



City of Richmond

Arts and Culture Operating Grant Program Guidelines



Operating Assistance Guidelines

As described in Council Policy 3712, the purpose of the City Grant Program is to support the capacity of eligible applicants to deliver a range of programs, services and events that enrich the lives and well-being of Richmond residents, in alignment with the City's strategic priorities.

The City of Richmond allocates funding through the Arts and Culture Grants Program to Richmond-based non-profit arts and cultural organizations that provide arts programming and activities for the benefit of Richmond residents.

This support acknowledges that the work of these organizations contributes to Richmond's quality of life, identity and economy and is extended to recipients who demonstrate vision, accountability and spirit of community service in their operations.

These guidelines incorporate recognized best practices and are designed to ensure accountability for use of public funds; **please read through this document carefully before you make an application.**

Do NOT apply for an Operating Assistance Grant unless you have a written invitation to do so from City staff listed below.

If this is your first time making an application to the City of Richmond, or if you require further assistance, we encourage you to speak with or meet with the listed staff member to ensure that your proposal is eligible and to ask questions so that we may assist you in preparing your application.

Camyar Chaichian, Program Manager, Community Cultural Development
604-247-8326, Camyar.Chaichian@richmond.ca

This information and other information on our programs and services are available on the City website at www.richmond.ca/CityGrants

Operating Assistance Program: Objectives and Description

The Richmond Arts and Culture Grants program has two streams: Operating Assistance and Project Assistance. Both are intended to support Richmond-based non-profit arts organizations to present a range of artistic activity including literary, visual, media, dance, theatre, music, multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, and community-based arts, reflecting different cultural traditions as well as contemporary art forms and practices.

Organizations may apply for only one stream within the City Grant Program: Arts and Culture; Child Care; Environmental Enhancement and Food Security; Health, Social and Safety; or Parks, Recreation and Community Events. The Arts and Culture Grants Program provides grants to 1) support organizational capacity-building through Operating Assistance and 2) to fund one-time, time-limited initiatives and annual arts events through Project Assistance.

Operating Assistance grants are provided to support the ongoing programming and operating activities of eligible organizations. These grants are reviewed on a yearly basis and are not to be viewed by applicants as an ongoing source of funding as they are not guaranteed renewal of funding and must reapply each year. At the end of each yearly grant cycle, grantees will meet with City staff for a review. After this meeting, a written invitation to re-apply will be forwarded based on the outcome of the meeting. An invitation to reapply may not be offered. In such cases, the organization could be eligible for a Project Assistance grant.

Applicants who already receive a form of operating support from the City — including but not limited to core funding, annual operating grants, ongoing service agreements or staffing supports — are not eligible to apply for

funding through the Operating Assistance program and may only apply for the Project Assistance program. These organizations are eligible for Project Assistance funding if their project meets that program's eligibility requirements and represents a new initiative and/or a program that is not otherwise supported by existing City funding.

Operating Assistance grants are awarded up to a maximum of 30% of the annual operating budget, to a **maximum request of \$12,500, for 2027**.

Application Forms

New applicants are strongly encouraged to read through the Guidelines first to obtain a general understanding of the program and then contact staff at Arts, Culture and Heritage Services to discuss your proposal and confirm your eligibility. Operating Assistance forms from applicants that have not received a written invitation from staff will be considered ineligible.

- The application form is available online at www.richmond.ca/CityGrants
- Applications must be received on or before the submission deadline. Late applications will not be accepted.
- Answer all the questions on the form concisely and include all requested supporting materials.

Operating Assistance Eligibility Criteria

- Operating Assistance is for established organizations that have an ongoing presence in Richmond and a track record of quality public programs and services. The organization provides arts programming and services that are open to the public. In the case of umbrella organizations, they must further the interests of artists, creators, and arts organizations.
- The organization must have a mission and mandate (registered with the Province of British Columbia Nonprofit registry and/or as a charitable organization with the Government of Canada) that clearly describes arts practice and/or cultural expression through arts practice as the **primary purpose** of the organization. For example, a filmmaking collective could be eligible for this funding; a social services organization presenting a film night could not.
- Applicants must be based in and/or active in Richmond, registered as a non-profit society in good standing with the Province of BC, and/or charitable status with the Government of Canada.
- Applicants must have been established legally and in operation for at least twelve (12) months prior to the application deadline and have recently received at least one Arts and Culture Project Assistance Grant and successfully completed the project(s).
- Presented work must be primarily with and/or by local artists/performers/artisans (amateur and/or professional); activities may include some artists who are not Richmond residents. All principal professional artists should be compensated for their participation commensurate with industry standards. For more information about these standards, please refer to the following organizations:
 - American Federation of Musicians: www.afm.org
 - Canadian Actors Equity Association: www.caea.com
 - Canadian League of Composers: www.clc-lcc.ca
 - Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists: www.cadadance.org
 - Professional Writers Association of Canada: www.pwac.ca
 - Canadian Artists' Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens/CARFAC: www.carfac.ca

- Applicants should have stable and qualified administration and artistic leadership, directed by a board of recognized arts/culture professionals and/or experienced volunteers.
- Applicants must operate year-round in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Applicants must have other cash revenue sources for their programs that may include self-generated revenue (e.g., ticket sales, concession and memberships), funding from other levels of government (provincial, federal) and/or private sector support (e.g., fundraising, foundations, sponsorship, cash and in-kind donations).
- Applicants must provide internally prepared financial statements endorsed by two signing officers (with balance sheet and income statement, at minimum), OR independently prepared financial statements (e.g., review engagement or audit endorsed by two signing officers). Financial statements as provided should represent the most recently completed fiscal year.

Use of Funds

- Operating Assistance grants are provided to support the annual programming expenses and annual operating costs of the Society.
- Organizations that forecast a deficit budget must describe a clear plan to eliminate the deficit within two years of the grant application year.
- Organizations are generally encouraged to maintain an operating surplus equal to 3 to 6 months of expenses as a contingency reserve. Surpluses beyond this level may reduce the organization's demonstrated need for funding unless the board has formally allocated those funds to a restricted reserve or other approved purpose.

Ineligible Organizations

- Organizations which do not meet eligibility criteria and requirements
- Organizations that provide a primarily internal member benefit as opposed to those that provide a broader public or community benefit through accessible arts and cultural programming.
- Other City of Richmond departments or branches
- Organizations already receiving City support that is the equivalent of operating funds.
- Social Service, Faith-based, Political or Sports organizations
- Cultural or Heritage organizations that do not have arts practice as their primary/core service

Ineligible Activities

- Core training, in-class or curriculum-based training
- Bursaries or scholarships
- Contests or competitions
- Fundraisers
- Deficit reduction
- Activity outside of Richmond
- Capital projects
- Activity that is not in service of artistic or cultural production
- Start-up costs
- Delivery of services and resources by service organizations
- Arts activities delivered by Cultural and/or heritage organizations that do not have arts service delivery as their primary mandate.
- Political activities including, but not limited to:
 - Promoting or serving a political party or organization

- Lobbying of a political party, or for a political cause
- Programs and services delivered in partnership with political parties and organizations. For clarity, this does not exclude programs and services that received funding from other levels of government, including funding from the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada.

Assessment Criteria

There are three key areas of evaluation that are weighted equally: Merit, Organizational Competence and Community Impact. The organization's recent activities (as outlined in the previous year's Grant Use Report, for example) as well as proposed activities, are taken into consideration when assessing an application.

Merit 40%

Target population

Primarily serves Richmond residents.

Project relevance

Aligns with the goals of *ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2026–2031* ([link](#)).

Artistic Excellence

Demonstrates a clear and credible artistic vision supported by consistent programming/strong project and capable artistic leadership.

Implementation Plan

Provides a clear plan that is feasible and sustainable to support the organization's success (e.g. key activities, outputs, benefits and required resources).

Impact 30%

Community benefit

Demonstrates realistic and achievable outcomes and community access to services.

Program/Project distinctiveness

A distinct program/project that offers a unique artistic, community, or cultural contribution that complements existing local offerings.

Equitable Access

Extends program reach for equitable access to programs and services for individuals facing barriers and/or demonstrates how barriers to participation will be minimized.

Marketing and Evaluation

Well-developed marketing plan, program/project, and? internal or external customer experience plan.

Capacity 30%

Organizational capacity

Demonstrates sufficient capacity to deliver the proposed activities, including administrative capacity and governance structure.

Realistic budget

Budget items are relevant to the application and realistic to achieve anticipated impact.

Financial cost sharing

Meaningful effort to secure external funding, with confirmed or likely contributions from one or more sources.

Collaboration and partnerships

Demonstrates involvement with community partners to deliver programs and services.

Assessment and Awarding of Grants

Complete applications are reviewed by an Assessment Committee made up of City staff. Following deliberations and scoring, a report with recommendations is submitted to City Council for their consideration and approval.

Council will make the final grant decisions, at its sole discretion, based on the program goals, criteria, policies, requirements and a review of City staff recommendations.

Council may:

- Approve the staff recommendation regarding funding:
 - in total, with or without conditions (i.e., subject to a mid-year review)
 - in part, with or without conditions
- Ask for more information
- Issue dollars in phases with conditions
- Deny an application

Funds will be dispersed shortly after Council approval. Typically, funds are disbursed within 60 days of approval.

Grants are awarded on an annual basis. Applicants must re-apply each year. Continued funding is not guaranteed.

Conditions of Assistance

Please note that if your organization receives any kind of City of Richmond grant, the following conditions will apply:

- Grant funds must be applied to current expenses, not used to reduce or eliminate accumulated deficits.
- Activities cannot be funded retroactively.
- The Society will make every effort to secure funding from other sources as indicated in its application. It will keep proper books of accounts for all receipts and expenditures relating to its activities and, upon the City's request, make available for inspection by the City or its auditors all records and books of accounts.
- If there are any changes in the organization's activities as presented in this application, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services Division must be notified in writing of such changes immediately. If the grant funds are not used for the organization's activities as described in the application, they are to be repaid to the City in full.
- The City of Richmond requires organizations receiving a grant to appropriately acknowledge the City's support in all their information materials, including publications and programs related to funded activities (e.g., brochures, posters, advertisements, websites, advertisements, signs, etc.). Such recognition must be commensurate with that given to other funding agencies. If the logos of other funders are used in an acknowledgement, the City should be similarly represented. Acknowledgement is provided by using the City of Richmond logo in accordance with prescribed standards. City of Richmond logo files and usage standards will be provided to successful applicants. Failure to acknowledge the City's support may result in the inability of an organization to obtain grant support in future years.
- All grant recipients must submit a Grant Use Report to the City by the end of the funding term and an interim report, where applicable, before applying for a grant in the next funding cycle, in accordance with individual program guidelines. Reports must include a detailed budget breakdown, a description of outcomes achieved, and evidence of alignment with the objectives of the grant program. In addition, recipients must provide reports or related documentation upon request by the City at any point during the funding term.

Confidentiality

All documents submitted by Applicants to the City of Richmond become the property of the City. The City will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of each application and the information contained within except to the extent necessary to communicate information to the Assessment Committee for the purpose of evaluation and analysis, as well as to Council for recommendation report. The City will not release any of this information to the public except as required under the Province of British Columbia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or other legal disclosure process.