# 2025-2026 Grants to Professional Arts Organizations

# Operating Assistance
# Program Guidelines

**DEADLINE March 31, 2025, 5:00PM**

**Staff Contact:**

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**HALIFAX**

# Program Purpose

The Grants to Professional Arts Organizations Program supports the operating capacity of producing and presenting arts organizations in the Municipality and advances the profile of the local arts sector by fostering broad public access to, and appreciation of, the arts.

Support is provided towards ongoing core creation, production, presentation and administrative costs. Support is provided on an annual basis for incoming applicants and multiyear basis for returning applicants in good standing and is subject to annual budget availability.

Eligibility is restricted to registered non-profit and charitable arts organizations in good standing under the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks. Read more about eligibility in the Program **Eligibility Section**.

The Program is governed by [Administrative Order 2014-007-ADM](#).

**In the event that a conflict arises between the conditions stated herein and the Administrative Order referenced above, the Administrative Order shall be considered the document of record in all instances.**


# Overview

## Operating Assistance to Professional Arts Organizations

This stream supports the general and ongoing operational capacity of professional arts organizations in the Municipality as follows:

a) *Anchor Organizations:* eligible to access a maximum of $100,000 per year.*
- Operate with budgets in excess of $3 million per year.
- Registered non-profits that have operated continuously for a minimum of three (3) years with strong administrative management and a track record of success and artistic merit.
- Demonstrate strong public impact in terms of number of events, attendance and employment figures.

b) *Other Non-profit Organizations:* eligible to access a maximum of $50,000 per year, or 15% of applicant's annual operating budget, whichever is less.*
- Registered non-profits that have operated continuously for a minimum of three (3) years with strong administrative management and a track record of success and artistic merit.

* Under this program the Municipality may contribute no more than 60% of revenues required to cover annual administrative and core program costs. Combined municipal, provincial and federal funding normally will not exceed 90% of total revenues for annual administrative and core program costs.

# Program Administration

## DEADLINE March 31, 2025, 5:00PM

Applications will be administered by the Halifax Regional Municipality's Culture & Community division.

**Program Officer**
Lindsay Cory
Community Developer - Public Art
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## Two-Part Application Process

Your organization's contact information and general application information will be submitted through an **online application form** while the **Written Responses** and **Financial Information** of your application will be submitted by email. Please refer to the **Application Checklist** to ensure your application is complete.

> **Note:** This application intake is ONLY for organizations who either:
>
> - received **one-year** funding in 2024-25; or
> - were **not successful** in their 2024-25 application.
>
> Organizations who received three-year funding agreements in 2024-25 **do not need to re-apply** in 2025-26. They will be instructed to provide an interim report.
>
> If you are a **new applicant,** you **must contact the program officer** before applying.

## How to Apply

1. Access the **Application Form** from the program website. Fill out the required information on the form and click submit. If you have difficulty filling out this online form, please contact the program officer.
2. Prepare your **Written Responses** and any **Support Material** to be sent by email to artgrants@halifax.ca which includes all the required application information.
3. Check the Application Checklist to ensure your application is complete.

**Applications will only be accepted to the artgrants@halifax.ca email address. All applications sent to artgrants@halifax.ca will receive an auto-reply confirmation. If you do not receive confirmation within one week, please contact the program officer directly. Please direct all questions on your application to the program officer directly.**

4. Applicants will be notified upon initial staff review if their application is deemed ineligible.
5. Staff will oversee the selection of a peer review panel who will score and assess the applications.
6. Assessment will follow the evaluation criteria set out in this document.

7. Final recommendations of the peer review panel will be compiled by staff and directed to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for review. In all instances, recommended organizations and corresponding funding levels are subject to the approval of the CAO.
8. All applicants will be notified of the results of this process once complete.

# Program Funding

- Program funding will be approved on an annual basis by Regional Council as a part of the annual municipal budget process, subject to budget availability.
- Support is provided on an annual basis for new applicants and multi-year basis for returning applicants in good standing as recommended by peer review panel.
- Applicants for Operating Grants shall re-apply at the end of their funding term (terms will be laid out in funding agreements).
- Disbursement of the funds will take place upon the approval of the CAO and will be administered by Culture & Community staff. Applications recommended for funding will receive 100% of those funds upon approval by the CAO.

# Program Eligibility

### Definition of Eligible Professional Arts Organization

- **A Professional Arts Organization** means a registered, non-profit professional arts and culture organization that supports, presents or produces work by professional or established artists, and employs qualified paid staff to administer on-going arts and culture programs and services.

### Eligible organizations must:

- Be registered not-for-profit societies or not-for-profit cooperatives in good standing with the Provincial Registrar of Joint Stock Companies or federally registered under the Corporations Act as not-for-profit societies or cooperatives based and operating in Nova Scotia.
- Be located within the geographic boundary of the Municipality, with a mandate to provide professional art programming and services to municipal residents.
- Have been operating for at least three (3) years prior to the date of application.
- Not be in receipt of operating assistance from any other municipal government department (excludes tax relief).
- Maintain an active membership or show a form of community support that includes residents of the Municipality and persons other than those who serve on the board.
- Operate programs year-round, except for presenting organizations which may have seasonal programs.
- Have secured additional sources of revenue such as corporate contributions, donations, sales, and membership fees and must pursue other sources of public or private funding.

### Ineligible Organizations

- Schools or educational institutions (with the exception of university art galleries), or educational based organizations.
- Organizations not based within the physical boundaries of the Halifax Regional Municipality.
- Organizations in arrears to the Municipality, or otherwise deemed to be in poor standing on the basis of incomplete projects or outstanding final reports.
- Organizations whose primary purpose is not the ongoing (year-round) production or presentation of professional arts.

# General Terms

Once approved by the CAO, the Municipality will enter into an agreement with the applicant based on the following terms:

- Successful grant recipients must complete a final report describing the impact of the funding received through this program.
- Applicants can now opt for a final report interview which will be followed up by a written summary provided by Culture & Community staff.
- Final report requirements will be sent with the confirmation of the award and will be available from Culture & Community staff.
- Should the operations of the applicant organization cease or be diminished, or should a project, in part or in whole, not be completed as described in the application, applicants must notify the program officer or their designate. This correspondence will be filed with the application.
- Municipal support must be recognized as outlined in the "Requirements for Acknowledging Funding" which will accompany the Terms and Conditions letter.
- All funding applications are subject to the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#).

# Evaluation Form

| Basic Eligibility |
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| The applicant must meet all of the following criteria to be considered eligible for funding: |

- • The applicant is a not-for-profit society incorporated under the Societies Act and registered with the N.S. Registry of Joint Stocks; or a not-for-profit co-operative incorporated under the Co-operative Associations Act and registered with the N.S. Registry of Joint Stocks. Organization has been active for 3+ years.
- • The applicant has provided a description of their organization's role and mandate.
- • The applicant has included a list of active board members including executive roles.
- • The applicant has provided a list of current staff, indicating which are permanent and which are project-specific or part-time.
- • The applicant has provided a copy of financial statements for the most recently completed fiscal year, including a balance sheet (assets, liabilities, equity/debt) and income statement. Financial statements must be signed by an authorized representative of the organization.

| ☐ **Proceed to Section 2 of Review** | ☐ **Ineligible** |
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# Evaluation Criteria

| Programs and Services (50pts) |
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| • **Program Delivery, Planning and Evaluation**<br><br>The application reflects:<br><br>Stated goals and objectives of the organization; Program evaluation, design and development; Quantitative and qualitative assessment of programming from past years; Impact of the organization's programming and service delivery **/30pts** |
| • **Community Relationships**<br><br>The application reflects:<br><br>Consideration of audience development; Organizational and community partnerships; Communication and outreach; Impact and engagement; **/20pts** |

| Organizational Standing (20pts) |
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| • **Governance, Administration and Strategic Direction**<br><br>The application reflects:<br><br>Active and engaged Board of Directors; Clear organizational mandate and a well-articulated plan; Organizational status and responsiveness to opportunities and challenges **/20pts** |

| **Program and Service, Organizational Standing Total Score ___/70pts** |
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| **Financial Stewardship (30pts)** |
| Existing/previous financial statements are accurate and complete; Statements show revenues and expenses, assets and liabilities, cash savings and investments; Statements reflect that the organization is in good fiscal health **/15pts** |
| Submitted operating budget is complete, detailed and accurate and has been developed to be efficient, without unnecessary costs; Budget shows diverse funding sources and revenue streams **/15pts** |
| **Financial Stewardship Total Score ___/30pts** |

| **Section 4 – Scoring Summary** | |
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| **Program and Service, Organizational Standing** | **/70pts** |
| **Financial Stewardship** | **/30pts** |
| **Total Score**<br>**\*A minimum score of 70 is required to be eligible for award** | **/100pts** |

# Written Responses and Financial Information

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| **Organizational Profile**<br><br>(1,500 words) | Briefly describe the organization in relation to the following:<br><br>• Organizational history, role and mandate<br>• Geographic area of service<br>• Governance and administrative structure<br>• List of current staff (indicate FT and PT) and board members<br>• Any additional information important to the context or environment within which you work (ex: region, artistic community, cultural community). |
| **Programs and Services - Program Planning and Evaluation**<br><br>(1,500 words, 30pts)<br><br>*Organizations may use the [Programming Overview Template](#) available on the [program website](#).*<br><br>**If you are a provincial Operating Client of Arts NS, you may submit the same Programming Overview Template for this application.* | Briefly describe your organizations programming including:<br><br>• Past programming (most recently completed fiscal year)<br>   o List programs and activities undertaken over the organization's last fiscal year.<br>   o Brief description of the impact of this programming (audience attendance, community engagement, professional and organizational development, e.g.).<br>• Current programming (current fiscal year)<br>   o List programs and activities planned for the current fiscal year.<br>   o Brief description of the impact of this programming (audience attendance, community engagement, professional and organizational development, e.g.).<br>   o Brief description of evaluation plan for these programs<br>• Planned programming (upcoming programming year)<br>   o List programs and activities planned for the upcoming year (year for which the organization is requesting funding).<br>   o Brief description of evaluation plan for these programs |
| **Organizational development, community relationships and impact**<br><br>(1,000 words, 20pts) | Describe the organization's approach to programming, program development and community engagement including:<br><br>• Audience development<br>• Marketing and promotion<br>• Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives (as relates to programming)<br>• Collaboration and partnership in programming and administration (Organizational and Community Partnerships) |

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| | • Community impact (incl. sectoral impact) |
| **Organizational standing**<br><br>(1,000 words, 20pts) | Describe the organization's operating model, governance structure, strategic direction and any opportunities and challenges in relation to the organization's current and future state including:<br><br>• Diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives (as relates to administration and governance)<br>• Roles and activities of the Board of Directors<br>• Links to strategic plan, where applicable |
| **Financial Information**<br><br>(30 pts)<br><br>*Organizations may use the [Financial Template](#) available on the program website.*<br><br>**Applicants are welcome and encouraged to submit the budgets and projections they use for Canada Council (CADAC) or Arts NS and do not need to complete a new template for HRM funding. Please provide the Excel version of the file and not a PDF.* | Submit a full picture of the financial position of the organization including:<br><br>• A detailed budget outlining projected revenue, operating and capital costs in a comparative table including the previous fiscal year actuals, current year budget projects and request year budget*<br>• Details on any other Municipal funding received within the current and previous two (2) fiscal years (includes tax relief, cash grants, and rental subsidy).<br>• Detailed and signed financial statements from your most recent fiscal period.<br>• New applicants only:<br>   ○ Provide detailed financial statements for the previous 3 years of operation<br>• Organizations on concerned status only:<br>   ○ Two-page recovery plan<br><br>Additional notes on required financial information:<br><br>• Itemize revenues and expenditures by applicable category (e.g. Artistic Expenses, Administrative Expenses, Marketing and Communications Expenses, etc.).<br>• List all, and differentiate between, sources of government funding (Municipal, Provincial, Federal).<br>• Reports may list in-kind expenses and must balance with listed in-kind contributions under revenues.<br>• Notation should be included to items listed on the financial table for the purposes of explaining:<br>   ○ Any significant change in a particular category of revenue or expense.<br>   ○ Any significant deficits or surpluses listed (expected). |

| | |
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| | <ul><li>Any particular items that the applicant wishes to highlight and address.</li></ul><ul><li>Applicants whose projected budget shows significant debt (in excess of 5% of the total annual budget for that fiscal year) must include a debt-reduction plan and a brief explanation of what steps are being taken to eliminate the shortfall.</li></ul> |
| **Support Material**<br><br>*Organizations may use the [Support Material Template](#) available on the program website.* | Support material can be submitted to accompany applications to Operating Assistance to Professional Arts Organizations program. Test your material before you submit to ensure that it is formatted correctly.<br><br><ul><li>All support material labeled clearly</li><li>Ensure file names are short</li><li>Do not put any special characters, symbols, periods, quotation marks (such as # / - "&) or spaces in any file name.</li></ul><br>Support materials can be submitted digitally as separate emails to that of the written application materials or via link to file-storage and sharing service in the body of the email. |

# Support Material Guidelines

| Video files | **3 samples; max 15 minutes for all material** | acceptable formats: dvd format, .mp4, .mov, .mpg |
|---|---|---|
| **Audio files** | **3 samples; max 15 minutes for all material** | acceptable formats:.cda, .mp3, .m4a and .m4p |
| **Digital images** | **maximum 10 images** | acceptable formats:.jpg, .tiff, .tif file format; (a maximum resolution of 1024 x 768 pixels; and, Max 2MB each) |
| **Written or Printed Materials** | **maximum 15 pages** | submitted digitally as a Word file or PDF document. |

# Application Checklist

## Applications for Operating Assistance must include:

- ☐ A completed **online application form**
- ☐ An email with all required information including **Written Responses** and **Financial Information**.
- ☐ An email with **Support Material** if you plan to submit any.

**Double check before sending your email for the following:**

- Your name is included on all files
- You may include all written responses in the same document.
- Spreadsheets should be submitted as Excel files (not Number files or PDFs)
- Ensure your word counts, page limits and file sizes are in line within the program guidelines. Word counts are suggested to give applicants a sense of the level of detail and time that is expected for each part. They also ensure that peer assessors will read your application in full.
- Only send one application per email.
- Subject line should be: "Your Organization Name – Operating Funding".
- Keep attachments under 25MB and do not attach large audio or video files; include a streaming link in the body of the email.
- Take note to not have long file names in your attachments.
- Ensure your email is addressed to artgrants@halifax.ca.
- Submit by 5pm on the day of the deadline.

## Accessing the Application Form

- ☐ Open the Application Form in your browser.
- ☐ A preview of the Application Form is also available directly on the program website.