle meets regularly throughout the year to provide strategic advice and co-develop programmatic responses aligned with Indigenous priorities, including an Indigenous Arts Program Pilot, set to launch in fall of 2026.

BCAC continues to align its programs and policies with DRIPA and broader provincial commitments to reconciliation. Through DRIPA Action 3.05—"provide resources to Indigenous organizations to improve public understanding of Indigenous histories, rights, cultures, languages and the negative impacts of Indigenous-specific racism", the council strengthens Indigenous self-determination in arts funding, supports the revitalization of Indigenous arts and cultural practices, and embeds decolonizing approaches throughout its operations and programs. These efforts contribute to increased public understanding of Indigenous cultures and histories while advancing BCAC's 2030 goals.

Rural and Regional Arts

B.C. encompasses a vast geographical area that is as diverse as the people living throughout the province. Twenty-two percent of B.C.’s population (approximately 1 million people) live in a rural, remote or First Nation community. It is estimated that rural areas contribute \$84 billion annually to the province’s economy¹.

Arts and culture play a vital role in contributing to the health and well-being of these communities. Among B.C. artists, 11% reside in rural areas, 9% reside in areas with populations under 30,000 (but which are not considered rural), and another 5% reside in areas with populations between 30,000 and 100,000. Combined, areas with fewer than 100,000 residents account for 25% of B.C.’s artists².

Artists and arts and culture organizations make significant contributions to local economies, community cohesion, and well-being in rural and remote areas. At the same time, they face distinct challenges compared with their urban counterparts, including workforce development and retention, higher transportation costs, limited cultural infrastructure, and fewer revenue-generating opportunities.

BCAC recognizes the importance of supporting the arts in regional and rural areas of the province. In 2025/26 BCAC continued to prioritize regional artists and arts organizations and provided dedicated funding to these groups.

Funding streams such as the Accelerate program improve access to flexible, stable funding for equity deserving and regional arts and culture organizations and collectives. The council’s commitment to rural and regional arts is also reflected in the make-up of peer assessment panels, staff, and the membership of the council itself.

The council remains committed to strengthening support for rural, remote and regional artists, arts and cultural organizations and place-based cultural expression, while recognizing that every region—urban, rural and remote alike— holds its own distinct identities and histories.

1 Province of B.C., [Rural Initiative - Draft Guidance](#)
2 Hill Strategies (2023), Artists in British Columbia in 2021



Key City Theatre, Kootenay Children’s Festival 2025, Photo by Brian Clarkson, Rotary Park, CRANBROOK

Cultural Infrastructure

Cultural infrastructure in B.C. encompasses a wide range of facilities and assets that enable artistic creation, production, presentation, and preservation—from performance venues and galleries to studios, museums, and specialized technical equipment. Across disciplines, infrastructure needs continue to be distinct and are increasingly complex, with artists and organizations requiring tailored spaces and tools to support diverse forms of cultural expression.

In 2025/26, cultural infrastructure needs in B.C. reflected sustained pressures. Many facilities were aging and in need of significant upgrades, while urban and regional communities faced ongoing shortages of affordable and appropriate spaces compared to other jurisdictions in Canada³. High capital, leasing, and operating costs—compounded by inflation and broader cost-of-living pressures—limited organizations’ ability to maintain or expand their infrastructure.

3 Statistics Canada, Table 18-10-0255-01 Commercial rents services price index, monthly

These conditions affected artists, reducing access to affordable workspaces and presentation opportunities, and continue to shape the sector.

Demand for specialized equipment also increased as organizations adapted to evolving artistic, technical, accessibility, and environmental requirements. Despite these challenges, BCAC continued to play a key role in supporting cultural infrastructure, reflecting the diversity of the province and responding to local community and cultural contexts. In 2025/26, BCAC invested \$4 million through the Arts Infrastructure Program. This included \$187 thousand for planning and consultation related to infrastructure projects, \$936 thousand for specialized equipment needs and \$2.8 million for capital improvements, including renovations and acquisition.

These targeted investments helped organizations secure and sustain cultural spaces, strengthen long-term planning, and enhance technical capacity, supporting safer, more accessible, and more sustainable environments for artists, organizations, and audiences.

Cross-Sector Collaboration through Arts Infrastructure

In 2025/26, Other Sights for Artists’ Projects received \$250,000 through the Arts Infrastructure Program for the fabrication of a third FLEET Mobile Artist Studio. The FLEET project designs, fabricates, and activates mobile artist studios on wheels throughout the Lower Mainland, allowing artists and public access to spaces for art production, presentation and engagement.

FLEET: Foreshore, is a partnership with Nch’kaŷ West and Museum of Vancouver and is located near the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre’s Observatory and the Senákw towers. This partnership provides opportunities for artists to create artworks and deepen their cultural practices. It also features a residency program for Indigenous artists who will be creating public artworks to be featured in the Senákw towers. Programming and design for the third studio will largely be informed by relationships developed through FLEET: Foreshore.

Located on the south shore of Vancouver’s False Creek, Senákw is one of 23 ancestral villages of the Skwxwú7mesh Stélmexw (People). The Senákw Towers project is led by Nch’kaŷ West - a partnership between the Nch’kaŷ Development Corporation and OPTrust.



(Top) FLEET: Foreshore with The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre’s Observatory just behind, and The Senákw Towers 1-3 in the distance. Image credit: Nch’kaŷ West, 2026. (Bottom) FLEET: Foreshore with The Museum of Vancouver in the distance. Image credit: Sarah Race Photography, 2026.

Funding, Capacity and Fiscal Constraints

Amid ongoing global economic pressures in 2025/26—including inflation, supply chain disruptions, and the fiscal impacts of tariffs—governments throughout Canada are operating within constrained budgets. Federal, provincial, and municipal expenditure decisions reflect this environment, with reprioritization affecting available funding for the arts and culture sector.

In B.C., these fiscal realities contributed to sector-wide challenges in funding, staffing, and organizational capacity—affecting not only arts organizations, but also individual artists. Rising costs reduced the actual value of funding, and increased demand on funding limited organizations’ ability to sustain operations and retain staff, while artists faced fewer opportunities, reduced project funding, and greater income instability. Provincial budget decisions reflect this pressure, supporting expenditure management taking place across government.

At the same time, softer private donations, sponsorships, and discretionary spending are further tightening resources. This has increased competition for limited funding, placing additional strain on artists and arts organizations.

In response, BCAC continues to advance a coordinated set of measures to support artists and art organizations. This includes prioritizing funding to areas of greatest need, maintaining direct supports for artists’ creation and professional development, streamlining programs and adjudication processes to manage increased demand, and strengthening supports that build organizational capacity and sector resilience.

The council is also deepening collaboration with partners across governments and the sector, encouraging resource sharing, and aligning funding decisions with its strategic priorities to maximize impact in a constrained fiscal environment.

The Impact of Arts and Culture in B.C.

Arts and culture are powerful. Throughout B.C., they reach across differences, create shared experiences, deepen understanding of diversity, and forge relationships that strengthen communities. They tell the stories of who we are in B.C. - reflecting the province’s rich diversity, Indigenous cultures, and distinct regional identities - while exploring our challenges and celebrating our collective achievements.

Arts and culture also play a vital role in sharing B.C. with the world. Through touring productions, festivals, and exchanges, B.C. artists and organizations share the province’s stories and perspectives within Canada and across the globe. These connections build understanding across borders, strengthen relationships, and position B.C. as a place defined by creativity, inclusion, and innovation.

The role of arts and culture in B.C. is more critical than ever in addressing division, and intolerance, serving as a powerful tool in advancing anti-hate efforts—creating safe spaces for dialogue, amplifying diverse and underrepresented voices, and fostering empathy throughout communities. Arts and cultural experiences help strengthen social cohesion and belonging. Notably, 75% of Canadians report that attending arts and culture events positively impacts their sense of belonging,⁴ underscoring the sector’s importance in ensuring people throughout B.C. feel safe, welcomed, and connected.

Beyond their social impact, arts and culture are a significant driver of economic growth in B.C. The most recent available data shows that, in B.C., culture GDP⁵ reached approximately \$11.36 billion in 2024, growing faster than the overall provincial economy and representing about 2.8% of B.C.’s GDP—the highest share among provinces⁶. This GDP represents a 5% increase from the previous year, outpacing B.C.’s total economy GDP year-over-year growth of 3.5%.

The sector is also a key source of employment and opportunity across urban, rural, and remote communities. The latest available data indicate that over 129,000 jobs in B.C. are supported by culture, representing more than 4% of total provincial employment, the highest share in Canada⁷.

In 2025/26, BCAC strengthened the province’s arts and culture sector by investing approximately \$36 million in grants to more than 1,300 artists and organizations. These investments enabled a wide range of artistic and cultural outcomes throughout British Columbia, supporting community vitality and enhancing access to arts and culture in urban, rural, and remote regions alike.

Guided by its commitment to reconciliation, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, BCAC continued to prioritize support for Indigenous and underrepresented artists and organizations. This focus helped ensure public funding reflected the diversity of British Columbia’s communities and fostered broad, meaningful participation in the arts.

Building on this foundation, BCAC continues to advance innovation, collaboration, and strategic investment to maximize the social, cultural, and economic impacts of the arts. The council continues to play a critical – if evolving - role in enabling the sector to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges, ensuring that arts and culture is a cornerstone of inclusive, connected, and resilient communities throughout British Columbia.



Photo credit: Learning Ensemble Across Difference- Romeo & Juliet, Newworld Theatre, Photo by Ryan McDonald, VANCOUVER



Cast, crew, Savage Society staff & community ensemble of The Council of Spider, Ant & Fly. Photo credit: Shelanne Justice Photography, LYTTON

4 Business / Arts, Arts Response Tracking Survey (ARTS)
5 includes arts, culture, heritage and sport
6/7 Statistics Canada, Provincial and Territorial Cultural Indicators, 2024, June 2, 2026
2025/26 Data Content. The figures cited above reflect the most recent validated data (2024), published between 2025 and 2026 through Statistics Canada and BC Stats. These remain the current official benchmarks for assessing the sector’s economic contribution.

Supporting Arts and Culture in B.C.

BCAC's responsibility in supporting arts and culture in the province extends beyond the provision of funding. As outlined in the *Arts Council Act*, the council has a mandate to advance public education on arts and culture, undertake sector-related research, support sector-wide advocacy, and produce and disseminate information about both the council and arts and culture in B.C. more broadly.

Public Education, Research and Advocacy

BCAC advanced public education, research, and sector advocacy through strategic partnerships, convening activities, and capacity-building initiatives.

The council continued to convene government and sector stakeholders to discuss priorities affecting arts and culture in B.C., including cultural infrastructure and federal funding opportunities, supporting shared understanding and coordinated advocacy. The council also sustained its investment in the Pathways program, a year-long education, mentoring, and coaching initiative that helps organizations advance equity, accessibility, and disability justice. Staff facilitated convening and participation in the Metcalf Foundation's Arts and Social Finance workshops in Victoria and Vancouver, strengthening knowledge of innovative financing models and long-term sustainability in the arts sector.

Public education efforts included virtual grant information sessions, program webinars, and sessions for emerging artists. While in-person outreach was limited, online delivery ensured continued access to information and support for applicants across the province.

CineVic Society of Independent Filmmakers One Take Super 8; CineVic;
Photographer: Arifin Graham; Metro Studio Theatre. VICTORIA

Production and Distribution of Information

BCAC continued to strengthen digital communications and outreach to improve access to information and engagement with the arts and culture sector. The BC Arts Council's website remained a primary source of program and policy information. Improvements focused on usability and clarity, including enhanced guidance on eligibility, expanded applicant resources, and updated program materials to support applicant readiness and improve the user experience.

Communications were guided by a structured content calendar that promoted BCAC programs, recognized key cultural events and commemorations, and amplified sector initiatives, achievements, and resources.

While outreach activities were limited due to both external constraints and internal capacity, BCAC maintained engagement through virtual information sessions, targeted online consultations and participation in select sector events. Stakeholder feedback continued to highlight the value of direct engagement in strengthening relationships, deepening sector knowledge, and supporting diverse peer assessment networks.

Awarding Grants to Individuals and Organizations

Providing an open, accountable, and neutrally administered process for managing public funds is a cornerstone of BCAC's mandate. Through adjudicated grant programs, funding decisions are made based on transparency, fairness, and artistic merit.

In 2025/26, BCAC delivered a range of funding to both individuals and organizations through its direct programs, spanning project, operating, development, and community-based initiatives.

A total of 1,391 grants were awarded. The overall success rate across programs was approximately 38%, reflecting the gap between funding provided compared to the overall funding requested.

Through these investments, BCAC continued to sustain artistic practice, strengthen organizational capacity, and support arts and cultural activity in communities throughout B.C.

Consultation and Collaboration

In 2025/26, BCAC strengthened consultation and collaboration with artists, organizations, and funding partners to support a responsive and sustainable arts sector. Work with the First Peoples' Cultural Council focused on advancing data collection and reporting practices to better measure program reach, outcomes, and impact. These collaborative efforts support more effective allocation of funding to support art-making and access to culture throughout the province.

BCAC continued to engage with national and provincial networks, including the Canadian Public Arts Funders (CPAF) and the National Research Group (NRG), to share and adopt leading practices in arts funding, communicating arts impact, impact measurement, and sector advocacy. This work strengthened BCAC's ability to support inclusive programming, and direct investments where they can have the greatest impact.

Collaboration with federal, provincial, and municipal funding partners helped align investment approaches and improve coordination across funding systems. These efforts contributed to a more streamlined funding environment and supported improved access to resources for artists and organizations.

Targeted consultation with the education sector increased understanding of challenges and opportunities in arts programming in schools. Insights from this engagement informed program and policy development aimed at expanding access to arts experiences for young people and strengthening partnerships between educators, artists, and arts organizations.

BCAC's peer assessment process continued to ensure funding decisions were informed by diverse expertise from across the province. This strengthened the fairness, transparency, and quality of funding decisions and supported investments that reflect the breadth of artistic practices and communities in British Columbia.

BCAC continues to strengthen evidence-based reporting, integrate stakeholder feedback into program and policy development, and deepen partnerships across the sector. These efforts support more effective investment in arts and culture and contribute to a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable arts sector throughout British Columbia.



Vancouver Arts Colloquium Society, Book launch featuring Keiko Honda @ Nikkei Museum, photo credit: SiMing Zheng, VANCOUVER

Managing Funds for Arts and Culture in B.C.

BCAC invested \$36 million in grants and strategic partnerships to strengthen artistic practice, advance cultural diversity, support reconciliation, and increase access to arts and culture. These investments helped sustain creative activity, foster community connections, and nurture a vibrant and resilient cultural sector despite ongoing economic and social challenges.

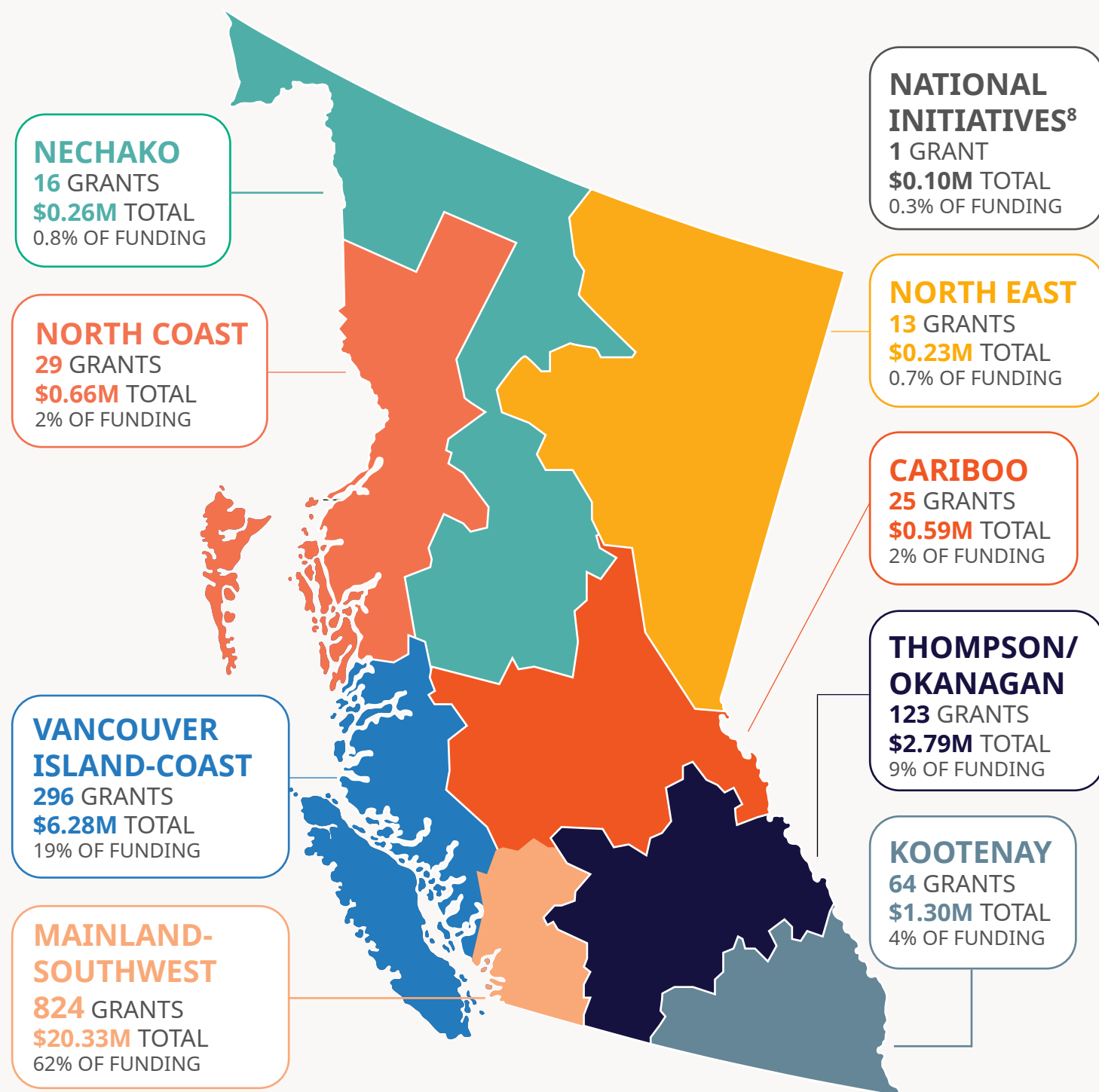
The following section provides an overview of how funding was distributed throughout B.C. in 2025/26. It highlights the reach and impact of BCAC investments by region, community, and funding program, demonstrating the council's commitment to supporting creativity and cultural participation in communities of all sizes across the province.



Theatre Replacement, HOLD ON LET GO Festival 2026 – Chelsey Stuyt Photography, VANCOUVER

At-a-Glance Funding Across the Province 2025/26

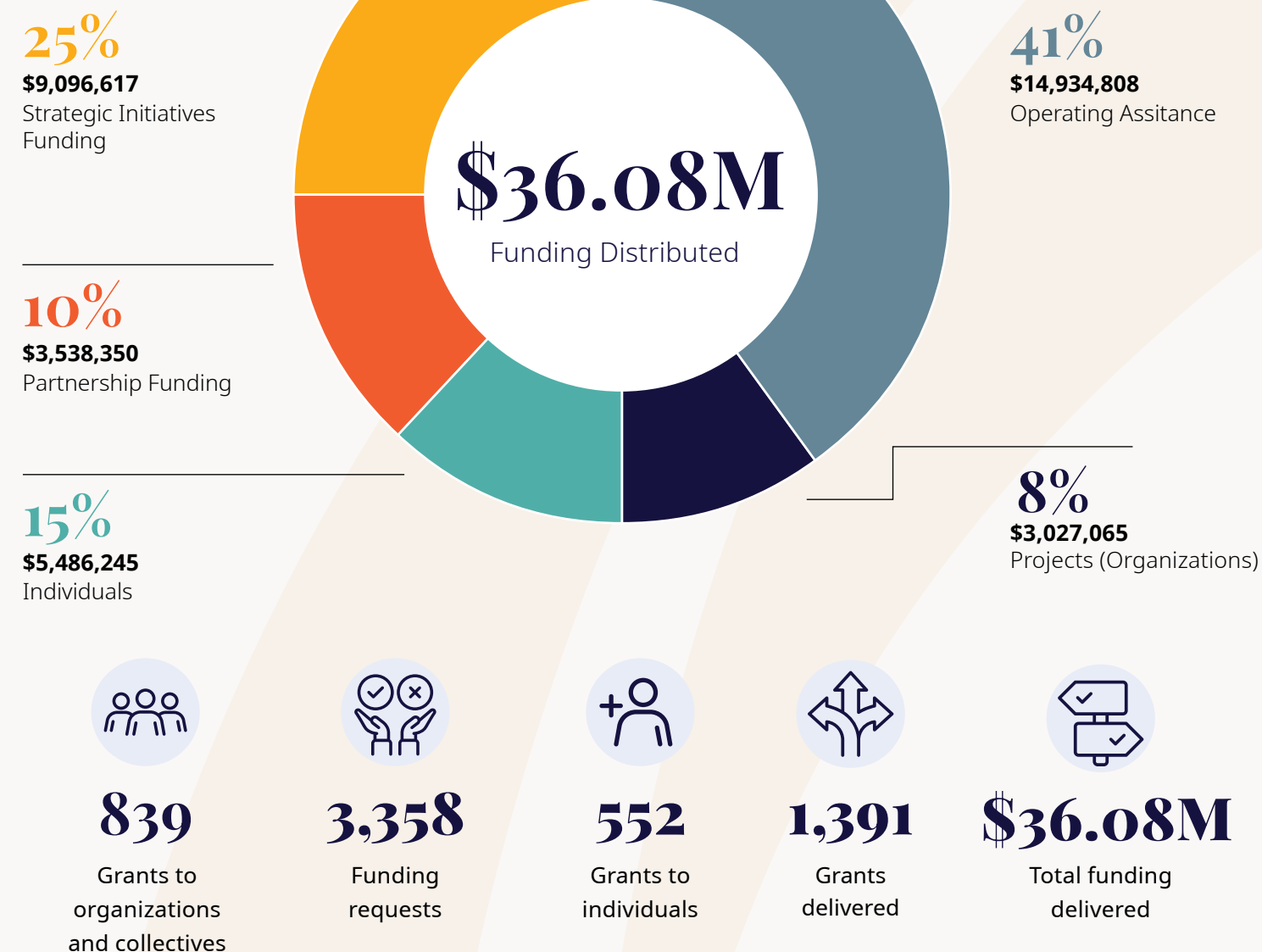
Funding by location distributed in 2025/26 through the BC Arts Council's base budget and supplemental funding.*



*Map and figures do not account for regional distribution of partnership funding or funding delivered through partner agencies.

⁸ These funds were delivered through national collaborations to support initiatives taking place province-wide.

Grant Funding



Partner Agencies 2025/26

Partner agencies deliver grants and services on behalf of the BC Arts Council.

625 Funding requests **63** Organizations supported through equity and access learning program.

119 Grants distributed to individuals and organizations **4** Partner agencies

- First Peoples' Cultural Council
- BC Live Performance Network
- Creative BC
- Arts Service Organization Consortium

ArtStarts in Schools: BC Arts Council has had a longstanding partnership with ArtStarts in Schools to connect young people to the arts through the participation of professional artists in schools. Historically, the partnership provided approximately \$1.3 million in funding annually. ArtStarts in Schools paused operations in 2025/26 to reflect, restructure and determine next steps as such, the BCAC funding was also paused this fiscal year.

Key Figures

	2024/25	2025/26
Professional Arts Funding: Supporting professional arts activity		
Operating Assistance	\$13,489,550	\$13,469,550
Professional Projects	\$3,442,460	\$3,032,971
Individual Arts Grants	\$2,861,114	\$3,981,501
Scholarship Awards	\$723,000	\$759,000
SUBTOTAL	\$20,516,124	\$21,243,022

Strategic Initiatives Funding: Supporting time-limited or strategic development programs		
Arts Infrastructure	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000
Arts Impact Grants	\$2,232,217	\$2,325,671
Accelerate Program	\$2,501,115	\$2,478,615
Strategic Investments	\$433,500	\$140,000
Access Support and Application Assistance	\$112,630	\$152,331
SUBTOTAL	\$9,279,462	\$9,096,617

Community Arts Funding: Supporting community arts activity		
Arts-Based Community Development	\$363,280	\$219,288
Community Arts Organizations Operating Assistance	\$1,465,258	\$1,465,258
Community Arts Development Projects	\$119,500	\$139,200
Community Festivals	\$617,900 ⁹	\$381,350
SUBTOTAL	\$2,565,938	\$2,205,096

⁹ Total funding delivered includes a one-time investment of \$210,000 to the Community Festivals program in fiscal 2024/25.
¹⁰ Funding paused in fiscal 2025/26 and reallocated to support Ministry expenditure management.
¹¹ Variance from budget represents savings due to Ministry expenditure management.
¹² Represents general recoveries, the Shared Recovery Mandate contingencies, and Ministry surplus delivered by the BC Arts Council.
¹³ External to the grants budget - staff salaries and benefits, peer assessment expenses, and all operational expenses.

	2024/25	2025/26
Partnerships Funding: Supporting programs delivered by partners that meet specific priorities of Council		
Creative BC - Interactive Fund	\$675,000	\$685,000
ArtStarts in Schools - Artists in Education & Artists in the Classroom	\$1,245,872	\$0 ¹⁰
First Peoples' Cultural Council - Arts Program	\$1,725,000	\$1,725,000
BC Live Performance Network - Community Presenter Assistance & Into the Act	\$688,350	\$688,350
Arts Service Organizations Consortium - Pathways Program	\$440,000	\$440,000
SUBTOTAL	\$4,774,222	\$3,538,350

TOTAL BC ARTS COUNCIL FUNDING	\$37,135,746	\$36,083,085
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BC Arts Council Budget

	2024/25	2025/26
Budget		
BC Arts Council - Base Budget ¹¹	\$36,210,000	\$36,115,000
BC 150 Cultural Fund	\$3,795,000	\$3,795,000
Supplemental Funding ¹²	\$87,355	\$304,604
TOTAL	\$40,092,355	\$40,214,604

	2024/25	2025/26
Expenses		
Grants to organizations, individuals, and partnerships	\$37,135,746	\$36,083,085
Operations ¹³	\$2,956,609	\$2,663,962
TOTAL	\$40,092,355	\$38,747,047 ¹¹

Council Members

Representatives for BC Arts Council

The *Arts Council Act* provides for up to 15 government-appointed representatives as BC Arts Council members. Collectively, they broadly represent the cultural and regional diversity of the province as well as a range of artistic practices and expertise.

We would like to thank the following outgoing members for their contributions and service:

- HALEY BASSETT**
Groundbirch (To June 2025)
- KIRANDEEP DHALIWAL**
Vancouver (To July 2025)
- MIKE MURRAY**
Maple Ridge (To July 2025)

Appointed Members 2025/26:

- SAE-HOON STAN CHUNG, CHAIR***
Cranbrook
- TOBY LAWRENCE**
Victoria
- JULES ANDRÉ-BROWN**
Victoria
- MELISSA LEE**
Vancouver
- NIKA COLLISON**
Skidegate
- TONYA MARTIN**
New Westminster
- CAREY FOUKS**
Vancouver
- BRIAN McBAY**
Vancouver
- MARNIE HAMAGAMI, VICE CHAIR****
Prince George
- BUKHOSI NKOSI**
Vancouver
- MIRANDA HURON**
New Westminster
- SMOKII SUMAC**
?amak?is Ktunaxa - East Kootenay

* Until November 2025
** Interim Chair from November 2025

For member biographies please refer to the BC Arts Council website:
www.bcartscouncil.ca.

Sustaining Apertures: Opening Celebration at Or Gallery, March 7, 2024. Photographer: Dani Costello. VANCOUVER

BC Arts Council Advisory Circles

Council’s work is supported by five Advisory Circles. These circles provide advice, guidance, and direction on specific areas of BCAC’s mandate enabling deeper discussion and focused attention on key issues before bringing recommendations back to the council.

Current Advisory Circles

- Leadership Advisory Circle** – Provides leadership between council meetings, liaises with the executive director, and represents the council in discussions with the Minister.
- Internal Engagement Advisory Circle** – Supports the health, effectiveness, and sustainability of council through oversight of governance, membership, policies, and member development.
- External Engagement Advisory Circle** – Advises on community consultation and engagement strategies to inform council planning and decision-making.
- Program, Policy and Process Advisory Circle** – Provides advice on the development, implementation, and improvement of programs, policies, and operational processes.
- Joint Indigenous Arts Advisory Circle** – Guides the development of Indigenous arts initiatives, including the Indigenous Arts Strategy and Indigenous-specific funding opportunities, and supported by external community members.

Grant Assessment

Peer Review

Peer assessment of grant applications is the primary means of review and is used to uphold the *Arts Council Act* purpose of providing an open, accountable, and neutrally administered process. The peer assessment process provides transparency and is fundamental to the work of the BC Arts Council.

For each relevant program, BCAC brings together panels of three to five artists and arts and culture practitioners to review applications. Panels determine or recommend funding based on how effectively applicants addressed the program criteria outlined in the guidelines.

Assessors are identified with consideration given to the diversity of artistic and cultural practice (representation of different artistic disciplines, approaches and fields of practice); a range of professional specialization (representation of different roles within the arts, such as creators, interpreters, administrators, directors, independent artists); geographic and regional representation; Indigenous perspectives; cultural perspectives; and stage of career. The goal is to have a panel of assessors who, through their diversity of experience and background, can evaluate the range of applications for each program intake.

BCAC also uses the opportunity of convening panels to conduct consultations with assessors to inform policy and program development. Discussions cover the structure, intent, and outcomes of individual programs; application and assessment processes; the council's strategic plan; and ongoing and emerging issues in the sector. These consultations are essential to facilitate continuous improvement, address changing needs, research new initiatives, and maintain a high degree of responsiveness to important trends as they emerge.

Peer assessors are remunerated for their time, expertise, and labour.

We are grateful to those who served as assessors for our programs and for the programs offered through partnership with BC Live Performance Network, Creative BC, and the First Peoples' Cultural Council.

A full list of BC Arts Council panel members 2025/26 is available on the website: www.bcartscouncil.ca.

201
Assessors

10
Program
Advisors

56
Assessment Meetings

Call for Nominations

BCAC is always looking for individuals with discipline and sector knowledge, open-mindedness, generosity of spirit, and the ability to work collaboratively through the assessment process.

Serving on a peer assessment panel provides a unique learning experience, valuable insight into how the funding process operates, and a broader understanding of the sector. By providing this support, assessors are participating in cultural policy in action. Assessors are remunerated for their services. Through our online grant management system, individuals can register their interest in becoming an assessor.

Awards Listing 2025/26

For a complete list of award recipients and grant amounts please refer to our website: www.bcartscouncil.ca.



Kimberly Ronning portrait with her ceramic collection. Photo by Sydney Pascal at Emily Carr University, VANCOUVER

Special Thanks

The work of the council and this report would not be possible without the support of the dedicated staff who worked within the BC Arts Council Secretariat Branch of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport during the timeline of this annual report.

BC Arts Council Secretariat Staff

CLAYTON BARANIUK

Program Advisor and Accessibility Coordinator

MICHELLE BENJAMIN

Program Advisor

ALLISON BOTTOMLEY

Executive Director

NADINE CAREW

Senior Policy Analyst

NICOLA DUNNE

Program Advisor and Accessibility Coordinator

DARB ERICKSON

Senior Director, BC Arts Council Programs

BREANNA FABBRO

Program Advisor

TASHA FARIVAR

Grant Program Administrator

SHERYL JONES

Senior Policy Analyst

ERIN MACKLEM

Program Advisor and Outreach Coordinator

JENNIFER NICHOLS

A/Senior Director, BC Arts Council Secretariat & Strategic Engagement (to November 2025)

SARAH OMWARE

Senior Director, Strategic Policy and Engagement

KRISTA PATTERSON

Program Advisor

ANISSA PAULSEN

Program Advisor

KAITLYN REINING

Program Advisor

SARVENAZ RIDLEY

Team Lead, Finance and Administration

JUSTINE SHORE

Program Advisor

SABRINA CANHOS MONTMORENCY SILVA

Finance and Contracts Administrator

PANEET SINGH

Program Advisor

INGMARIE THUNANDER

Manager, BC Arts Council Operations

MARINA VAN WITTENBERGHE

Secretariat Coordinator

SHELAGH VAUX

Grant Program Administrator

Thank you to staff both past and present for contributing to a thriving arts and culture sector in B.C.

A = Acting



Production Still; The Mosquitos by Marya Folinsbee; Material Theatre; Photographer Makala Burjaw; The Capitol Theatre, NELSON



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