

2020 Untitled: Public Art Grants Information Sessions: February 4 & 10, 2020

néçá ?mat ct Strathcona Branch Library & Woodward's Heritage Building

Q: Under eligible projects, can you explain how we should “demonstrate integrity and ethical use of materials for works taking on representation of a specific cultural group or community” if we are not from that community?

A: We ask that you be considerate of cultural appropriation. You may be asked to demonstrate that permissions and approvals were obtained as necessary and that appropriate protocols were followed.

Q: Can you explain what exactly you are talking about under Strength of Proposed Project in the Assessment Criteria, and give an example of what you mean by “strong ideas expressed with clarity

A: Essentially what is meant by “strong ideas expressed with clarity” is that your application will be stronger if the artwork concept and the form of its expression demonstrates the potential to become something more than an object or event. It’s hard to think of relevant examples that are temporary rather than permanent but an easy example is Ken Lum’s *Monument for East Vancouver* which has historical origins in gang and territorial symbolism but has become a landmark in the city and resonates for many of Vancouver’s citizens. Another example was a temporary project which was commissioned through the Artist Initiated Call: Hannah Jickling and Helen Reed’s *Bubble Trouble*, a year-long residency at Queen Alexandra Elementary School. The artists, working with grade five and six students, created a program that enabled students to learn and experience the process of art-making through chewing gum: researching the history of chewing gum, the uses of gum in making art from figurative drawings, exploring the senses, in particular taste, and so on. At the end of the year, the artists, working with the students, produced a chewing gum as an artwork and distributed it on Halloween.

Q: Does the proposed project have to result in a physical object or legacy?

A: It is not necessary to leave a physical trace. One project, funded through the Public Art Boost, involved the Contemporary Art Gallery’s commissioning of Feminist Land Art Retreat (FLAR) to produce FLAR Air, a project comprised of an airplane trailing a banner with a message and flown during the Festival of Lights fireworks competition along with an alternate soundtrack for people to listen to that was produced specifically for the Festival of Lights.

Q: One of the eligibility requirements is for the organization to be accommodating, welcoming and open, in their policies, practices and programs, to people of all ages, and abilities. We are a disability arts organization with a mandate to support artists with mental disabilities. Are we ineligible to apply for this grant?

A: Although your organization is working with and supporting a specific group of people, the only requirement for you would be that any public art projects would be open to everyone.

Q: Would an audio sculpture be eligible?

A: Audio projects are eligible. Keep in mind that you will need to clearly articulate in your application how people will access it, how it would be broadly distributed and communicated, and how it will stand out from all the other audio programming (e.g. podcasts, radio shows, etc.) out there.

Q: What is the overall budget allotment?

A: \$300,000. However, the panel will not necessarily recommend grant awards that total that amount. It’s possible that they will only recommend 1 or 2 projects for funding.

Q: When will the grants be announced and when will the money be available?

A: The recommendations of the selection panel will be written up in a report to Council which will be made public around the third week of May, one week in advance of the date that Council votes on the recommendations. Pending approval by Council, organizations are notified and invited to meet with the program lead to discuss the project in more detail and determine payment phases. Typically, the first stage of funding is released after start-up meetings and after execution of an agreement between the Public Art program and the successful organization. In this case, the earliest payment would be approximately mid-June 2020.

Q: Is it okay to apply again for an idea that I proposed previously?

A: Yes.

Q: If you are a solo artist with an idea, do you have to have an umbrella group? Does the artist have to go find a group to work with?

A: Grants can only be awarded to non-profit organizations, First Nations Band Councils, community service co-ops, and registered charities. You would need to find an organization to partner with if you are an individual artist.

Q: Could a First Nations Band apply for First Nations artists?

A: Yes they can.

Q: How does the organization secure city owned space or a site for the work? You can't propose a project if you don't have a site. How does an organization secure a site before being awarded a grant?

A: First, it's important to remember that getting permission to site artwork on City-owned land is not always easy or even possible. As noted in the information guide, some sites are off limits or require additional approvals due their significance to the xʷməθkʷəy̓ə m (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-waututh) Nations. In your application you can indicate the site of interest and state that you don't have permission yet. It is a good idea to also propose an alternate site. Your application will need to include a strong rationale for why that particular site is important for the project. In addition, siting projects on City-owned property may also require a license agreement which will address such things as maintenance responsibility, insurance requirements, permits, engineering, and so on.

Q: Why is this application so complicated and involved?

A: Placing art in the public realm is much more involved than producing artwork say, for a gallery space. The City has a number of regulations and by-laws that are primarily concerned with public safety, and all proposed projects will have to meet the standards of these public safety requirements. As well, the work (if an actual object) will need to withstand weather and people and in many cases, be signed off on by an engineer. We have attempted to make the application as simple as possible but need to include all the relevant information so that applicants know what is involved in placing artwork in the public realm.

Q: In regards to the budget requirements, what would you recommend as a standard artist fee?

A: Artist fees vary from project to project and are dependent on what the artist is being asked to do. For example, if the artist is providing digital files for a two-dimensional work, fees would be less than those for a three-dimensional work. The norm is typically, 20% of the project budget but, again, it depends on how much administration, project management, or other associated tasks the artist is being asked to undertake.

Q: Would an organization be denied if this is the first time producing artwork?

A: An organization won't be denied if this is their first time producing artwork. However, this grant will be highly competitive and past experience with producing public art will necessarily rank higher with the jury. If this is your first time producing public art, there are other ways to show that your organization is supporting artists materially.

Q: We have never applied for grants before but have previous experience with working with artists. We have never produced a 3D artwork in the public realm before.

A: See the answer above.

Q: Are you looking for Canadian artists?

A: Although we don't expressly state that we are looking for organizations to work with Canadian artists, we are interested in working with artists that have connection to this place (Vancouver) and the site where the artwork is being considered for "installation."

Q: Do we need to email you to set up a time to have a conversation?

A: It doesn't need to be that formal. Faith is usually in the office three days per week so she will always get back to inquiries in a timely manner.

Q: How is "professional artist" being defined? For example, can organizations work with architects and designers?

A: The definition of professional artists is listed on page 5 of the Information Guide. However, how professional artist is defined is less important than how the project or opportunity enables the artist to develop or expand their practice and critical inquiry. One of the assessment criteria (listed under **Strength of Proposed Project** on page 5) is "engagement with critical dialogues in contemporary art" and the selection panel will be looking for this in the proposal and the artist's work/practice.

Q: What is meant by third party advertising?

A: Third party advertising is part of the Sign Bylaw which reads: *third party advertising means copy that advertises, promotes, or directs attention to products or services that are not sold, produced or provided on the premises on which the sign is located, but does not include any acknowledgement that identifies the artist, owner or sponsor of a work of art or mural approved by the City, as a condition of a development permit or pursuant to a public art program or similar program or policy.*

Q: Are marketing and promotional costs eligible?

A: Yes, we consider those costs important to the distribution and communication of the project.

Q: Would third party advertising include corporate logos?

A: Yes, but as stated in the Sign Bylaw, acknowledgements for artworks are permitted as long as they meet any development permit requirements.

Q: Are there age restrictions for participating artists?

A: We are looking to commission professional artists as the lead artists for these projects. The strength of the application will, in part, be based on the experience of the artist and the strength of their previous practice. One way to get youth involved would be to work with an artist whose practice might include mentoring youth.

Q: Can you talk about “duration”? What do you mean by significant duration?

A: Duration will obviously vary depending on what makes the best sense for the project and significant will also vary accordingly. For example, producing a project involving projections would be much more costly than producing a project involving a digital print installation – in which case significant duration for the projections project could be much shorter than significant duration for the digital print installation. However, our expectation is that the proposed projects are temporary and when we speak about temporary projects, we are referring to projects with a maximum duration of two years.

Q: Do the artists have to be from Vancouver or this area?

A: As with an earlier question about Canadian artists, this grant is not necessarily restricted to local artists. However, your application will have to demonstrate that the artists have a connection to this place and the intended site.

Q: How do we account for a proposed project that might be part of or develop from an existing project? For example, if there’s an artist already engaged in a residency, how would we show that in relation to a new public art project?

A: In the project narrative, it would be important to show the panel not only that this project is outside the framework of what’s already been developed by the artist, but also how this new component or project meets the vision and criteria of the grant. For the budget, please indicate how the requested amount will be spent specifically on this new component or project.

Q: How do you suggest determining fees for elders, mentors or other knowledge keepers and cultural supports?

A: This is best determined by the elders, mentors, and knowledge keepers who will usually tell you what they expect in the way of compensation.

Q: How will you decide who’s on the selection panel?

A: We have a long list of potential selection panelists but we are looking to include representation from x^wməθk^wəyə̌ m (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-waututh) Nations as well as members from other cultural communities/groups. We are also looking for gender balance. However, it’s often the case that the final panel is determined by who’s available within the given time frame.

Q: Are projects using digital platforms and practice eligible?

A: A project focusing on digital practice would be eligible. However, like audio projects, you will need to clearly articulate how people will access the project, how it will be broadly distributed and communicated, and how the project is innovative or stands out from all the other digital projects out there.

Q: How would you recommend a solo artist break into creating artwork for the public realm?

A: Start by asking yourself if it’s a natural outgrowth of your practice to begin expanding into producing works for the public realm. If the answer is yes, then you can explore what artist-run centres and other organizations are doing in relation to public art and begin reflecting that back to your own practice. If your work is primarily two-dimensional, then it might be a good idea to start by applying for two-dimensional artist calls or other similar platforms.