2027 CULTURAL OPERATING FUNDING – SPACES INFORMATION GUIDE

Formerly Affordable Spaces

Deadline: Thursday, December 10, 2026, at 11:59 pm

Vancouver is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm, Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and səlilwətaɬ Nations, whose peoples have lived, and continue to live, throughout this region for thousands of years.

The Cultural Operating Funding - Spaces (COF-S) grant replaces the former Affordable Spaces grant and provides funding to support facility operating costs for local non-profit arts and culture space operators that:

- operate Vancouver-based cultural spaces that provide subsidized or affordable space to artists and/or cultural organizations (cultural users) outside of the organization's own programming; and
- currently do not receive other City cultural core support, through Cultural Operating Funding, Cultural Equity and Accessibility Funding, or Cultural Indigenous Funding.

Eligible applicants are Vancouver-based arts and cultural spaces operated by non-profit cultural societies, co-ops, registered charities, xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm (Musqueam Indian Band), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) or Urban Indigenous non-profit organizations.

We recognize the COF-S pilot is a new process and that it may take some adjustment for applicants. The pilot will be evaluated based on experience and feedback, and the process may be refined in future years.

Key Dates:

Applications open in VanApply	Monday, November 2, 2026
Application deadline	Thursday, December 10, 2026
Assessment	January-March 2027
Council approval of grant recommendations	April 2027
Grant payment	April 2027

Grant Amounts:

Grant Requests:

- Up to $40,000 for organizations with annual operating expenses more than $250,000
- Up to $25,000 for organizations with annual operating expenses less than $250,000

Note: In future years, the maximum grant request and award amounts may decrease due to high program demand.

Application Support

Applicants who are Deaf/deaf, Hard of Hearing, or live with a disability and need support to complete their grant applications can access up to $500 towards the costs of assistance from service providers. Please contact program staff if you have any questions or need support with the application process.

Contact Information

Cultural.spaces@vancouver.ca

Website: Cultural Space Grants | City of Vancouver

The City's Arts and Culture department offers other programs, awards and services. Details at: Arts and culture grants | City of Vancouver

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About Cultural Operating Funding – Spaces (COF-S):

Program Goals and Eligible Activities

The goal of COF-S remains in alignment with the Affordable Spaces program:

- Support facility operating costs for arts and culture organizations whose sole or primary purpose is to provide and operate subsidized, affordable, cultural workspace for cultural users, outside of their own organizational programming.
- Funding is focused primarily on arts and culture spaces for creation/production, presentation, and performance, as well as supporting ancillary spaces that contribute to *Culture|Shift* directions, goals and actions, including Reconciliation with the xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm, Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and səlilwətaɬ Nations and Urban Indigenous peoples, cultural equity and accessibility.

Operational or administrative costs associated with space operations are eligible, including:

- Rent, lease, or mortgage costs;
- Property tax, insurance, utilities; e.g. heat, hydro, water/sewer;
- Common area costs and/or strata fees;
- Rent subsidies for cultural users; and/or
- Equipment that improves affordable space provision and access may be considered.

Funding for space operation costs for the current year that exist prior to application deadline may be considered.

Priority will be given to organizations that:

- have operated and provided arts and culture space use/access for at least one year;
- currently provide subsidized working space to cultural users;
- demonstrate financial need; and
- represent equity-denied artists and communities, and/or organizations who serve them.

Making Space for Arts and Culture

Alongside *Culture|Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture*, the detailed ten-year infrastructure plan, *Making Space for Arts and Culture* informs how this grant program recognizes and supports cultural spaces and organizations that align with the plans' guiding principles: Reconciliation, decolonization, cultural equity and accessibility. The plans call for us to be deeply mindful of how arts and culture is conducted upon these lands, to build shared cultural understanding of these histories, and move towards a resilient future.

Cultural spaces are essential to every community. They serve community residents, attract tourists, enhance the business environment, and add to quality of life. Ensuring access to appropriate and affordable facilities in Vancouver's rapidly developing real estate market requires a committed effort and strategic focus. To catalyze this effort, *Making Space for Arts and Culture* provides a framework to support a diverse, thriving cultural space ecology, and directions to support securing affordable, accessible, and safe cultural spaces.

Eligible Applicants

The COF-S program is available to organizations that do not receive other cultural core operating support from the City of Vancouver.

Organizational Status

- Be a non-profit society or a community service co-op legally registered and in good standing with BC Registries Services, or a registered charity with the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA). **Please confirm standing through BC Online prior to submitting application.**

Mission & Mandate

- Affordable cultural space provision is rooted in the organization's mission and/or long-term goals.
- Provide equitable access to a diverse public in practice and policy with Equity and Accessibility Planning Initiatives to address physical, cognitive, financial, linguistic, cultural, social, and geographic barriers to participation for audiences and key contributors.
    - See glossary for definition of Equity and Accessibility Planning Initiatives.

Funding History

- Be in good standing with the City of Vancouver; i.e, does not have any outstanding invoices or reporting with any City departments.
    - If your organization has defaulted on a previous grant, please include an explanation of that default and resolution of any outstanding issues.

Financials

- Have Board-signed independently-prepared Financial Statements in the form of audited statements, a review engagement or compilation engagement.

Facilities:

- Have infrastructure located within Vancouver City Limits or, in the case of xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm, Sḵwx̱wú7mesh, and səlilwətaɬ Nations, on their traditional lands.

- Have a Lease Agreement demonstrating that the facility is secured for a minimum of 18 months from the time of application.
    - It is recommended that the facility is secured with long-term tenancy of 5 + years.
    - Priority will go towards supporting long-term space for the cultural sector.
    - Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- If your space is used for multiple functions and/or disciplines; e.g., cultural centre, etc, demonstrate that 50% or greater use of the space is dedicated for arts and culture purposes.

Ineligible Organizations and Activity

- Organizations that do not have arts and cultural mandates
- Residential housing, and/or home-based businesses.
- Strategic planning, capital campaigns, fundraising, or marketing activities.
- Cultural programming, artistic research, and/or creation.
- Operations or administrative items that are NOT related to facility operations, such as: staffing costs, including training, tools, equipment, including computer software/equipment, food and beverage. Equipment may be considered if demonstrated that it supports affordable space provision and access.
- Organizations with three (3) or more open Cultural Spaces grants for incomplete projects or reporting. Confirm open grants in your VanApply account.

Information on previous grant awards and recipients is located at:
https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/cultural-spaces-grant-program.aspx

Assessment Criteria

The questions for each section of the application are prompts to consider your priorities, challenges, and opportunities, and tell us about your current and upcoming needs and plans for your space(s). The criteria following each set of questions inform how answers will be assessed, with each section given a different weight, indicated by percentage of overall application.

Applicants are encouraged to provide sufficient details and context, along with enough information to address criteria. Applications will be evaluated using these criteria.

Prioritizing Equity-denied Artists and Organizations
In order to balance funding investments to support organizations, projects and artists that reflect the diversity of Vancouver and the unceded ancestral lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm, Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and səlilwətaɬ Nations, *Culture|Shift* aims to increase investment to equity-denied artists and organizations who have been most impacted by structural racism and

discrimination. Priority will be given to organizations representing equity-denied artists and communities, and/or organizations who serve them. See the glossary for definitions.

VISION & PUBLIC BENEFIT 30%

Vision: cultural facility meets a current community need. Affordable space provision is rooted in your organization's mission and/or long-term goals or is part of the organization's purpose. Priority will be given to organizations who have operated and provided arts and culture space use/access for at least one year, outside of their own programming.

Public Benefit: contributes to Vancouver's cultural ecology and reflects the COF-S Grant program priorities built upon *Culture|Shift* and *Making Space for Arts and Culture* directions. Application aligns with the COF-S goals of supporting facility operating costs for space operators who provide subsidized affordable cultural space for cultural users outside of applicant's own programming use.

Partnerships and Collaborations: demonstrates relationship-building and collaborative development, funding and delivery over the long-term. Partnerships are mutually beneficial and result in a broader positive impact for the organization and community.

FINANCIAL NEED 25%

The proposal must demonstrate financial need. Organization demonstrates that funding is required to maintain affordability of space for cultural users. Facility operating budgets clearly show that COF-S funding goes directly to supporting affordability of space for cultural users.

RECONCILIATION & EQUITY 25%

Reconciliation & Decolonization: supports Reconciliation with xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm, Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and səlilwətaɬ Nations and Urban Indigenous communities, and actively pursues strategies to decolonize cultural space. This may be demonstrated through:

- Reconciliation and Decolonization initiatives, including but not limited to improved visibility of the local Nations;
- Meaningful participation and access to space for Indigenous peoples; and
- Guidelines and processes to ensure cultural safety.

Examples include space operating practices and policies, facility design, rental rates, facility-related procurement and hiring opportunities and processes.

Equity: demonstrates, reflects and/or integrates principles of equity, accessibility, diversity and inclusion, including an understanding of the factors and elements required to make space more inclusive and accessible to Vancouver's diverse population.

ORGANIZATIONAL & FINANCIAL READINESS 20%

Capacity & Leadership: The organization demonstrates capacity to lead and effectively operate and manage cultural space, including sufficient human resources.

Fiscal Responsibility: The organization demonstrates fiscal responsibility with respect to planning and/or operating budget and balances.

- **Funding**: The organization has a realistic funding plan and demonstrates actions to seek a diverse range of financial support. Organizations are encouraged to explore alternate sources of revenue/ funding, and/or a reduction of expenses, etc., to ensure ongoing affordable access to cultural users. Provide facility-specific operating budgets for each facility requiring support, including the previous year's actuals, current budget, and next year's projected budget.

Security of Tenure: The organization has cultural space secured for a minimum of 18 months tenancy from time of application.

Application Attachment Checklist

Required: Please include the following:

- ☐ Facility-specific operating and expense budget form: single or multiple facilities
- ☐ Financial statements for most recent fiscal year **Note: if most recent completed fiscal year statements are unsigned or not available, please include draft statements along with the most recent completed and signed statements.**
- ☐ Lease agreement
- ☐ Rental rate sheet, if applicable
- ☐ Staff list
- ☐ Board of directors list
- ☐ Recent BC registry services annual report, confirming good standing

Review Process

1. **Application Review**
   Eligible applications are reviewed by a committee. Committees may include peer reviewers such as other non-profit space providers or space professionals, and staff.
2. **City Council Approval**
   Most committee grant recommendations require City Council approval and will be presented in a public report to Council.
3. **Notification**
   For grants requiring Council approval, each applicant will receive a notice of the City Council meeting at which the grants will be considered. Following the City Council

meeting, all applicants will be notified of City Council's decision. The report will be available on the City's website on the Council Meetings page.

When the recommendations are approved by Council, applicants will receive a confirmation notification by email. Please retain this notification as your document of record for your auditor, if required.

Terms and Conditions

Grant Agreement
If the applicant organization receives a grant, it must adhere to legal terms and conditions that will form a binding Agreement between the Recipient and the City of Vancouver for the use of funds. The full Agreement is set out in the online submission and should be reviewed and authorized by a representative of the organization who has the full right, power, and authority to enter into the Agreement and complete the work. If you would like a copy of the full agreement in advance of completing the application, please contact staff.

Grant Acknowledgement
Grant recipients will acknowledge the City's assistance and the Grant in all public communications or materials. Grant recipients can contact Anthony Hoang at **anthony.hoang@vancouver.ca** to receive the recognition marks electronically.

Respectful Workplace and Communications
The City is committed to a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace. City policies define expectations for respectful, appropriate workplace behaviour and processes for reporting and resolving incidents of bullying and harassment, including discrimination. Policies comply with the B.C. Human Rights Code, WorkSafe BC regulations, and the Criminal Code of Canada.

The City of Vancouver policies include:

- Respect in the Workplace Policy: ADMIN050.pdf (vancouver.ca)
- Preventing Violence in the Workplace Policy: SUBJECT: (vancouver.ca)
- Code of Conduct: https://policy.vancouver.ca/AE02801.pdf

Eligibility for this program, and conditions of the Grant Agreement, requires recipients to provide a healthy/respectful workplace environment demonstrated through policies and practices. If a complaint of unsafe working conditions is received by Arts & Culture, staff will ask that the complaint be directed to the organization's leadership and be put through their processes according to their policies and procedures.

Eligibility for this program, and conditions of the Grant Agreement, also requires recipients to not, in interactions with or in any communications with and about City officials (Mayor and Council) and City staff, make statements or engage in conduct which could be characterized as threatening, intimidating, harassing, or discriminatory. This does not

restrict a recipient or their staff from exercising their freedom of expression as protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This includes:

- promoting political or social participation and engagement
- advocacy of policy change
- criticism of City policies and decisions
- or anything else which is properly considered “political speech”

In the event that the City receives a complaint about such communications or conduct, City staff may make a recommendation to City Council that a recipient be ineligible for a grant, or that a grant already provided must be returned by the recipient. In that event, City staff will engage with the applicant or recipient to gather more information and will ensure that the applicant or recipient has an opportunity to address Council about any recommendation made by City staff, before Council makes a decision as to whether to deny a grant or require a grant to be repaid.

Freedom of Information

Information submitted when applying to City of Vancouver cultural grant programs is subject to the access and privacy provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (British Columbia)*.