CITY OF VANCOUVER

COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date:	November 6, 2026
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Meeting Date:	December 2, 2026

Submit comments to Council

TO: Standing Committe on Policy and Strategic Priorities

FROM: General Manager, Arts, Culture, and Community Services

SUBJECT: 2026 Cultural Grants (Equity and Accessibility, Indigenous, Vancouver Book Award)

Recommendations

A. THAT Council approve Cultural Equity and Accessibility grants of $480,500 each year for two years (2026 and 2027) totalling $961,000 from the Annual Cultural Grants Operating Budget to the 22 organizations listed in the first table of Appendix A for the amounts recommended for each organization in the “2026 Grant Recomm” and “2027 Grant Recomm” columns.

B. THAT Council approve Cultural Indigenous grants of $344,500 each year for two years (2026 and 2027) totalling $689,000 from the Annual Cultural Grants Operating Budget to the 13 organizations listed in the second table of Appendix A for the amounts recommended for each organization in the “2026 Grant Recomm” and “2027 Grant Recomm” columns.

C. THAT Council approve a grant of $10,000 from the 2026 Cultural Grants Operating Budget to The West Coast Book Prize Society as described in the third table of Appendix A.

D. THAT Council delegate authority to the General Manager of Arts, Culture and Community Services to negotiate and execute agreements to disburse the grants described in Recommendations A to C on the terms and conditions set out herein or such other terms and conditions as are satisfactory to the General Manager of Arts, Culture and Community Services and the Director of Legal Services.

E. THAT pursuant to section 206(1)(j) of the *Vancouver Charter*, Council deems any organization listed in Appendix A that is not otherwise a registered charity with Canada Revenue Agency to be contributing to the culture of the city.

F. 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 to E require at least 2/3 affirmative votes of all Council members under section 206(1) of the *Vancouver Charter*.

Purpose and Executive Summary

This report recommends grants totalling $835,000 in 2026 and $825,000 in 2027 to 36 cultural organizations to support programs and services for artists, the cultural community, and the public in alignment with the City's Arts and Culture priorities.

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 the local arts and culture sector (RTS 15658).
- January 20, April 14, and June 2, 2026: Council approved three grant reports for arts and culture, supporting cultural projects and operations (RTS 18164, 18483, 18484).
- March 10, 2026: Council approved a grant to the West Coast Book Prize Society to deliver the 2026 Vancouver Book Award (RTS 18412).
- July 23, 2025, and July 15, 2026: Council approved the Urgent Investment in Vancouver's Arts and Culture Infrastructure: Strengthening Vancouver's Cultural Sustainability and Economic Impact and Supporting Prioritized Solutions from the Arts and Culture Sector Working Group motions to address the urgent needs of the arts and culture community.

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

The City of Vancouver provides operating and capital grants to local arts and culture non-profit organizations to advance City arts and culture priorities, support cultural and economic vibrancy, and contribute to accessible and affordable cultural programming for the community. Grants support operations, cultural projects, capital projects and planning, access to the civic theatres, and organizational capacity building. The distribution and impact of cultural grant streams and other grants are reported through the ACCS Annual Grant Impact Report.

This report is the fourth in a series of 2026 annual cultural grant recommendations presented to Council, focusing on two grant streams developed to achieve greater equity for those who have been systemically excluded in funding programs:

- Cultural Equity and Accessibility Funding

- Cultural Indigenous Funding

A grant is also recommended for the delivery of the 2027 Vancouver Book Award.

These 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 *Reconciliation Framework* and *UNDRIP Action Plan 2024-2028*
- The City's *Equity Framework* and *Accessibility Strategy*

Cultural grant funding provides support for local organizations and helps leverage investment from other levels of government and the private sector, amplifying the impact of City funding. Investing in arts and culture has a significant impact on cultural vibrancy, jobs, tourism, community health and well-being. BC's arts and culture sector outperforms many traditional industries, with a direct GDP of $11.4 billion in 2024[1]. Over 11,000 artists live in Vancouver[2], one of the highest concentrations among Canadian cities.

Vancouver's arts and culture sector contributes to the city's social, cultural, and economic vitality, and continues to face escalating pressures that have led organizations to reduce programming, scale back operations, or cease operations entirely. Inflation and rising costs have significantly increased the cost of production, while the economic context is impacting revenues from ticket sales, corporate sponsorship and private donors. Organizations also face increasing real estate pressures in offering, upgrading, and protecting affordable space for arts and culture.

Demand for funding from the cultural sector continues to increase and more organizations are applying for funding, including artists and organizations from equity-denied communities that have been historically underserved and are prioritized through *Culture|Shift*. As staff have put forward recommendations to support more organizations, this has resulted in smaller grants and use of inflationary increases to support more organizations.

On July 15, 2026, Council approved the motion "Supporting Prioritized Solutions from the Arts and Culture Sector Working Group", recommending increased investment in the arts and culture sector alongside policy options to support cultural infrastructure and address regulatory barriers. On April 1, 2026, Council also directed staff to report back on recommendations for a new Festival Support Fund, to address rising costs for cultural festivals, community celebrations, and major public events. Work on these motions is underway, and staff will report back in 2027 to inform future recommendations to Council.

Discussion

[1] Statistics Canada. Table 36-10-0452-01 Culture and sport indicators by domain and sub-domain, by province and territory, product perspective (x 1,000)
[2] Kelly Hill, "Artists in British Columbia in 2021," Statistical insights on the arts, October 17, 2023, hillstrategies.com.

This report outlines priorities and processes for grants recommended to Council this fall. A full list of applicants and recommended grantees is in Appendix A, with grant metrics in Appendix B.

Recommendations A + B: Cultural Equity & Accessibility Funding and Cultural Indigenous Funding

Cultural Equity and Accessibility Funding (CEAF) and Cultural Indigenous Funding (CIF) launched in 2020 as key actions of *Culture|Shift* to achieve greater equity in the City's support for arts and culture, and advance reconciliation goals to increase investment and leadership opportunities for xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and Urban Indigenous artists.

CEAF provides core support for equity and accessibility-mandated organizations, funding arts and cultural programming and capacity building. CIF provides core support for Indigenous-led organizations, funding Indigenous arts, culture, and language initiatives. Both are low-barrier funding programs with a relational approach, to honour and respect Indigenous self-determination and the deep knowledge held by equity-denied groups.

At the start, 17 organizations were invited into the program based on community input that identified groups advancing equity in practice, through policy, programs, and the people in decision-making roles. In 2021, CIF funding was also directed to xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, to support self-determined cultural projects creating access to history, language, and culture for their communities. This funding advances *Culture|Shift* and is in line with UNDRIP Action Plan recommendations for the City.

In 2025, there was an open call for organizations to apply to both funding programs, to increase access for the arts and culture community. Peer assessment committees, made up of members of the arts and culture sector and City staff, reviewed applications against program priorities to determine grant recommendations. Demand for funding exceeded available funding, and 36 organizations were supported.

This report recommends renewing grants for the same cohort of recipients for 2026 and 2027, to provide stable funding for Indigenous, equity, and accessibility-mandated groups to deliver ongoing arts and cultural programming. These programs would provide funding on a multi-year grant cycle, with new organizations able to apply every three years. The next call for applications is planned for 2028.

The recommendations are aligned with those made in 2025, with several changes based on the peer assessment and program priorities. For example, two organizations receiving grants in 2025 were not recommended for continued funding through CEAF, ranking lower in the peer assessment process. Both organizations are eligible to apply for cultural project grants and can reapply to CEAF in 2028.

This program has expanded the City's support to artists and organizations that have faced systemic barriers and been historically underserved. Organizations funded through this program have had significant impact, and supported many different cultural communities.

Recommendation C: Vancouver Book Award

The City of Vancouver Book Award was established in 1989 by City Council, to recognize authors that contribute to the appreciation and understanding of Vancouver's diversity, history, unique character, or the achievements of its residents.

The West Coast Book Prize Society (WCBPS) delivered the Vancouver Book Award in 2026 as a successful one-year pilot. This involved issuing a callout for submissions, assembling a jury to review submissions, promoting the short list and award winner, and coordinating logistics for the event where the award is announced. Staff recommend a $10,000 grant to WCBPS to continue delivering the Vancouver Book Award in 2027.

Financial Implications

The source of funding for these recommendations is the 2026 Cultural Grants Operating Budget, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 – 2026 Cultural Grants Operating Budget

Rec	Grants Stream	2026 Budget^	Previously Approved	Rec. in this Report	Balance
A	Projects (CASC)	$1,025,533	$1,025,533		$0
	Operating – Institutions	$3,783,680	$3,783,680		$0
	Operating – Annual **	$1,122,000	$1,122,000		$0
	Operating – Multi-year	$3,944,250	$3,944,250		$0
	Theatre Rental	$3,018,713	$3,018,713		$0
	Equity & Accessibility	$480,500		$480,500	$0
	Indigenous	$344,500		$344,500	$0
B	Affordable Spaces	$335,000	$335,000		$0
D	Capacity Building	$8,000	$8,000		$0
	Emerging Priorities *	$161,002	$151,002	$10,000	$0
	Sport / Destination Events	$190,000	$190,000		$0
	Total Operating Grants	**$14,413,178**	**$13,578,178**	**$835,000**	**$0**

** This budget line includes grants for the 2026 and 2027 Vancouver Book Awards (RTS 18412), a grant to the Chinese Benevolent Association (approved by Council on February 4, 2026), and the payment of an annual fee tied to inflation to the Museum of Vancouver, for the stewardship of the Olympic Collection.*
*** On April 14, 2026, Council approved an additional $25,000 to be added to this grant stream from the reserves.*

Legal Implications

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

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APPENDIX A
GRANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation A: Cultural Equity and Accessibility Funding					
	Organization	**Total Grant Request (2026-2027)**	**Total Grant Recomm (2026-2027)**	**2026 Grant Recomm**	**2027 Grant Recomm**
1	African Friendship Society *	50,000	50,000	25,000	25,000
2	All Bodies Dance Society	50,000	50,000	25,000	25,000
3	Black Block Association	30,000	30,000	15,000	15,000
4	Blackout Art Society	40,000	40,000	20,000	20,000
5	Chapel Sound Art Foundation	50,000	50,000	25,000	25,000
6	Canadian International Dragon Boat Festival Society (Dragon Boat BC) *	51,000	51,000	25,500	25,500
7	Future Arts Network Society	30,000	30,000	15,000	15,000
8	Hogan's Alley Society	30,000	30,000	15,000	15,000
9	Love Intersections Society	30,000	30,000	15,000	15,000
10	MENA Film Festival Society	40,000	40,000	20,000	20,000
11	New Old World Music Society	30,000	30,000	15,000	15,000
12	Odd Meridian Arts Society	80,000	80,000	40,000	40,000
13	Punjabi Market Collective Society	40,000	40,000	20,000	20,000
14	re:Naissance Opera	70,000	70,000	35,000	35,000
15	Recorded Movement Society	60,000	60,000	30,000	30,000
16	The Biting School Society	50,000	50,000	25,000	25,000
17	The James Black Gallery Association	30,000	30,000	15,000	15,000
18	Time Will Tell Arts Society	30,000	30,000	15,000	15,000
19	Van Vogue Jam Arts Society	30,000	30,000	15,000	15,000
20	Vancouver Asian Film Festival Society	50,000	50,000	25,000	25,000
21	Vancouver Cantonese Opera	30,000	30,000	15,000	15,000
22	VocalEye Descriptive Arts Society	60,000	60,000	30,000	30,000
		961,000	**961,000**	**480,500**	**480,500**

** Denotes grants with conditions*[3]

Recommendation B: Cultural Indigenous Funding					
	Organization	**Total Grant Request (2026-2027)**	**Total Grant Recomm (2026-2027)**	**2026 Grant Recomm**	**2027 Grant Recomm**
1	Aeriosa Dance Society	20,000	20,000	10,000	10,000
2	All My Relations Indigenous Society	75,000	75,000	37,500	37,500
3	Carnegie Community Centre Association *	40,000	40,000	20,000	20,000
4	Compaigni V'ni Dansi Society dba V'ni Dansi	70,000	70,000	35,000	35,000
5	Holy Crow Arts Society	60,000	60,000	30,000	30,000
6	Mortal Coil Performance Society	30,000	30,000	15,000	15,000
7	Native Hip Hop Society	34,000	34,000	17,000	17,000
8	O.Dela Arts Society	60,000	60,000	30,000	30,000
9	Snichim Foundation Society+	40,000	40,000	20,000	20,000
10	Western Canada Community Projects Society	20,000	20,000	10,000	10,000
11	səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation)	80,000	80,000	40,000	40,000
12	SKwxwu7Mesh Uxxwumixw (Squamish Nation)	80,000	80,000	40,000	40,000
13	xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam Indian Band)	80,000	80,000	40,000	40,000
		689,000	**689,000**	**344,500**	**344,500**

** Denotes grants with conditions*

+ Moved from Cultural Operating Funding to Cultural Indigenous Funding

Recommendation C: Vancouver Book Award			
	Organization		**2026 Grant Recomm**
1	The West Coast Book Prize Society	The West Coast Book Prize Society will deliver the 2027 Vancouver Book Award, which includes issuing a callout for submissions, assembling a jury to review submissions, promoting the short list and award winner, and coordinating logistics for the event where the award is announced.	10,000
			10,000

[3] A grant with a condition means that a specific requirement must be satisfied before the grant is paid, typically providing financial statements from the last fiscal year or completing annual Society filing.

APPENDIX B
METRICS

Table 1 – 2026 Grants Metrics

Grant Program	# Grants Requested	# Grants Recomm	$ Grants Requested	$ Grants Recomm	% (by $)
Cultural Equity and Accessibility Funding	22	22	$480,500	$480,500	100
Cultural Indigenous Funding	13	13	$344,500	$344,500	100
Vancouver Book Award	1	1	$10,000	$10,000	100
Total	**36**	**36**	**$835,000**	**$835,000**	**100**