

Festival Project Grant

Program Guidelines

CONTEXT

The City of Victoria recognizes the importance of cultural festivals to the economic, social and creative life of the city. Since 1999, the Festival Project Grant (FPG) Program (previously called the Festival Investment Grant Program), has provided annual cash grant funding and in-kind support for festivals produced by not-for-profit organizations that deliver significant social and economic impact, community vitality and artistic vibrancy across the City, particularly the downtown core.

The program guidelines were updated in 2025 to reflect the growing needs within the community and to better align grant funding with City plans, strategies and priorities.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- To increase opportunities for residents to participate in free or low barrier public events with diverse artistic content.
- To support economic development and sustainable cultural tourism by attracting audiences from across the city and beyond through high calibre artistic content.
- To nurture local talent and provide paid professional opportunities for artists, especially individuals from Indigenous and equity-seeking communities.

EQUITABLE APPROACH

The City of Victoria's Cultural Policy guides decision-making on how we do our work. The City is strengthening its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion by embedding these considerations into City policies, programs and practices through the mandate of the Equity Framework.

In keeping with our Cultural Policy Statement, the City is working to ensure that everyone has fair access to equitable benefits and outcomes by being able to participate fully in the creative life of the city, which is essential to an equitable, inclusive and human rights-oriented society.

ORGANIZATION ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must meet all the criteria listed below to have their application reviewed for funding under this grant program:

- Be registered as a not-for-profit society, not-for-profit cooperative, charitable organization, the Songhees Nation Council or the Xwsepsum Nation Council, or a registered Urban Indigenous not-for-profit organization, with an independent and active volunteer board of directors.
- Have operated as a registered eligible organization (as per definition above) for one full year prior to applying and provide financial statements signed by the Board for one full recent fiscal year.
- Have successfully organized a prior edition of the festival that meets the project eligibility requirements further below.
- Have a clear arts and culture mandate or purpose as part of the organization's vision and mission or provide regular programming with artistic content.
- Be in good standing under the BC Society Act.
- Be in good standing as per the terms and conditions of all previous City of Victoria grant funding, including submission of final reports.
- Not be in arrears with any local authority, bankrupt, seeking creditor protection, insolvent or under court supervision of any kind.
- Submit a complete application package prior to the application deadline, including all required materials.

Organizations whose activities are deemed to come under the jurisdiction of other levels, divisions, departments or agencies of government (e.g. sports and recreation, school boards, social services, hospitals, business improvement associations, universities, military programs, etc.), **will not be prioritized for funding in this program.**

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

Partnerships and collaboration between multiple organizations is encouraged. Not-for-profit arts and culture organizations applying in partnership or collaboration with other not-for-profit organizations should designate one organization as the lead applicant in the application. Collaboration between not-for-profit (designated as the lead applicant) and private organizations working in the arts and cultural sector are eligible.

The lead applicant must be an eligible organization and will be responsible for completing the application and fulfilling all the terms of the grant, if funded. Evidence must be provided demonstrating that the proposed project is vital to the activities, audiences, and mandates of each of the organizations included in a partnership application. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Partnership Agreement (PA) between all partner organizations with

clearly defined roles, responsibilities and relationships must be provided as part of the application package.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In addition to the organization eligibility criteria listed above, applicants must demonstrate that their project meets the following project eligibility criteria:

- For this grant program a festival is defined as a concentrated collection of arts and cultural activities with a common theme, presented over a minimum of a one-day period and no longer than one month. A festival may be devoted to one or more artistic discipline(s) and must be produced annually or once every two years.
- Festivals must compensate professional artists or cultural experts at appropriate industry standards or provide honoraria for emerging artists.
- Festivals must have a cash project budget (not including in kind and only prorated operating expenses for organizations not receiving a CRD operating grant) greater than \$15,000.
- Each eligible organization can apply for up to 2 festivals per year, however, priority will be given for funding one festival per applicant.
- Festivals must occur within the city of Victoria municipal boundaries.
- Festivals must take place within the calendar year in which funding is allocated.
- Festivals must be accessible to the public and attract a significant number of attendees. Ticketed festivals can be considered eligible provided either discounted tickets for Indigenous and equity-seeking communities are provided, or a significant free public programming component is included.

WHAT THIS PROGRAM DOES NOT FUND

Applicants cannot apply for funding under this grant program to cover any of the following events or activities:

- One-time only festivals or events.
- Festivals that have received funding for the same project or activities from any other City grant program.
- Music or concert series or other events that occur over a period of more than one month.
- Festivals or project activities that are already underway or completed prior to the grant application deadline and/or budget items to cover existing project or organization deficits.
- Operating expenses including fixed recurring costs (e.g., rent, utilities) and staff time that are not pro-rated and/or specific to the proposed Festival. For

organizations receiving annual or multi-year operating grant funding through the CRD Arts Development Service, any operating expenses including rent, utilities, office administration and staff are not eligible for funding. For applicants seeking operating grant funding please refer to the [CRD Arts Development Service](#).

- Capital expenses including equipment purchase or facility infrastructure upgrade projects. These projects are funded through the City's [Cultural Infrastructure Grant program](#).
- Any of the following types of events, or other events whose primary theme and programming is not arts or cultural heritage focused:
 - Sports, recreation or athletic events, runs, walks or cycling events,
 - Fundraising events, banquets or galas,
 - Religious celebrations or political events, including demonstrations, rallies or protests,
 - Commercial events including fairs, markets, consumer/trade shows, car shows, or conferences,
 - Educational initiatives including seminars, workshops, professional development, training activities, or public lectures.

GRANT FUNDING STREAMS

Applicants must apply for funding for each festival through **one** of four streams.

At a glance	Signature Festivals	Established Festivals	Emerging & Growing Festivals	Cultural Community Celebration
Maximum City grant	\$40,000 or 10%	\$20,000 or 20%	\$10,000 or 25%	\$5,000 or 30%
Project cash expenses	More than \$200,000	More than \$100,000	More than \$30,000	More than \$15,000
Free public programming	Entire festival free, or at least 10 hours	Entire festival free, or at least 7 hours	Entire festival free, or at least 5 hours	Entire festival free, or at least 4 hours
Paid staff	Paid staff or professional contractors manage all aspects	Paid staff or professional contractors manage all aspects	Professional contractors manage all or key aspects	No minimum requirement

Audience reach	Beyond Victoria, or more than 15,000 attendees	Multiple Victoria neighbourhoods, or more than 5,000 attendees	Multiple Victoria neighbourhoods, or more than 1,500 attendees	No minimum requirement
Artist compensation	Professional rates based on industry standards	Professional rates based on industry standards	Professional rates, or appropriate honoraria for emerging or volunteer artists	Professional rates, or appropriate honoraria for emerging or volunteer artists
Marketing and promotion	Cash budget plus paid or significant earned media coverage	Cash budget plus paid or significant earned media coverage	Some cash budget or significant earned media coverage	Some cash budget or earned media coverage

Signature Festivals

The purpose of this funding stream is to support signature festivals that attract large audiences from across **and** beyond the city, supporting economic development and cultural tourism, relying on talented and well recognized artists and performers. This grant stream is for large-scale festivals that are professionally produced by organizations with full-time staff and provide multiple days of festival programming.

The City will fund up to a maximum of \$40,000 or 10% of the project's eligible cash expenses budget, whichever is lesser, per application.

Applicants must meet all six criteria below to be eligible for funding under this stream:

- Project cash expenses budget (not including in kind and only prorated operating expenses for organizations not receiving a CRD operating grant) must be greater than \$200,000.
- The festival attracts audiences from beyond the city, OR more than 15,000 total festival attendees.
- The festival budget includes appropriate cash marketing and promotion expenses and paid or significant earned media coverage.
- Either entire festival programming is free to attend OR includes a minimum of 10 hours of free public programming suitable for all-ages audiences.

- The festival must have paid staff or paid professional contract staff managing all aspects of festival production.
- The festival must provide professional artist compensation as per or above appropriate industry-standard fee guidelines: American Federation of Musicians/Canada: www.afmcanada.org; Canadian Actors Equity Association: www.caea.com; Canadian League of Composers: www.clc-lcc.ca; Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists/BC Chapter: www.cadabc.org; Professional Writers Association of Canada: www.pwac.ca; Canadian Artists Representation/CARFAC: www.carfac.ca or as per other industry guidelines.

Established Festivals

The purpose of this funding stream is to support established festivals that have a demonstrated multi-year track record of professionally produced festivals with strong artistic and cultural content that supports local artists by attracting large city-wide audiences.

The City will fund up to a maximum of \$20,000 or 20% of the project's cash expenses budget, whichever is lesser, per application.

Applicants must meet all six criteria below to be eligible for funding under this stream:

- Project cash expenses budget (not including in kind and only prorated operating expenses for organizations not receiving a CRD operating grant) must be greater than \$100,000.
- The festival must have paid staff or paid professional contract staff managing all aspects of festival production.
- The festival budget includes appropriate cash marketing and promotion expenses and paid or significant earned media coverage.
- The festival attracts audiences from multiple neighborhoods across the city OR more than 5,000 total festival attendees.
- Either entire festival programming is free to attend OR includes a minimum of 7 hours of free public programming suitable for all-ages audiences.
- Applicant provides professional artist compensation as per or above appropriate industry-standard fee guidelines: American Federation of Musicians/Canada: www.afmcanada.org; Canadian Actors Equity Association: www.caea.com; Canadian League of Composers: www.clc-lcc.ca; Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists/BC Chapter: www.cadabc.org; Professional Writers Association of Canada: www.pwac.ca; Canadian Artists Representation/CARFAC: www.carfac.ca or as per other industry guidelines.

Emerging & Growing Festivals

The purpose of this funding stream is to support emerging and growing festivals that promote their activities to attract local audiences from multiple neighborhoods.

The City will fund up to a maximum of \$10,000 or 25% of the project's cash expenses budget, whichever is lesser per application.

Applicants must meet all six criteria below to be eligible for funding under this stream:

- Project cash expenses budget (not including in kind and only prorated operating expenses for organizations not receiving a CRD operating grant) must be greater than \$30,000.
- The festival must have paid professional contract staff to manage all or key aspects of festival production.
- The festival budget includes some cash marketing and promotion expenses or significant earned media coverage.
- Either entire festival is free to attend OR includes a minimum of 5 hours of free public programming suitable for all-ages audiences.
- The festival attracts audiences from multiple neighborhoods across the city OR more than 1,500 total festival attendees.
- Professional artist compensation provided as per or above appropriate industry-standard fee guidelines: American Federation of Musicians/Canada: www.afmcanada.org; Canadian Actors Equity Association: www.caea.com; Canadian League of Composers: www.clc-lcc.ca; Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists/BC Chapter: www.cadabc.org; Professional Writers Association of Canada: www.pwac.ca; Canadian Artists Representation/CARFAC: www.carfac.ca or appropriate honoraria for emerging or volunteer artistic or cultural talent.

Cultural Community Celebration

The purpose of this funding stream is to support community celebrations with cultural events. These events are often organized and managed by volunteer led non-profit boards and event volunteers and involve a broad base of support from the local community.

The City will fund up to a maximum of \$5,000 or 30% of the project's cash expenses budget, whichever is less per application.

Applicants must meet all four criteria below to be eligible for funding under this stream:

- Project cash expenses budget (not including in kind and only prorated operating expenses for organizations not receiving a CRD operating grant) must be greater than \$15,000.
- The festival budget includes some cash marketing and promotion expenses, or some earned media coverage.

- Either entire festival is free to attend OR includes a minimum of 4 hours of free public programming suitable for all-ages audiences.
- Professional artist compensation provided as per or above appropriate industry-standard fee guidelines: American Federation of Musicians/Canada: www.afmcanada.org; Canadian Actors Equity Association: www.caea.com; Canadian League of Composers: www.clc-lcc.ca; Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists/BC Chapter: www.cadabc.org; Professional Writers Association of Canada: www.pwac.ca; Canadian Artists Representation/CARFAC: www.carfac.ca or appropriate honoraria for emerging or volunteer artistic or cultural talent.

HOW DO I APPLY?

- Review the Program Guidelines to confirm organization and project eligibility.
- Complete and submit the online application form prior to the deadline.
- Submit all required supporting materials to culture@victoria.ca prior to the deadline.
- **First Time Applicants must** contact staff to confirm organization eligibility, discuss your project and to answer questions about the application form prior to applying. Contact Andrea Collins at ACollins@victoria.ca.

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS & TIMELINE?

- **Eligibility and Review:** Applications will be reviewed by staff for eligibility and completeness. All eligible applications will be competitively scored based on the five assessment criteria.
- **Notification:** All applicants will be informed on the results of their application within 12 weeks of the submission deadline.
 - **Successful applicants** will receive a digital copy of funding notification by email with the terms and conditions of grant funding.
- **Unsuccessful applicants** will receive feedback from staff and guidance on how to improve future applications.

HOW ARE APPLICATIONS EVALUATED?

All eligible applications will be evaluated based on the following five assessment criteria. Staff may also rely on previous year's final reports and event feedback forms to assess eligibility and reassign applications between funding streams. Applicants should demonstrate clear objectives and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the following criteria:

1. Building Community – 25%

- a. Demonstrated understanding of audience and participant needs and community priorities reflected through Festival activities.
- b. Creating new or expanded opportunities for low or no barrier participation through programming and activities for diverse audiences.
- c. Broad level of community support demonstrated through number of partners, community collaborators, sponsors and volunteers.

2. Artistic Creativity and Cultural Vibrancy – 25%

- a. Strong artistic vision reflected through clear project scope and measurable outcomes and benefits for artists and cultural sector workers.
- b. Innovation and excellence in activating venues, programming format and content.
- c. Diversity, quality and depth of artistic content.

3. Economic Impact & Cultural Tourism – 20%

- a. Quantifiable local economic benefits by attracting audiences from across the city and visitors from beyond the city.
- b. Quantifiable employment opportunities for artists, cultural producers and suppliers.
- c. Raises Victoria's profile provincially, nationally and internationally. A key measurable will be media coverage including earned media and marketing and promotion expenses and avenues including web and social media statistics.

4. Organizational Capacity & Resilience – 15%

- a. Demonstrated team capacity and expertise to deliver project on schedule and within budget.
- b. Detailed and realistic project budget and project schedule.
- c. Financial resiliency demonstrated through diverse revenue sources, contingency plans, and revenue growth.

5. Alignment with City Priorities – 15%

- a. Reconciliation:
 - i. Demonstrated plans and actions to acknowledge and maintain respectful relations with Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations,
 - ii. Demonstrated plans and actions to develop or maintain meaningful opportunities for Indigenous Peoples
- b. Accessibility, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:
 - i. Demonstrated plans and actions to increase physical and financial accessibility for and at events,

- ii. Demonstrated strategies and actions to increase representation for underrepresented and/or equity-seeking communities.
- c. Zero Waste and Sustainable Transportation:
 - i. Demonstrated plans and actions to reduce and/or divert waste from the landfill,
 - ii. Demonstrated strategies and actions to encourage and support attendees to use active and public transportation for events,
 - iii. Demonstrated actions to power events using energy efficient equipment.

AVAILABLE GRANT FUNDING

Funding decisions are determined based on several factors including the number of applications and total funding requested, total available program budget, and on the merits of individual applications.

Requests for funding consistently exceed the available annual program budget and the City cannot guarantee funding to all eligible applicants, nor can the City ensure that the total amount requested will be awarded to successful applicants. The decision to fund all or part of an applicant's request will depend on its alignment with the evaluation criteria and City priorities. Funding received in a previous year does not guarantee funding in subsequent years.

WHAT ARE THE GRANT FUNDING CONDITIONS?

Applicants awarded a grant will be required to agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. Grant recipients will receive 80 per cent of the grant after July 2. The remaining 20 per cent of grant funding will be disbursed within 30 days after approval of the final report.
2. Grant recipients must complete their projects and submit final reports by December 31, 2027. If you do not submit a final report by this deadline, the remaining 20% of grant funding will be forfeited.
3. Grant recipients must return any unused portion of City funding at the end of the Grant term (12 months from approval) unless an extension in writing has been obtained from the Senior Cultural Planner.
4. Grant recipients must submit a final report within 60 days of project completion. Required documentation includes a project report, photo documentation, financial statement listing actual revenue and expenses signed by a Board representative. A report template will be provided to successful applicants as part of the grant confirmation package.

5. Grant recipients confirm that the information provided in the application package and the final report package are accurate and complete.
6. Any significant change or any change in scope, timelines, or deliverables of the project as presented in the application must be discussed and receive approval in writing from the Senior Cultural Planner in advance of implementation.
7. Grant recipients are responsible for securing all required permits and approvals to meet all federal, provincial and municipal legislation, guidelines and bylaws. The award of grant funding may in no way be construed as providing for other City approval.
8. Grant funding will not be used for activities that the City deems may promote discrimination, contempt or hatred for any individual or entity.
9. Grant recipients must carry commercial general liability insurance as specified in the Special Event Guidelines for outdoor events on City property.
10. The City's support must be acknowledged in all promotional or public materials related to funded activities, including all print and online media. Contact engage@victoria.ca to request electronic copies of the City of Victoria's logo and usage standards.
11. Grant recipients agree that the City shall not be liable for any incidental, indirect, special or consequential damages, injury or any loss of use, revenue or profit of the Society arising out of or in any way related to the program.
12. The City of Victoria reserves the right to an onsite presence, or formal role, at signature events.
13. Previously funded projects must be completed before any future grant application can be approved for funding.
14. Receipt of grant funding does not guarantee funding in the following or any subsequent year.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

All documents submitted as part of a grant application through the FPG program shall become the property of the City of Victoria. 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 staff and assessment committee members for the purposes of evaluation and analysis. 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 processes.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Before preparing your application, please ensure your organization and project are eligible. Applicants are encouraged to contact staff to discuss their project prior to submission.



Staff can review draft applications and provide feedback to support applicants with limited grant writing expertise.

Please contact:

Andrea Collins,
Arts, Culture and Events Liaison
Email: ACollins@victoria.ca
Phone: 250-216-9325.