



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: May 5, 2026
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Meeting Date: June 2, 2026
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TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: General Manager, Arts, Culture, and Community Services
SUBJECT: Theatre Rental Grant Allocations – Fall 2026 and Spring 2027

Recommendations

- A. THAT Council approve Theatre Rental Grants totaling \$1,152,410 from the 2026 Cultural Grants Operating Budget to the 46 organizations listed in Table A of Appendix A for the amounts recommended in the “Sept 1 – Dec 31, 2026 Recommendation” column to allow organizations to use the Civic Theatres for the September 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026 season.
- B. THAT Council approve, in advance of the 2027 operating budget, Theatre Rental Grants totaling \$1,904,695 from the 2027 Cultural Grants Operating Budget to the 53 organizations listed in Table B of Appendix A for the amounts recommended in the “Jan 1- Aug 31, 2027 Recommendation” column to allow organizations to use the Civic Theatres for the January 1, 2027 to August 31, 2027 season.
- C. THAT Council delegate 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).
- D. THAT, pursuant to Section 206(1)(j) of the *Vancouver Charter*, Council deems any organization listed in Appendix A of this report that is not otherwise a registered charity with the Canada Revenue Agency to be contributing to the culture of Vancouver.
- E. THAT no legal rights or obligations will arise or be created by Council’s adoption

of these Recommendations unless and until all legal documentation has been executed and delivered by the respective parties.

Recommendations A, B, and D require two-thirds affirmative votes of all Council members pursuant to section 206 (1) of the Vancouver Charter.

Purpose and Executive Summary

This report recommends a total of \$1,152,410 in-kind grants to 46 cultural organizations for use of the Vancouver Civic Theatres (VCT) during the Fall 2026 performing arts season that runs from September 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026.

This report recommends a total of \$1,904,695 in-kind grants to 53 cultural organizations for use of the Vancouver Civic Theatres (VCT) during the Spring 2027 performing arts season that runs from January 1, 2027 to August 31, 2027.

These recommendations support Vancouver-based arts and culture organizations that align with key civic policies and Council's strategic priorities including *Vibrant Vancouver*, *Culture|Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture*, the City's 10-year culture plan, the *Vancouver Music Strategy* and *Making Space for Arts and Culture*.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

On June 4, 2025 (RTS 17898), Council approved 47 Theatre Rental Grants totalling \$1,278,350 for the period of Sept. 1-Dec. 31, 2025 and 61 Theatre Rental Grants totalling \$1,902,525 for the period of Jan 1-Aug. 31, 2026.

On December 10, 2025 (RTS 18169) Council approved new rental rates for VCT that included both commercial and not-for-profit rental rates for the performing arts season that runs from September 1, 2026 to August 31, 2027.

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

The City of Vancouver has a long history of supporting arts and culture and the role it plays in elevating the distinct characteristics of the city. The long-standing Council-approved Cultural Grants program provides cash and space grants to arts and culture non-profit organizations (NPOs) and is a foundation of the City's support. The Cultural Grant program includes the Theatre Rental Grant (TRG) program which provides arts and culture NPOs in-kind grant support to access Vancouver Civic Theatres (VCT), a portfolio of City-owned and operated performance venues.

About the Vancouver Civic Theatres (VCT)

VCT, a department within Arts, Culture, and Community Services, operates four major performance venues: the Orpheum (2,672 seat concert hall), Queen Elizabeth Theatre (2,765 seat proscenium theatre), Vancouver Playhouse (668 seat proscenium theatre), and Annex (191 seat multi-purpose performing arts space). In 2025, VCT worked with commercial promoters, NPOs, and community groups to host 727 events across all four venues, with 897,058 patrons attending a diverse range of live performance and presentation, and event types.

VCT enhances the performing arts experience and strengthens the cultural fabric of the city. With professionally equipped theatres, supported by experienced staff, VCT plays an integral role in the cultural and economic health of the city. Through VCT, residents and visitors access an array of arts and entertainment productions, including concerts, theatre, classical music, opera, dance, film, lectures and many other event types.

About Theatre Rental Grants (TRG)

The TRG program is designed to advance the City's goals for cultural and economic vibrancy through providing support to Vancouver-based, professional arts and cultural NPOs that have a mission to develop, create, produce, present, and disseminate artistic work for the benefit of the public and the arts sector.

The TRG program offers arts and culture NPOs in any artistic discipline (e.g. Indigenous arts, community arts, dance, interdisciplinary, literary, media, multidisciplinary, music, theatre, and visual arts) the opportunity to produce and present local and international artists and creators in VCT's iconic venues and associated spaces at below market rates. The grant program serves a range of organizations, from large-scale year-round users to small-sized occasional users. These organizations present culturally diverse performances to the community at lower ticket costs than would be required were the theatre rental rates set at market value.

VCT, as a municipally owned and operated business, primarily relies on earned revenues. The TRG investment strengthens theatre utilization and contributes to the overall financial stability of the VCT. In 2025, TRG programming added 58% to the overall utilization of the VCT. This in turn contributed to VCT's event based earned revenues of approximately \$3.6M (rental revenues, staffing recoveries, food and beverage sales, facility fees, ticket surcharges, and parking).

The in-kind grant is equal to Council approved non-profit rental rates (approximately 25% below Council approved commercial rental rates). The funding recommendations are presented each year to Council for approval.

The theatre rental grant program Guide is found online: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/theatre-rental-grant-information-guide.pdf>

Discussion

Recommendations in this report are for the 2026/2027 Performing Arts Season that runs from September 1, 2026 to August 31, 2027 and seek to support the delivery of key objectives in *Culture|Shift* and to build on Council's support and investment in the cultural diversity and economic vitality of the city. If the recommendations are approved for the 2026/2027 TRG Season, access will be made possible to a range of programming in all disciplines presented by local organizations representing diverse cultures such as, Indigenous, Latin American, Southeast Asian, Asian, African diaspora, Middle Eastern, European, and others.

TRG Assessment Process

The TRG applications were evaluated by a staff team using the published application criteria, while also cross-referencing applicants' bookings and theatre availability. The review considers the organization's capacity to produce the event as proposed and the anticipated community impact of the presentation.

TRG recommendations are awarded on a per usage basis and are based on Council-approved NPO rental rates. Funds from any grants that cannot be partially or fully used may be reallocated to TRG or other eligible Cultural Grant programs.

The recommendations are based on the published program criteria, which include:

- Alignment with City policies and Council priorities;
- Confirmed booking at a VCT venue within the 2026/2027 Season;
- Respectful and safe working conditions for artists, staff, volunteers, and contractors;
- 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 (skilled leadership, working with artists and creative collaborators with the relevant lived experience, permission, knowledge, skills, and expertise to lead and contribute to the work); and,
- Mix of revenue sources (earned, private, and other levels of public funding).

Grant Recommendations

There is growing pressure on the TRG program. Past and current TRG recipients are seeking to expand their level of activity and nine NPOs are requesting support for the first time. Overall, applications for grants have been increasing and – as with other grants programs – the associated cumulative funding requests exceed available funding (see metrics highlighted in Table 1). As a result, the TRG process is highly competitive and while all 74 applicants in the 2026-2027 Season cohort met eligibility and are recommended to receive a grant, not every new or returning organization are recommended for the full amount of funding requested.

As an in-kind grant, funding is allocated to offset Council approved rental rates at the daily non-profit rental fee. NPOs who apply for only one performance day usage are typically recommended for 100% of their request. NPOs who apply for multiple uses, or have increased their programming year over year, might not be recommended for their full funding request. A number of factors are considered including, availability in the venue to deliver the full program, and balance of public performances and technical/rehearsal dates. The TRG prioritizes public over technical or rehearsal-based usage.

Grants are being recommended to applicants as listed in Table A Section A (Sept. 1 – Dec. 31, 2026) and Table B (Jan. 1 – Aug. 31, 2027) of Appendix A.

Table 1 – Key Metrics: Requests vs Recommended

TRG Funding	Requested #	Recomm. \$	%	Requested \$	Recomm. \$	%
Fall 2026	46	46	100	\$1,779,210	\$1,152,410	65
Spring 2027	53	53	100	\$2,531,465	\$1,904,695	75

Financial Implications

As an in-kind grant program, TRG is an internal transfer from Arts & Culture’s Council-approved Cultural Grants budget to the VCT Operating Budget. The TRG internal transfer is reflected in the VCT Operating Budget as revenue to offset approved, eligible event expenses incurred by the TRG organizations. TRG events generate other revenue for VCT such as Food and Beverages sales, ticket surcharges, and parking fees that significantly reduce the VCT’s reliance on property tax revenue to support operations. On average, TRG rental revenues represent approximately 33% of VCT’s annual rental budget.

The 2026 TRG budget is \$3,018,713 for the fiscal year. In June 2025 (RTS 17898), Council approved in advance of the 2026 budget, grants totalling \$1,902,525 for Spring 2026 events at VCT venues as part of the September 2025 – August 2026 Performing Arts Season. This left \$1,116,188 to be allocated in the 2026 TRG budget for September – December 2026.

Within the 2025/2026 season, some TRG groups experience challenges due to increased production and travel costs and economic impacts from the global market, reduced revenue opportunities from corporate sponsorship, and reduced public funding. As of May 1, 2026, 11 granted organizations have cancelled or will underuse their Spring 2026 approved bookings, thereby making \$36,505 available for reallocation in the Fall 2026 season.

Table 2 – Summary of 2026 Theatre Rental Grants Funding

2026 Theatre Rental Grants Budget	3,018,713
2026 Theatre Rental Grants (Jan. – Aug.) (RTS 17898)	(1,902,525)
2026 Theatre Rental Grants Spring 2026 cancellations or underuses (forecast as of May 1, 2026)	36,505
TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION	1,152,693
2026 Theatre Rental Grants recommended in this report – Sept. – Dec.	(1,152,410)
2026 FORECASTED THEATRE RENTAL GRANTS BALANCE	283

Staff are therefore recommending 46 grants totalling \$1,152,410 for Sept. 1 - Dec. 31, 2026. The source of funds is the 2026 TRG budget, as shown in Table 2.

This report also recommends approval of grants to 53 organizations for VCT uses within the TRG program from January 1-August 31, 2027, in advance of Council’s confirmation of the 2027

operating budget totalling \$1,904,695. The source of funds is to be the 2027 Cultural Grants Operating budget. These grants are summarized in Table 3 and listed in Appendix A, Section B, and are calculated at the current 2026 budget allocation in advance of the 2027 budget process. This would result in a projected balance of \$1,114,018 in TRG funds to be allocated for the rest of 2027.

Table 3– Summary of 2027 Theatre Rental Grants Projected Funding

2027 Theatre Rental Grants Budget (projected at 2026 funding level)	3,018,713
2027 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations in this report (Jan. – Aug.)	(1,904,695)
2027 TOTAL THEATRE RENTAL GRANTS BUDGET AVAILABLE TO ALLOCATE FOR Sept. 1 - Dec. 31, 2027	1,114,018

Legal Implications

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

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APPENDIX A

A. Sept. 1 – Dec. 31, 2026 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations			
Organization	Sept 1 - Dec 31, 2025 Awarded**	Sept 1 - Dec 31, 2026 Requested	Sept 1 - Dec 31, 2026 Recommendation
Afro Van Connect Society	1,660	1,720	1,720
All My Relations Indigenous Society	82,730	85,630	85,630
Allegra Chamber Orchestra Society	0	1,720	1,720
Arts Umbrella Association	19,450	37,000	16,230
Asian-Canadian Special Events Association	5,025	12,925	8,640
Blackout Art Society	1,660	6,880	3,440
Canada International Arts & Music Society	0	10,230	10,230
Chapel Sound Art Foundation	0	1,720	1,720
Circus 3 Arts Society	7,550	7,815	7,815
Compaigni V'ni Dansi Society	4,150	4,300	4,300
Erato Ensemble Society	1,660	1,720	1,720
Friends of Chamber Music	5,025	20,800	5,200
Greater Vancouver International Film Festival Society	127,070	172,640	124,995
Indian Classical Music Society of Vancouver	0	5,200	5,200
Inverso Productions Society	0	1,720	1,720
Karen Flamenco Dance Society	0	13,015	5,200
Lamondance Arts Society	0	13,645	5,200
Mexican Dance Vancouver Society	0	5,200	5,200
Movement Dance Productions Society	0	18,230	5,200
Muzewest Concerts Society	0	3,440	1,720
Nahualli Folklore Society	5,025	1,720	1,720

Pacific Ballet British Columbia Society (Ballet B.C.)	132,375	205,475	111,435
Raven Spirit Dance Society	3,320	6,020	6,020
RE:Naissance Opera	5,810	10,320	6,020
Seismic Shift Arts Society (DanceHouse)	15,075	15,630	10,400
Shades of YVR Creative Collective	0	3,440	3,440
Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society	0	10,230	10,230
The Society of We Are Canadians Too	3,320	3,440	3,440
The Vancouver Bach Choir	20,520	46,540	38,035
The Vancouver Chopin Society	3,765	11,685	3,895
The Vancouver International Writers Festival Society	5,025	5,200	5,200
The Vancouver Men's Chorus	13,825	24,710	13,000
The Vancouver Out On Screen Film and Video Society	10,050	15,600	10,400
Time Will Tell Arts Society	1,660	1,720	1,720
Turning Point Ensemble	1,660	6,880	3,440
Vancouver Academy of Music	24,610	20,460	10,230
Vancouver Chamber Choir	24,790	20,860	18,245
Vancouver Choral Arts Society	12,305	34,230	12,375
Vancouver Independent Music Centre Society	0	1,720	1,720
Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra	12,305	10,230	10,230
Vancouver Opera Association	113,690	114,725	72,200
Vancouver Recital Society	16,320	15,580	15,580
Vancouver Symphony Society	521,855	751,725	473,755
Vancouver West Side Theatre Society	0	5,160	3,440
VSO School of Music Society	3,320	8,640	1,720
Yarilo Contemporary Music Society	1,660	1,720	1,720
Total		1,779,210	1,152,410

**0 value in "Sept 1 – Dec 31, 2025 Recommendation column means that this NPO was not part of this season's recipients

B Jan. 1 – Aug. 31, 2027 Theatre Rental Grant Recommendations			
Organization	Jan 1 – Aug 31, 2026 Awarded**	Jan 1 - Aug 31, 2027 Requested	Jan 1 - Aug 31, 2027 Recommendation
Albanian Canadian Society for Social and Economic Progress	0	1,720	1,720
Arts Umbrella Association	40,200	75,505	41,600
Asian-Canadian Special Events Association	12,305	5,200	5,200
Blueridge Chamber Music Society	3,320	8,600	3,440
Canadian Music Competitions of British Columbia Society	1,660	1,720	1,720
Dance//Novella Arts Society	0	5,160	3,440
Dance West Network Society	0	1,720	1,720
Erato Ensemble Society	1,660	1,720	1,720
Friends of Chamber Music	31,395	19,495	19,495
IFG And Art Association	0	2,575	1,720
Indian Summer Arts Society	19,225	16,215	16,215
Inverso Productions Society	4,980	3,440	3,440
Karen Flamenco Dance Society	10,060	13,015	5,200
Movement Dance Productions Society	10,050	44,260	15,600
Music on Main Society	5,025	4,300	4,300
Muzewest Concerts Society	6,640	3,440	3,440
New Old World Music Society	0	8,640	5,200
Opera Unbound	3,320	4,300	3,440
Pacific Ballet British Columbia Society (Ballet B.C.)	140,525	179,605	154,025
PuSH International Performing Arts Festival Society	34,280	49,380	33,760
RunNGun Filmmakers Society	16,575	25,725	17,155
See Ya Youth Fraternity Foundation	0	12,375	12,375

Seismic Shift Arts Society (DanceHouse)	60,320	91,120	62,400
Sound of Dragon Society	4,980	4,300	3,440
Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society	4,980	5,150	1,720
The Coastal Jazz and Blues Society	30,150	110,220	31,200
The Documentary Media Society	5,025	5,200	5,200
The Standing Wave Society	1,660	3,440	1,720
The Vancouver Bach Choir	25,785	9,535	6,920
The Vancouver Chinese Singers Society	5,025	5,200	5,200
The Vancouver Chopin Society	16,070	20,780	15,580
The Vancouver Folk Music Festival Society	0	17,155	17,155
The Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra Society	0	5,160	3,440
The Vancouver International Writers Festival Society	0	5,200	5,200
The Vancouver Men's Chorus	1,660	1,720	1,720
Time Will Tell Arts Society	5,025	1,720	1,720
Turning Point Ensemble	4,980	3,440	3,440
Vancouver Academy of Music	24,610	35,800	35,800
Vancouver Chinese Canadian Seniors Society of Multicultural Song and Dance	0	5,200	5,200
Vancouver Choral Arts Society	16,575	34,230	17,155
Vancouver Dancing Club	5,025	5,200	5,200
Vancouver International Burlesque Festival Association	10,050	10,400	10,400
Vancouver International Dance Festival Society	16,600	18,055	16,355
Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra	12,305	22,355	17,155
Vancouver New Music Society	4,980	2,580	2,580
Vancouver Opera Association	254,650	280,915	280,915

Vancouver Recital Society	51,470	44,150	36,360
Vancouver Society for Early Music	18,395	20,880	12,375
Vancouver Symphony Society	904,400	1,239,240	918,565
Vancouver Tap Dance Society	3,320	6,020	3,440
Vancouver West Side Theatre Society	0	7,815	5,200
VSO School of Music Society	11,710	17,280	12,120
Westcoast Tap Dance Collective	0	3,895	3,895
Total		2,531,465	1,904,695

***0 value in "Jan 1 – Aug 31, 2026 Recommendation column means that this NPO was not part of this season's recipients*