City of Vancouver - Cultural Services

COVID-19 FAQ and Resources

Current as of: April 3, 2020

Cultural Services would like to reaffirm our commitment to supporting arts and culture in our city during this time of crisis. Our priority continues to be our relationships with artists and organizations in our community. This page has been developed to respond to questions, as we continue to learn more about the impacts of COVID-19 on the cultural sector. It will be updated regularly as new information is confirmed.

The City of Vancouver aims to be as flexible as possible with the use of civic cultural grants; and we understand that there already are and will continue to be cancellations and/or postponements of activities. Stay up-to-date on COVID-19 impacts on Vancouver events, facilities, and services here: vancouver.ca/covid19

For the latest information about COVID-19, please refer to the following sites:

- City of Vancouver COVID-19 Information
- BC COVID-19 Provincial Support and Information
- BC Centre for Disease Control
- Healthlink BC
- Province of BC News Releases
- BC Small Business Supports
- Government of Canada’s COVID-19 Economic Response Plan

We are committed to keeping you informed. The most up-to-date information will be posted on this page and announced on our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts.

FAQs

STAFF & OPERATIONS

Will Cultural Services staff be available for questions during this time?

To comply with physical distancing measures, most staff are working remotely but will be available during regular business hours. Cultural Services staff are contributing to the City’s essential service delivery — including cultural grant programs currently being adjudicated and critical response funds. Many City staff have already been redeployed to support civic emergency services, however, core staff are still in place to support you during this time. If you have COVID-19 related questions, please contact: culture@vancouver.ca
CULTURE|SHIFT

Culture|Shift, the City’s new 10-year cultural plan, was recently approved. Given the impacts of COVID-19, how is the plan moving forward?

Now is a time where arts and culture are needed more than ever. Key directions from Culture|Shift, including reconciliation, decolonization, equity, and accessibility, continue to guide our work. We recognize that deep and historic inequities can be magnified in times of crisis, and we are working to provide resources that support both immediate responses and community resilience and recovery in the longer term.

GRANTING & AWARDS

i. What is confirmed and going forward?
   ● Operating, Annual Assistance, and Project Grants

ii. What is scheduled to be approved?
   ● Community Arts Grants
   ● Cultural Infrastructure Grants

iii. What is being postponed or placed on hiatus?
   ● Cultural Learning and Sharing Grant program
   ● Vancouver Book Award

Is my Operating or Annual Assistance grant at risk if events or activities are cancelled or postponed?

No. Core funding will not be impacted and can allow for additional uses to cover eligible costs incurred, and reasonable costs of cancellations, as a result of COVID-related impacts. Given the rapidly-changing nature of the pandemic, we understand that you may be unable to contact the office prior to making programming or operational changes, but please keep us informed when you can.

Is the Community Arts grant program still moving forward?

Yes. Staff have contacted applicants that submitted to the Wednesday, March 4, 2020 deadline to learn about possible changes to their plans and are expediting the adjudication process as much as possible. The report is scheduled to go to City Council for approval in the near future, but may be subject to change as City Council adjusts the schedule in light of changing circumstances.
I’ve just been awarded a 2020 Project grant for events or activities that should have been taking place between now and June 30, 2020. What should I do?

You have a few options:

- Cancel the event and decline the grant if no costs have been incurred and there is no possibility to postpone the event to another time or modify the event. If you make this hard decision, please be assured that these funds will contribute to addressing critical needs arising from the pandemic. You have the option to make another application for 2021 funding.
- Postpone the event or activities to a date later in the year, into the fall season or into calendar 2021
- Change the event – you can modify the event or apply the funds to another project that still fulfills the intent of the initial project and mission of the organization.

We will try to be as flexible as possible with the use of the grant that has just been allocated. Please call your Program staff lead to discuss which course of action makes sense for you.

**My 2020 Project grant covers a timeframe after June 30, 2020. Do the same options apply to me?**

Yes.

**I may need to postpone the Project grant-funded event until after your next scheduled grant application deadline. What should I do?**

Under normal circumstances all previously funded projects must be complete prior to the next deadline for Project grant funding. If you can’t complete the project prior to the deadline we will consider the following options:

- If the previously funded event is confirmed, we can consider an application for a different project for 2021 funding.
- If the event is unconfirmed, we may still consider an application for a separate project. If funding for a separate project for 2021 is approved, it may be made conditional upon confirmation of the event going forward in 2021 before funding can be released.

**I’ve received funding, but what do I need to do if my plans change?**

We will aim to help you find creative and flexible approaches to uphold the original intention of your funded project event if that means adapting timelines and/or scope or doing work in community by virtual means. Please contact your Program staff lead to discuss significant changes, such as cancellations, adjustments in scope, or date changes beyond the original project end date.

**Do I need to contact you with minor changes to my plans?**

No. Your final report can capture minor adjustments to your plans. There is no need to contact staff at Cultural Services.
Is the new Cultural Learning and Sharing Grant Program moving forward?

No. The Cultural Learning and Sharing Grant Program has been suspended until further notice. This will allow staff to focus on emerging COVID-19 related impacts on artists and groups in the cultural sector.

Are Cultural Services award programs—like the City of Vancouver Book Award—going ahead this year?

Staff are currently postponing the call for the 2020 City of Vancouver Book Award. It will be re-evaluated on June 30, 2020 based on current health directives from the Provincial health officer. The hold remains on the venue for an announcement date on October 17, 2020, should conditions allow a celebration to be held.

COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDING

When can we expect an update on the City’s plans to consider Covid-19 relief funding for the cultural sector?

In collaboration with community and funding partners, Cultural Services staff is working on a proposal for COVID-19 relief funding from the existing Cultural Grants funding envelope to be presented to Council for consideration and decision.

CIVIC THEATRES, VENUES, AND CULTURAL SPACES

When will the Vancouver Civic Theatres (VCT) venues re-open?

The Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Orpheum, Vancouver Playhouse, and Annex, are closed until further notice. For more detailed questions please contact: Natalie Lue, Director, Vancouver Civic Theatres at natalie.lue@vancouver.ca.

What should I do with my Theatre Rental Grant (TRG) that was allocated to my event originally-scheduled for the Spring 2020 Season (Jan 1-Aug 31)?

- If you are able to reschedule your eligible event within the current Spring 2020 Season, your grant can remain with your rescheduled activity.
- If you would like to cancel your event, but have had previous activity in the Spring 2020 Season that was not allocated, your Theatre Rental Grant may be transferred to the past use, as long as it took place at a VCT venue.
- If you would like to cancel your Theatre Rental Grant for Spring 2020 use, the approved TRG can also be returned to a general, unallocated Theatre Rental Grants pool to be reallocated to other eligible cultural organizations providing immediate COVID-19 response.
Will my application for Theatre Rental Grants for my Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 events still be reviewed?

Yes. Staff are currently reviewing grant applications that were submitted for the March 25, 2020 deadline.

What provisions are there for cultural tenants in City-owned spaces?

Current facility contracts remain in place and rent and common area costs remain payable for all tenants in City spaces. If you have any questions about your lease, please contact the Property Negotiator assigned to your contract and cc: cultural.spaces@vancouver.ca to ensure Cultural Services is also aware of any issues or concerns. Tenants are also encouraged to seek assistance through the Government of Canada’s Economic Support Plan and emergency credit lines through Business Development Bank of Canada (more information is available here).

Please note that Cultural Services will also be reaching out directly to arts and culture tenants in City-owned spaces over the next week. In the meantime, please send any concerns, questions or key space contact updates to cultural.spaces@vancouver.ca.

What is the status of Cultural Spaces Grants?

Staff are currently reviewing submitted Cultural Infrastructure Grants and Small Grants for Cultural Spaces and preparing the Affordable Cultural Spaces grant stream in light of COVID-19 impacts. More details will be shared in the coming weeks.

PUBLIC ART

What is the current status of Public Art commissions?

Private sector and civic commissions are proceeding with specific project delivery schedule adjustments to ensure safety and conformance to current health safety standards. The Public Art Committee will meet as soon as City staff establish safe protocols for convening advisory committees.

What is the status of Public Art Grants?

Applications are being reviewed by an external panel for adjudication in late April. Staff will work with applicants to determine the feasibility of proposals and adjust timelines and other details to respond to changing conditions.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS
How can I share the impacts of COVID-19 on my organization, business, and arts practice? Will these lead to any financial support?

We are capturing impacts of lost revenue and expenses for Vancouver-based artists, organizations, and businesses through the following reporting mechanisms. This information will inform our approach to program delivery and alignment with current and potential funding partners. Please review and complete the surveys below that are relevant to your work.

COVID-19 IMPACTS SURVEYS

- **GVPTA - COVID-19 Impact Survey** - For all arts disciplines, artists, arts workers, cultural organizations, and museums across B.C. The Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance (GVPTA) is collecting data to better understand the impact COVID-19 has had on arts and culture organizations across the province. Data to be shared with funders and arts service organizations for regional, provincial, and national reporting.

- **Creative BC - COVID Impacts Assessment Survey** - Data collection to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on creative industry business activity, events and projects across the province. Key sectors include: book & magazine publishing, interactive + digital media, film and television, and music.

- **BC Chamber of Commerce and Vancouver Economic Commission - COVID-19 Economic Impact Survey** - The BC Chamber of Commerce and Vancouver Economic Commission are working to assess the impact of COVID-19 on Vancouver’s economy and local businesses; and to support all levels of government on initiatives to identify and implement what Vancouver needs to weather and swiftly recover from market shocks related to COVID-19.

- **I Lost My Gig / CARFAC - COVID-19 Impact Survey for Arts, Culture, and Tourism Workers** - National survey of economic impacts on arts, culture, tourism, heritage, and creative industries workers in Canada

- **Indigenous Arts & Culture Impacts Survey** - Alberta-based Indigenous consultancy Naheyawin is compiling national data to help policymakers make informed decisions about how to support Indigenous artists and cultural practitioners in the wake of COVID-19.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE & OTHER RESOURCES

Financial Assistance:

- **Canada Council Announces $60 Million in Advance Funding to Help Stabilize Arts** - Will issue advances enabling core funded organizations to: meet their immediate commitments, help ensure cash flow and address outstanding payments to the artists and cultural workers they employ.

- **Province of BC Announces $3 Million Arts and Culture Resilience Supplement** - Fund to be administered by BC Arts Council. Operating and eligible project clients will
receive a supplement of up to $15,000 in early April. BC Arts Council will provide operating clients a 50% advance on 2020-21 funding to help with cash flow.

- **Unison Benevolent Fund** - Fund provides $1000 in emergency support to musicians and music industry employees for groceries, housing costs, and medical expenses
- **Vancouver Foundation - Community Response Fund** - Fund will provide flexible operating grants to charities most immediately impacted by COVID-19
- **Canada Emergency Response Benefit** - The Government of Canada has introduced the CERB—a taxable benefit that provides $2,000/month for up to 4 months for workers who lose their income as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

**Other Resources**

- **City of Vancouver - COVID-19 Resources** - Latest updates from the City of Vancouver in response to COVID-19. For more information visit: vancouver.ca/covid19
- **Vancouver Economic Commission - COVID-19 Resources** - Information on VEC’s work to support all levels of government on initiatives to identify and implement Vancouver needs in response to COVID-19.
- **Government of BC’s COVID-19 Action Plan** - Provincial resources, support & information
- **Government of Canada’s COVID-19 Economic Response Plan** - Information on the Federal Government’s $27 Billion response plan to provide support to individuals and businesses affected by COVID-19
- **BC Arts Council - COVID-19 FAQ** - Information for Arts and Culture Grant Recipients & Applicants to support sustainability of arts and culture organizations; provide access to funding as quickly as possible; ensure that funded projects are not penalized; and to support the continuation of projects and activities.
- **Alliance for Arts and Culture - COVID Resource Page** - Aggregate resources for artist and organization funding, government response and relief, mental health, data collection, employment, and more
- **Nonprofit Lifecycles Institute - Emergency Consulting Initiative** - The Lifecycle Capacity Consultants members of the Institute have donated their skills in nonprofit consulting to help organizations during this difficult time. If you are interested in having a one on one conversation with a Lifecycle Capacity Consultant to discuss next steps during this period of time, you can make a request for assistance. This is open to organizations in North America.
- **Here’s where Canadian artists and freelancers can find help during COVID-19 shutdowns** - CBC Arts - Regularly updated list of resources, funding, and other supports for artists and freelance workers in the cultural sector