



## COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: April 1, 2025  
Contact: Margaret Wittgens  
Contact No.: 604.871.6858  
RTS No.: 17705  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: April 15, 2025  
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: General Manager of Arts, Culture, and Community Services  
SUBJECT: 2025 Cultural Grants (Balance of Operating, Capacity)

### Recommendations

- A. THAT Council approve Cultural Operating Funding - Institutions (COFI) grants totaling \$2,861,560 from the 2025 Cultural Grants Operating Budget to the five organizations listed in Section A of Appendix A for the amounts recommended for each organization in the “2025 Grant Recomm.” column, which will bring the total 2025 operating grants for those five organizations to \$3,822,080.
- B. THAT Council approve Cultural Operating Funding – Annual (COFA) grants totaling \$926,980 from the 2025 Cultural Grants Operating Budget to the 38 organizations listed in Section B of Appendix A for the amounts recommended for each organization in the “2025 Grant Recomm.” column, which will bring the total 2025 operating grants for those 38 organizations to \$1,505,150.
- C. THAT Council approve a grant of \$30,000 from the 2025 ACT Operating Budget to the Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance to support REFLECT, a program to develop and enhance leadership in the cultural sector for equity-deserving individuals and communities.
- D. THAT Council delegate its authority to execute grant agreements that include terms and conditions that are consistent with this report, that satisfy the City’s Director of Legal Services, and that disburse the grants described in this report to the City’s General Manager of Arts, Culture, and Community Services (or their designate).
- E. THAT pursuant to Section 206(1)(j) of the *Vancouver Charter*, Council deems any organization listed in Appendix A and any organization meeting the criteria in

Appendix C of this report that is not otherwise a registered charity with Canada Revenue Agency to be contributing to the culture of Vancouver.

Recommendations A to E require 8 affirmative votes of all Council members under section 206(1) of the *Vancouver Charter*.

## **Purpose and Executive Summary**

This report recommends a total of \$3,818,540 in grants to 44 cultural organizations to support the delivery of critical programs and services for artists, the cultural community, and the public.

The recommendations advance the following key civic policy and strategic directions:

- *Vibrant Vancouver: City Council's Strategic Priorities 2023-2026*
- *Culture|Shift*, the City's 10-year culture plan, including the *Vancouver Music Strategy* and *Making Space for Arts and Culture*
- The City's *Equity Framework* and *Accessibility Strategy*
- The City's *Reconciliation Framework* and *UNDRIP Action Plan 2024-2028*

## **Council Authority/Previous Decisions**

- July 25, 2023: Council approved the 2024 Arts and Culture Grants Program Framework which outlines the policy, programs, adjudication process, and accountability requirements to support ongoing and emerging needs in the local arts and culture sector.
- October 22, 2024: Council received The Municipal Grants Jurisdictional Review for information and directed staff to deliver an annual report back to council to accompany the ACCS Annual Grant Impact Report.
- January 21, 2025: Council approved \$2,639,390 in grants to 127 cultural organizations which included project grants, multi-year grants, and advance payments on annual operating grants.

## **City Manager's Comments**

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

## **Context and Background**

The City of Vancouver invests in critical operating and capital grants to local arts and culture non-profit organizations to support operations, projects, access to the civic theatres, and capacity building, that advance the City's arts and culture priorities and support cultural and economic vibrancy. The distribution and impact of cultural grant streams and other grants are reported through the ACCS Annual Grant Impact Report.

This report is the second in a series of 2025 annual cultural grant recommendations and recommends the balance of core operating grants for institutions and annual funding recipients.

## Discussion

This report outlines the funding programs, priorities, and processes for the grants recommended to Council. A full list of recommended grantees is included in Appendix A, with grant metrics in Appendix B.

### Recommendations A + B: Cultural Operating Funding - Institutions (COFI) and Cultural Operating Funding - Annual (COFA)

Recommendations in this report are for two core operating programs that are assessed on an annual basis by a community peer assessment committee. \$3,788,540 is recommended to 43 organizations. These are the final 2025 recommendations for these programs, following an advance payment approved in January.

#### *Program Description and Goals*

Cultural operating grants provide core funding to Vancouver-based, professional non-profit arts, cultural and creative organizations that have a mission to develop, create, produce, present, and disseminate artistic work or provide professional services or space for the benefit of the local arts and culture sector and community, in any artistic discipline.

The program aims to leverage the collective community efforts of the arts and culture sector to:

- Provide opportunities to artists and cultural workers to have the freedom, agency and space to create and share their stories
- Ensure meaningful and broad public participation and access to a range of programs and services for the greater understanding of Vancouver's dynamic cultural landscape
- Provide consistent support for the impactful delivery of professional programming, space, services and activities that advance creative disciplines and services, and contribute to the visibility of the cultural diversity of Vancouver
- Support the livelihood of local artists and cultural workers
- Support healthy leadership practices and ensure leadership pathways into the sector
- Create a more equitable, vibrant, collaborative and sustainable arts and culture sector

Program Guide: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/cultural-operating-funding-annual-info-guide.pdf> \

#### *Eligibility*

To be eligible for this program, organizations need to align with the program goals and objectives and meet a set of criteria. Organizations need to have an existing funding relationship with the City and have been consistently well-assessed by recent peer assessment committees which endorse consistency in the delivery of quality programs or services with positive impact in the community, and demonstrated commitments to equity in purpose, programs, and practice.

#### *Peer Assessment Process*

To guide these grant recommendations, the City relies on the model of peer assessment – a pillar practice used by the majority of public sector arts funding agencies across Canada. Applications are evaluated by committees comprised of peers from the cultural community and staff, bringing a wide range of lived and professional experience across multiple disciplines from various communities. To ensure there is equity in the assessment process, the composition of assessment committees exceeds 50% representation by priority groups. For this round, ten

community members assessed funding applications to augment the knowledge of staff, applying artistic and administrative expertise from visual and media arts, theatre, dance, music, literary, and festival organizations, representing all artistic disciplines, and providing racialized and LGBTQ2+ lenses. The committee members are as follows: Sean Bickerton, Beth Carter, Tasha Faye Evans, Whess Harman, Harpo Mander, Gabrielle Martin, David Mesiha, Victor Tran, Sarah Wang, and Maiko Bae Yamamoto.

All committee members completed conflict of interest forms and removed themselves from discussion and decision-making if conflicts were declared. Staff appreciate all peer community members for their thoughtful consideration and generosity throughout the assessment process.

### *Assessment Criteria*

The committee reviewed applications and made recommendations based on the following criteria:

- Artistic Purpose: purpose is clearly defined and responds to current needs in the arts and culture community, clear commitments to equity in the mission, vision, and values.
- Artistic Contributors and Programs: artists have appropriate experience, knowledge, and permission and are provided meaningful opportunities to develop their practice, respectful practices are in place when working with Indigenous artists, the work advances a particular practice, there is access for diverse community participation.
- Participation, Access and Impact: audiences and participants reflect the diversity of the city, accessibility plans and practices are in place, there is demand for the programs.
- Leadership and Administration: leaders bring appropriate experience and knowledge to advance the mission and work, healthy workplace practices are in place, appropriate human resources are in place, equity policies and plans are being integrated into practice, the board is advancing the mission and work.
- Financial Management: finances show a healthy position with diversified revenues, realistic and balanced budget projections, demonstrated need for public sector assistance.

### *Summary of Recommendations*

The following is a summary of the assessment committee recommendations:

- 43 applications were reviewed requesting \$6.1M with a budget of \$5.3M.
- Demand for funding exceeded available resources by \$779,275.
- 12 groups are recommended for an increase, 8 groups are recommended for a decrease, and 23 groups are recommended for a grant at the same level as 2024.
- Many organizations demonstrate a case for increases. With finite resources, recommendations for reduced grants are necessary to increase support for groups who are advancing program priorities.
- The recommendations and shift in funds ensure that the City's available funding is directed to organizations who have been assessed as having the greatest impact in the community to advance City priorities. This is common with each annual assessment process.
- There are larger shifts of funds from groups where the core purpose is outside of the program goals and the City's priorities for arts and culture, to groups who are advancing these goals and priorities well.

- There are shifts in funds from groups who are less responsive to evolving needs of the cultural community, to less established groups who are more responsive.

Staff are available to meet with applicants to provide feedback on funding decisions.

### Recommendation C: Arts and Culture Grant – REFLECT

Radical Empathy for Leaders: Equity, Connection, Time (REFLECT) was launched in 2023 as a pilot project by Arts, Culture & Tourism at the City of Vancouver in partnership with the Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance (GVPTA) and The Cultch. REFLECT is a cohort-based program focused on fostering leadership among underrepresented arts communities. Designed for arts leaders from Indigenous and equity-deserving groups, REFLECT emphasizes radical empathy, community-building, and project-based learning. In the first cohort, eight participants engaged in monthly workshops, intergenerational mentorship, and self-directed projects, receiving a stipend for their involvement. The program's goals are to support inclusive leadership, provide equitable access to resources, and nurture diverse cultural perspectives within Vancouver's arts sector. This grant will allow REFLECT to serve a second cohort, starting the second iteration of the program in 2025. This is the second grant as part of a three-year program with a potential third year grant recommendation coming before Council in 2026.

The Arts and Culture Grant for the REFLECT program represents an impactful investment that aligns with the City of Vancouver's Culture|Shift and Vibrant Vancouver objectives, advancing inclusivity, reconciliation, and cultural vibrancy across the city. By nurturing underrepresented arts leaders, REFLECT enhances the city's arts sector, strengthens diverse cultural representation, and contributes to the realization of Vancouver's broader cultural vision. Funding this program aligns with Council's priority to create a culturally rich and inclusive city where all communities feel represented and supported.

Information on this program can be found at: <https://www.gvpta.ca/programs/reflect>

### **Financial Implications**

The source of funding for these recommendations are the 2025 Cultural Grants Operating and Capital Budget, as summarized in Table 1.

*Table 1 – 2025 Cultural Grants Budget (Operating & Capital)*

Rec	Grants Stream	2025 Budget <sup>^</sup>	Previously Approved	Rec. in this Report	Balance
	Projects (CASC)	\$1,110,568*	\$489,700		\$620,868
	Cultural Learning & Sharing	\$210,000			\$210,000
A	Operating – Institution	\$3,822,080	\$960,520	\$2,861,560	\$0
B	Operating – Annual	\$1,505,150	\$578,170	\$926,980	\$0
	Operating – Multi-year (cohort 1)	\$1,670,700	\$1,670,700		\$0
	Operating – Multi-year (cohort 2)	\$1,082,200	\$1,082,200		\$0
	Operating – Multi-year (cohort 3)	\$591,000	\$591,000		\$0

	Theatre Rental	\$3,018,713	\$1,866,975		\$1,151,738
	Individual Artists Fund	\$60,000			\$60,000
	Indigenous	\$355,000			\$355,000
	Equity & Accessibility	\$425,000			\$425,000
	Affordable Spaces	\$335,000			\$335,000
	Emerging Priorities	\$150,000			\$150,000
	<b>Total Operating Grants</b>	<b>\$14,335,411</b>	<b>\$7,259,265</b>	<b>\$3,788,540</b>	<b>\$3,297,331</b>
C	Arts & Culture Grant (GVPTA for REFLECT)			\$30,000	
	<b>TOTAL – All Grants</b>			<b>\$3,818,540</b>	

<sup>^</sup> the budget allocation is preliminary in advance of the community peer assessment.

\* Includes a \$42,500 reallocation for a 2023 grant and a \$20,000 reallocation for a 2024 multi-year grant

### Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with the report’s recommendations.

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**APPENDIX A  
GRANT RECOMMENDATIONS**

<b>A Cultural Operating Funding - Institution (COFI)</b>					
	<b>Major Institutions</b>	<b>2025 Grant Request</b>	<b>2025 Q1 Approved</b>	<b>2025 Q2-4 Recomm</b>	<b>2025 Grant Recomm</b>
1	A.S.T.C. Science World Society*	150,000	23,625	70,875	94,500
2	H.R. MacMillan Space Centre Society	519,600	116,725	325,175	441,900
3	The Vancouver Art Gallery Association	2,122,680	530,670	1,592,010	2,122,680
4	The Vancouver Maritime Museum Society	575,000	100,000	305,000	405,000
5	Vancouver Museum Society	758,000	189,500	568,500	758,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,125,280</b>	<b>960,520</b>	<b>2,861,560</b>	<b>3,822,080</b>

\*Denotes conditions on grant

<b>B Cultural Operating Funding - Annual (COFA)</b>					
	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>2025 Grant Request</b>	<b>2025 Q1 Approved</b>	<b>2025 Q2 Recomm</b>	<b>2025 Grant Recomm</b>
1	221A Artist Run Centre Society	100,000	20,000	50,000	70,000
2	Axis Theatre Society	50,000	13,000	19,500	32,500
3	Bard on the Beach Theatre Society	85,000	24,000	36,000	60,000
4	Carousel Theatre Society	45,000	12,800	27,200	40,000
5	City Opera of Vancouver Society	20,000	6,000	12,500	18,500
6	Craft Council of British Columbia	22,150	4,860	7,290	12,150
7	Eastside Arts Society	30,000	5,200	7,800	13,000
8	Electric Company Theatre Society	35,000	14,000	21,000	35,000
9	Fight With a Stick Hybrid Performance Society	11,000	4,400	5,600	10,000
10	Joe Ink Performance Society	15,000	4,720	5,980	10,700
11	Kidd Pivot Performing Arts Society	31,500	10,080	15,120	25,200
12	Live Biennial of Performance Art Society	20,000	7,200	10,800	18,000
13	Movement Enterprises Society dba Small Stage	12,000	3,970	5,030	9,000
14	Music in the Morning Concert Society	20,000	6,440	9,660	16,100
15	New Forms Media Society	10,000	4,000	6,000	10,000
16	New Performance Works Society	30,000	8,000	20,000	28,000
17	Pacific Ballet British Columbia Society	200,000	40,000	55,000	95,000
18	Projectile Publishing Society dba Phillip	20,000	4,680	7,020	11,700
19	PuSh International Performing Arts Festival Society	100,000	32,000	53,000	85,000
20	Sníchim Foundation Society*	17,500	7,000	10,500	17,500
21	Sub-Terrain Literary Collective Society	12,000	3,920	5,880	9,800

22	The Art Starts in Schools Society*	52,775	11,400	17,100	28,500
23	The Arts Club of Vancouver Theatre Society	194,500	57,800	80,200	138,000
24	The Coastal Jazz and Blues Society	92,000	36,800	55,200	92,000
25	The Firehall Theatre Society*	90,000	30,000	55,000	85,000
26	The Geist Foundation	15,000	5,400	8,100	13,500
27	The Green Thumb Players Society	75,000	24,000	40,000	64,000
28	The Mascall Dance Society	25,000	6,000	9,000	15,000
29	The Vancouver Cantata Society	15,300	6,120	7,880	14,000
30	The Vancouver Folk Music Festival Society	100,000	24,000	46,000	70,000
31	Touchstone Theatre Society	35,000	12,600	22,400	35,000
32	Vancouver Access Artist Run Centre dba Access Gallery	37,500	9,400	16,600	26,000
33	Vancouver Chamber Choir	25,000	8,000	10,000	18,000
34	Vancouver Fringe Theatre Society	40,000	16,000	24,000	40,000
35	Vancouver Opera Association	100,000	22,000	33,000	55,000
36	Vancouver Symphony Society	58,000	23,200	34,800	58,000
37	Vancouver West Side Theatre Society	40,000	13,180	22,820	36,000
38	VDC Dance Centre Society	100,000	36,000	54,000	90,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,981,225</b>	<b>578,170</b>	<b>926,980</b>	<b>1,505,150</b>

\*Denotes conditions on grant

<b>C Arts and Culture Grant - REFLECT</b>			
	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>2025 Grant Request</b>	<b>2025 Grant Recomm</b>
1	Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance Society	30,000	30,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>



**APPENDIX B  
GRANT METRICS**

Grant Program	# of Applicants	# of Grants Recomm.	%	\$ Requested	\$ Grants Recomm	%
Institution (COFI)	5	5	100	\$4,125,280	\$3,822,080	93
Annual (COFA)	38	38	100	\$1,981,225	\$1,505,150	76
Arts & Culture Grant (GVPTA for REFLECT)	1	1	100	\$30,000	\$30,000	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>\$6,136,505</b>	<b>\$5,357,230</b>	<b>87</b>

**Key Impacts for Cultural Operating Groups – 2019 to 2023**

Key Metric	2019	2020	2021	2022	*2023
Total Number of Public Activities	27,540	20,592	19,493	22,777	30,035
Total Attendance/ Participants	7,507,255	3,872,885	2,072,310	3,069,659	3,790,897
Total Number of Artists	13,001	9,899	9,267	12,444	13,488
Total Full-Time Equivalent Staff	1,237	1,137	845	1,216	1,295
Total Number of Volunteers	16,268	10,084	7,249	11,775	12,905

*\*2023 Source of Data: 2022-2023 Canadian Arts Data/Données sur les arts au Canada (CADAC) statistical data from 148 of 149 2024 Operating Grant applicants*

The investment in core operating funds generate significant impacts in the city. This table captures pre- and post-pandemic levels of activity noting that the sector is still in recovery mode. 2023 levels of activity have returned to 2019 levels in most categories, with cultural attendance and the number of volunteers still significantly low.