

2025 CULTURAL LEARNING AND SHARING (CLS) GRANT PROGRAM INFORMATION GUIDE

Program Description and Purpose

This capacity-building program provides up to \$20,000 to non-profit arts and cultural organizations to access or deliver learning opportunities that will build and strengthen skills, knowledge, relationships and experience in order to enhance organizational, sectoral, or individual practices. The program is open to a wide array of learning methods and is intended to support the arts and culture sector in ways that build knowledge and resources as well as strengthen communities of practice, with a focus on underrepresented artists & cultural workers.

CLS supports equity-deserving arts and cultural leaders and artists and non-equity led or mandated arts and culture organizations' leaders, artists and staff in their pathways to becoming more equitable.

Individual artists and cultural leaders may apply via a sponsoring non-profit arts and cultural organization.

2025 Key Dates

Process Milestones	Key Dates
Applications open in VanApply	January 22, 2025
Applications due	March 19, 2025, 11:59pm
Council approval of recommendation	Early June 2025
Project start dates	July 2025 and after

How To Apply

- Discuss your proposal with a staff member
- Once your proposal has been discussed and considered eligible, you will receive an access code to submit an application through the grant application portal, [VanApply](#).

Program Contact Information

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Application Support

Application Assistance Funds: Deaf/deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Applicants with Disabilities

Applicants who are Deaf/deaf, Hard of Hearing, or live with a disability and need support to complete their grant applications can apply for up to \$500 towards the costs of assistance from service providers.

The City's Arts, Culture & Tourism department offers many other programs, awards and services, which you can learn about at: <http://vancouver.ca/people-programs/arts-and-culture-grants.aspx>

Background and Context

Culture|Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture. Culture Plan 2019 - 2029

This program supports the following key actions of [Culture|Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture](#)

- Increase knowledge, and share knowledge and resources across the cultural sector
- Increase leadership opportunities for Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and Urban Indigenous artists, and cultural leaders and artists from priority equity-deserving* communities
- Support the development and facilitation of organizational learning opportunities to advance equity and accessibility
- Support Indigenous-led development of cultural protocols, resources, and training to support non-Indigenous cultural organizations to build collaboration with Indigenous artists and organizations

*Priority equity-deserving artists and cultural leaders are those who identify as:

- Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, Urban Indigenous
- Black or of African descent
- People of Colour
- Deaf/deaf, Hard of Hearing
- Living with a disability/disabled people
- LGBTQ2+ and gender diverse

Program Guiding Principles

Based on community input throughout the consultation process of *Culture|Shift* and feedback from individuals and organizations surveyed about their capacity needs, the program is guided by the following principles:

- Centre voices from non-mainstream perspectives
- Support peer to peer learning
- Invest in opportunities that are timely and urgent
- Draw from the depth of local knowledge
- Encourage broad-rippling sectoral impact
- Support practical and immersive learning experiences
- Support learning that is arts and culture-centered
- Support self-determined opportunities
- Facilitate network or cohort learning

Examples of Recently-Funded Projects

- A land-based Indigenous placenames and local languages toolkit and an economic redress process and cultural consultation exchange with a local First Nation
- A Black-led music industry symposium which focuses on strategies to combat systemic discrimination and racism in Canada's live music business
- A mentorship program for emerging Latin/e/x film programmers
- Two supportive succession processes for founders of equity-mandated organizations that pave the way for new leaders from equity-denied communities
- A mentorship for emerging BIPOC and Hard of Hearing artists and curators and an engagement process for arts organizations to deepen engagement and inclusion with Deaf/deaf & Hard of Hearing communities.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible Applicants

To apply to this program, the applicant must:

- Be a non-profit society, a community service co-op legally registered and in good standing with BC Registries and Services, a First Nations Band Council on whose unceded traditional homelands Vancouver sits, or a registered charity with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

OR

Groups and individuals from equity-deserving communities that are not incorporated as registered non-profits, co-ops, or charities may submit an application via a sponsor organization that is a registered non-profit society, co-op, charity or First Nations Band Council.

- First-time applicants must provide documentation of non-profit, registered or charitable status (e.g., Certificate of Incorporation)
- Have an active presence in and deliver programs and services within Vancouver.
- Be working with artists and creative collaborators with the relevant lived experience, permission, knowledge, skills, and expertise to lead and contribute to the work.
- Compensate artists, cultural practitioners, and project contributors at standard industry rates.¹
- Provide respectful and safe working conditions for artists, staff, volunteers and contractors.
- Have accessibility and inclusion policies and practices in place.

¹ For more information on industry payment standards, please refer to the following organizations: Canadian Federation of Musicians: cfmusicians.afm.org; Canadian Actors Equity Association: caea.com; Canadian League of Composers: composition.org; Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists: cadawest.org; Canadian Artists Representation/Le front des artistes canadiens/CARFAC: carfac.ca

- Provide financial statements signed by the Board for the most recently-completed fiscal year, including a Balance Sheet and Income/Expense Statement.
- Have a governance model that is supportive of the mission, a healthy and inclusive workplace, and the staff and people served.
- Comply with all applicable laws, governing acts, regulations, bylaws and guidelines, including obtaining any necessary licenses, permits or approvals required for the project.
- Have completed all previous projects funded through Cultural Learning and Sharing and can provide a Final Report OR can provide an interim report if the previous project is not complete by the application deadline. If funding for a new project is approved, release of funds will be conditional upon receipt of an interim report.

Eligible Activity

- Paid mentorships or residencies that provide pathways to permanent leadership positions within the applicant organization or other organizations in the arts and culture sector
- Gatherings, convenings, or conferences for the purpose of sharing critical knowledge and resources for artists², cultural workers and leaders in the arts and culture sector
- Workshops or courses that further the artistic practice of an individual artist or group of artists, or develop skills for cultural workers
- Organizational planning that strengthens the health of an equity-mandated or led organization or if non-equity mandated or led, strengthens equity, accessibility, or healthy workplace practices
- Other self-determined learning opportunities in line with program purpose

Ineligible Organizations and Activity

- Organizations that do not have an arts and/or cultural mandate
- Projects that do not meet the grant program goals and eligibility criteria
- Projects that do not involve artists, cultural practitioners, or cultural administrators
- Core artistic training or workshops and training or classes geared to non-artists/general public
- Activity taking place before the application is submitted
- Programs, services, or activity already supported through (or better aligned with) an Arts, Culture & Tourism project or operating grant
- Other City of Vancouver departments and branches

² This grant program defines “artist” as someone that has an active artistic practice, is recognized by their peers, has specialized training in their practice (not necessarily in academic settings), seeks compensation for their work, and has a history of public presentation or production.

Application Questions & Criteria

Questions

Project Description: what is the learning opportunity, who developed it, what gap is it meeting, who is leading/delivering it, who is participating, how will it benefit the organization or individual(s) or sector? If this is a sponsored application, this should be in the artist/cultural worker(s)' own words.

Attach bios of project leadership/key participants, max 200 words each.

Alignment with *Culture|Shift* actions and guiding principles: what priority groups are supported, which goals and actions will the project advance, and how?

Accessibility and Healthy Workplace: if delivering or hosting the learning opportunity, how will you determine and respond to the access needs of participants, how are you ensuring an inclusive and healthy workplace/safe space for the participant(s)? Attach healthy workplace/safe spaces plans/policies. If applying for mentorship or residency support, attach partnership/mentorship agreements.

Detailed Program: list key activities, workshop or details on learning content, dates and locations associated with the learning opportunity, or timeline of the project.

Budget & Financial Statement: provide a budget with all expenses and any other revenue in addition to this grant request, and a board-signed financial statement for the most recently-completed year end - at minimum a balance sheet and income statement.

Assessment Criteria

- The learning opportunity is led by individuals who have the relevant lived experience, permission, skills, knowledge and expertise to deliver the material
- The learning opportunity is timely with a strong need to support it
- The learning opportunity will greatly benefit the individual, organization, or broader cultural sector
- The learning opportunity strongly aligns with one or more of the *Culture|Shift* actions and guiding principles
- The learning opportunity offers meaningful opportunities to underrepresented artists, cultural leaders in a healthy workplace, or advances equity in the sector
- Resourced accessibility and healthy workplace/safe space conditions are in place
- The proposed budget and project plan is feasible

Assessment and Notification Process

This program uses a staff-driven assessment process based on priorities and criteria informed by the arts and cultural community. Staff assessors may include Cultural Planners from Grants & Awards, Arts, Culture & Tourism's Equity and Accessibility Planner, and Indigenous Cultural Planner.

Once the grant is approved, you will receive a confirmation notification by email from VanApply. Please retain this notification as your document of record.

All new grant recipients are required to register as a new supplier in the City's online portal, enter banking info and upload banking documentation. Staff will contact you with instructions following your grant confirmation.

Final Report

Final Reports are required to be submitted within one month of project completion. The Final Report Form is available on VanApply, appended to your application.

If funding for a new Cultural Learning and Sharing project is approved prior to the completion of a previously funded Cultural Learning and Sharing project, release of new funds will be conditional upon receipt of an interim report.

Freedom of Information

The Parties acknowledge that they are each subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (British Columbia)*, and that all records prepared by either Party may be under the custody and control of that Party for the purposes of the said act and that all records prepared by that Party in the performance of this Agreement are in the custody and control of that Party. Each Party is or will be subject to the access and privacy provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (British Columbia)*, which creates a right of access to records under the custody and control of public bodies subject to specific limited exceptions.