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Information Item No. 2
Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee
November 20, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of Community Planning and Economic Development
Standing Committee

FROM: Jacqueline Hamilton, Acting Commissioner of Operations

DATE: September 9, 2025

SUBJECT: 2025-2026 Grants to Professional Arts Organizations, CAO Approved

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

2025-2026 applications received pursuant to *Administrative Order Number 2014-007-ADM: Respecting Grants to Professional Arts Organizations*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the 2025-2026 Grants to Professional Arts Organizations awards.

BACKGROUND

Halifax Regional Municipality administers an annual funding program in support of professional arts organizations as governed by *Administrative Order Number 2014-007-ADM Respecting Grants to Professional Arts Organizations* (Administrative Order). The 2025-2026 approved funding envelope is \$810,000.

The Grants to Professional Arts Organization Program awards funding to registered non-profit professional arts organizations located within the geographic boundary of the municipality and in accordance with the definitions outlined in the Administrative Order. Applications are assessed by peer jury review and awarded by the CAO, as set out in the Administrative Order.

The program is divided into two funding categories:

1. Operating Assistance to Professional Arts Organizations, which supports the regular operations of those organizations; and
2. Project Assistance to Professional Arts Organizations, which allocates funding to stand-alone, non-recurrent arts initiatives.

On December 12, 2023, Regional Council approved an amendment to *Administrative Order Number 2024-007-ADM: Respecting Grants to Professional Arts Organizations* allowing Halifax Regional Municipality to

provide up to a three-year funding commitment subject to annual budgetary approval. The peer jury considered this option when developing their recommendations.

DISCUSSION

On April 8, 2025, the funding envelope for 2025-2026 Grants to Professional Arts Organizations was approved at \$810,000, with awards recommended and approved at this total amount. The awards reflect approximately 75% toward Operating Assistance, and 25% toward Project Assistance. This allocation is in line with historic allocations and represents feedback from arts groups who have confirmed that Operating Assistance should be weighed heavier than Project Assistance support when additional funding is available. Table 1 provides a comparison of Grant Applications from 2024-2025 and 2025-2026.

In total, ninety (90) applications were considered as part of the 2025-2026 funding requests for the Grants to Professional Arts Organizations funding program. These included:

- Thirty-three (33) multi-year Operating Funding clients (CAO approved in 2024-2025 for 3-year funding).
- Fifteen (15) new applicants to the Operating Funding program.
- Thirty-eight (38) applications to the Project Assistance Program.
- Four (4) applications that were either ineligible or were withdrawn by the applicant.

The cumulative funding request in 2025-2026 is \$1,419,380 which is \$409,799 less than in 2024-2025. This is due to ongoing multi-year Operating Funding agreements that provide consistent funding amounts for three consecutive years. Groups in receipt of multi-year funding could not reapply in 2025-2026 so the amount "requested" in Table 1 is the amount that has been allotted to them in their initial request year which is often lower than the amount initially requested. While this makes the overall request for funding appear relatively lower than in previous years, the need for funding remains consistent across the sector and continues to trend upwards. In 2027 all operating clients will reapply as one cohort and applications will then include the organizations' new operating funding requests for the 2027-2030 three-year funding term. The new funding requests total is anticipated to increase. In 2024 the HRM became members of CADAC (Canadian Arts Data / Données sur les arts au Canada) and joined the National Research Group led by Mass Culture and Canada Council for the Arts which will provide additional metrics that will be applied for future funding considerations.

Operating Assistance

On May 13, 2025 the peer jury was convened. Operating funding recommendations are listed in Table 2. Fifteen (15) new applications were received, three (3) applications were deemed ineligible after the internal review or withdrawn by the group, thirty-three (33) applications were carried over into the 2025-2026 Operating Funding year based on previously being approved for funding in 2024-2025. Organizations approved for multi-year funding will enter into the cohort with a two-year agreement.

Project Assistance

On May 16, 2025, the peer jury was convened. Project funding recommendations are listed in Table 3. The peer jury recommended funds at least 90% of their requests, supporting projects as holistically as possible. Of the thirty-eight (38) eligible applications received, twelve (12) were recommended for funding.

The CAO accepted the recommendations of the peer jury, and the recommended grants have been awarded.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommended Professional Arts Grant awards for 2025-2026 in the total amount of \$810,000 are accommodated in the approved 2025-2026 Parks & Recreation operating budget (Cost centre W707 GL: 8004) as shown in Attachment 1.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Grants to Professional Arts Organizations program uses a peer jury to assess and score the applications against the criteria. The peer jury is established achieving a balance of artistic discipline or area of professional expertise, regional perspective, age, and cultural and gender diversity while also considering potential conflicts of interest. This process supports public access to professional arts activities, diversifies and grows the local arts sector providing meaningful opportunities for artists and arts administrators and ultimately supports engagement, participation, and appreciation of the arts.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39 as amended

79A (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if

- a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;
- b) the expenditure is in respect of an emergency under the Emergency Management Act; or
- c) the expenditure is legally required to be paid.

Administrative Order Number 2014-007-ADM: *Respecting Grants to Professional Arts Organizations*

Section 16A. (1) Council hereby delegates to the CAO the authority to approve grants under this Administrative Order, and to determine the amount of such grants.

Section 21A. Parks & Recreation staff will provide an information report annually to the Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee on the peer jury process and the grants approved by the CAO.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Funding Tables

ATTACHMENT 1

Table 1: Comparison of Grant Applications and Requests (2024-2025 and 2025-2026)					
Category	Application Type	Number of Applications (2024-2025)	Total Funding Request (2024-2025)	Number of Applications (2025-2026)	Total Funding Request (2025-2026)
Operating Grants	Anchor Organization New Applications	2	\$ 200,000.00	0	\$ -
	Non-Anchor Organization New/Annual Applications	47	\$ 1,028,159.00	15	\$ 189,500.00
	Multi-year clients approved in the previous year (including Anchor Organizations)	NA	NA	33	\$ 532,450.00
Project Grants	Eligible Applications	33	\$ 527,859.00	38	\$ 618,540.00
Ineligible or Withdrawn Applications	Both Operating and Project Grants	6	\$ 73,161.00	4	\$ 78,890.00
Overall Request for Funding		88	\$ 1,829,179.00	90	\$ 1,419,380.00

Table 2: Operating Assistance - Recommended Grants					
2025-2026 Applications		2024-2025 Grant	2025-2026 Request	2025-2026 Rec.	Rec. for Multi-Year
1	Atlantic Book Awards Society	DNA	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	No (NA)
2	Capella Regalis Choirs Society	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	Yes
3	Choirs for Change Association	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 11,500.00	\$ 6,000.00	Yes
4	Matchstick Theatre Company	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	Yes
5	Phin Performing Arts	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	No (DNA)
6	Playwrights Atlantic Resource Centre	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 6,500.00	Yes
7	Prismatic Arts Society	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	Yes
8	RadStorm Art, Music and Community Space	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	Yes
9	Scotia Chamber Players	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	Yes
10	Visual Arts Nova Scotia	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 14,000.00	Yes
11	Wonder'neath Art Society	\$ 15,500.00	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 17,000.00	Yes
TOTAL				\$ 91,500.00	
2024-2025 Multi-year Funding Clients (for information only)		2024-2025 Year 1 Request	2024-2025 Year 1 Operating	2025-2026 Year 2 Operating	Rec. for Multi-Year
1	2b Theatre Society	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 38,000.00	\$ 38,000.00	Yes
2	African Nova Scotia Music Association	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	Yes

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3	AfterWords Literary Festival	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	Yes
4	Anna Leonowens Gallery	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	Yes
5	Atlantic Filmmakers Cooperative	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 22,500.00	Yes
6	Bus Stop Theatre Cooperative	\$ 24,999.00	\$ 24,950.00	\$ 24,950.00	Yes
7	Carbon Arc Cinema	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	Yes
8	Cecilia Concerts Society	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 8,500.00	Yes
9	Craft Nova Scotia	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	Yes
10	Dalhousie Art Gallery	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	Yes
11	Debut Atlantic Society	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	Yes
12	Eastern Front Theatre Society	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 17,500.00	Yes
13	Everyseeker	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 13,000.00	Yes
14	Eyelevel Gallery Society	\$ 17,000.00	\$ 17,000.00	\$ 17,000.00	Yes
15	Halifax Camerata Singers	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	Yes
16	Halifax Theatre for Young People	\$ 18,500.00	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 13,000.00	Yes
17	HEIST Society	\$ 37,660.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	Yes
18	Khyber Arts Society	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	Yes
19	Kinetic Studio Society	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	Yes
20	Live Art Productions Society	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	Yes
21	Mocean Dance Society	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 24,000.00	Yes
22	MSVU Art Gallery	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	Yes
23	Music Nova Scotia	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 16,500.00	\$ 16,500.00	Yes
24	Neptune Theatre Foundation	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 42,500.00	\$ 42,500.00	Yes
25	Nocturne: Art at Night Society	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	Yes
26	Shakespeare by the Sea Theatre Society	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	Yes
27	Society for Art Presentation (CFAT)	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	Yes
28	SUDDENLY LISTEN MUSIC SOCIETY	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 6,500.00	Yes
29	Symphony Nova Scotia	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	Yes
30	The Villains Theatre Association	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	Yes
31	Upstream Music Association	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 5,500.00	Yes
32	Writers Federation of Nova Scotia	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 12,500.00	Yes
33	Zuppa Circus Theatre Society	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 22,000.00	Yes
TOTAL				\$ 532,450.00	
TOTAL RECOMMENDED OPERATING GRANTS				\$ 623,950.00	

DNA = Did Not Apply; NA = New Applicant

Table 3: Project Assistance - Recommended Grants				
Organization		2025-2026 Request	2025-2026 Recommendation	Percent of Ask
1	Atlantic Filmmakers Cooperative (AFCOOP)	\$ 4,345.00	\$ 4,345.00	100%
2	Dalhousie Art Gallery	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	90%
3	Eastern Front Theatre Society	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 9,900.00	90%

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4	Everyseeker (fka OBEY)	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 22,500.00	90%
5	Khyber Arts Society	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	90%
6	Matchstick Theatre Company Society	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	90%
7	MSVU Art Gallery	\$ 14,780.00	\$ 14,780.00	100%
8	Secret Theatre	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 13,500.00	90%
9	Society for Art Presentation (CFAT)	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	100%
10	Unity Charity	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 12,500.00	100%
11	Youth Art Connection	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 13,500.00	90%
12	Zuppa	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 16,025.00	92%
TOTAL RECOMMENDED PROJECT GRANTS			\$ 186,050.00	93%