Capital Regional District Arts Development Service

GROW FORWARD GRANT Guidelines – 2026

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Grow Forward Program provides funding to arts organizations for capacity-building, planning, mentorships, sectoral & cross-sectoral initiatives, and the process of investigating, identifying, planning and executing significant and strategic adaptations in their operations.

While these adaptations will likely influence the development and delivery of both existing and future programs, this funding does not support artistic programming directly.

Organizations can access funds to engage external expertise and develop strategies to guide them in navigating the questions, challenges and opportunities they face.
This work may include projects such as the following examples:

- Developing mentorships for arts leaders internally or between organizations.
- Making shifts to business models and organizational structures.
- Forming strategic partnerships with other organizations, including resource sharing.
- Sectoral initiatives that benefit multiple arts organizations in the Capital Region.
- Cross-sectoral initiatives that create collaborations between arts and other sectors or industries.
- Planning for leadership succession from founding and longstanding leaders.
- Addressing organizational life cycle questions, including potential mergers and closures.

When planning their projects, organizations are expected to consider how equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility are integrated into all aspects of their operations.

Grow Forward Grant assistance acknowledges that, in order for the arts to remain accessible to the region's audiences and participants, they require an investment of public sector funds. Through an investment in our arts organizations and institutions, the CRD is contributing to the development of a healthy, diverse and vibrant community.

Grow Forward Grants provide support to arts organizations of regional significance whose primary mandate is public programming in the arts. The CRD Arts Development Service is funded by the following jurisdictions: Saanich, Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt, View Royal, Highlands, Metchosin, Sooke, and the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicant organizations must:

1. be a not-for-profit society registered in British Columbia.
2. have arts as their primary mandate and purpose.
3. have an active Board of Directors. Voting members of the Board may receive compensation for expenses directly related to Board duties (travel, childcare, etc) but not honoraria for participation or fees for services.
4. be based in one of the jurisdictions that contributes to the Arts Development Service, as indicated by the organization's registered, physical address on its BC not-for-profit registration document.
5. conduct all the activities involved in the proposed initiative in jurisdictions that contribute to the Arts Development Service.
6. have received at least one other CRD Arts grant in the previous three years.
7. offer a potential impact within the Capital Region.

Organizations in arrears with any local authority, are bankrupt, seeking creditor protection, are insolvent, or under court supervision of any kind are ineligible.

New applicants to the Grow Forward Grant program must:
Contact the CRD Arts Development Service (the Arts Service) office at least one week before the application deadline to arrange a pre-eligibility review discussion.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Development, Delivery, or Touring of artistic programming
- Fundraising activities, contests and competitions
- Scholarships
- Mentorships or residencies for individual artists or artist collectives
- Capital expenditures
- Website or app development and design for basic informational or promotional purposes
- Elimination or reduction of accumulated deficits
- Expenses for events or activities that have already taken place

EVALUATION

Consideration will be given to activities that result in:

- facilitation of knowledge-sharing between arts leaders in the Capital Region.
- creation of new collaborations and partnerships.
- development of organizational capacity or financial resiliency within the funded organization.
- skill development in staff.
- creation of new sectoral or cross-sectoral initiatives.
- organizational transformation that advances arts development of the sector.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

The Arts Service is committed to supporting the development of equity in the region's arts sector. We are taking action to embed values of equity, diversity, inclusion, access, and cultural self-determination into our processes and policies, understanding that these concepts are not a static set of goals, but rather an evolving journey.

The aim of our commitment and these actions is to support the full diversity of artistic and cultural expression in the region. Recognizing that persistent and systemic discrimination has prevented equity-seeking groups from accessing resources, we continue to expand access and remove barriers to our funding. Equity-seeking groups include, but are not limited to, First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, those who are racialized, Deaf people, LGBTQ2+ people, and those with disabilities.

PROCESS SUPPORT

Applicants who are Deaf, hard of hearing or have a disability and need support to complete their grant applications can apply for funds to cover the costs of assistance from Service Providers. Up to $500 is available for each eligible applicant in a calendar year.

Grant recipients who need to develop a Final Report verbally or in Sign language, or need other supports, can request this through the Arts Service. The requirement for this support must be directly related to being Deaf or having a disability. This support is a contribution towards the costs of transcription services or Sign language interpretation, to enable the recipients to submit their report in written English.

Requests for process support, for either grant applications or final reports, require approval from the Arts Service. Please contact our office at least three weeks before the deadline to determine eligibility, request support funding, and to review the process for payment to be made to your Service Provider.

HOW TO APPLY

If your organization is interested in applying, start by having a conversation with CRD Arts staff. During this discussion, we can determine if your organization qualifies and talk about your goals and planned activities for the proposed project. If your proposal is eligible, staff will send you an application form.

General

- Guidelines and samples of the application are available online. Contact the Arts Development Service to confirm eligibility and to request a full application package.
- Organizations that receive an Operating, Projects or Equity grant in the current year may also receive a Grow Forward grant.
- Operating Grant clients may only apply to Grow Forward for collaborative projects that involve and benefit at least one other local non-profit arts group.
- All organizations may also apply as a Sponsor Society in Equity Grants.
- If you've received a previous Grow Forward grant, that project must be completed and a full final report sent to CRD Arts before another application to Grow Forward may be submitted.
- Start your application process early. To assist in the success of your application please feel free to contact us at any time during the application process.
- The maximum grant available through the Grow Forward Grant Program is $15,000.
- Be brief, concise and use plain language. Write as if you are describing your organization and project to someone who doesn't know anything about you. Do not use additional attachments.
- Ensure your project starts no earlier than October 1, 2026, and ends no later than October 1, 2027.
- Ensure the cash budget and the in-kind budget* each balance to zero, resulting in an overall balanced budget where "Surplus or Deficit" is zero.

***Note:** In-kind contributions are goods and services that would otherwise be purchased with cash but have been donated to the project. Record the values of such donations under in-kind revenue. These donation values must also be recorded under in-kind expenses. The value of your in-kind revenues should equal your in-kind expenses.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- Applications are assessed by the CRD Arts Advisory Council whose recommendations are subject to approval by the CRD Arts Commission.
- The CRD Arts Development Service is committed to ensuring that the choice of assessors reflects both the diversity of the region and grant applicants and will compensate external assessors who are not part of the Arts Advisory Council, at established assessor compensation rates, to ensure a diversity of

viewpoints on each assessment panel.

- Notification of awards may take at least 10 weeks following submission.
- Applicants are notified of the results of their application by email after the CRD Arts Commission has reviewed recommendations.
- Eligibility and acceptance of your application does not guarantee funding, just as receipt of funding does not guarantee future support.

Funding recommendations are made by the CRD Arts Advisory Council through an adjudication process.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT REQUIREMENTS

An organization requesting operating funding from the CRD must submit one of the following:

a) **Audited Financial Statements** for the most recently completed fiscal year, where the previous year's grant from the CRD Arts Development Service is $250,000 or more.

b) **Review Engagement Financial Statements** for the most recently completed fiscal year, where the previous year's grant from the CRD Arts Development Service is $50,001 - $249,999.

c) **Compilation Financial Statements with Notice to Reader (NTR)** or Internally Prepared Financial Statements for the most recently completed fiscal year, where the previous year's grant from the CRD Arts Development Service is $50,000 or less.

The Compilation or Internally Prepared Financial Statements may be prepared by a qualified person either internal or external to the organization, such as an accountant, a bookkeeper, or the Board Treasurer. The Statements must include a balance sheet, statement of revenues and expenses, notes relating to the financial statements where appropriate, and show comparative columns for the most recently completed year and the previous year, on the same page.

The **NTR** that accompanies the financial statements states the nature of the assignment, the scope and limitations, a caution to readers, who prepared the report, and the date of preparation.
It is your responsibility to ensure the appropriate financial statements are submitted. Applications without appropriate financial statements are considered incomplete. Contact Arts Service staff if you have questions.

CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

- CRD funding support must be acknowledged in media, verbally at events, on websites and in print. Information describing how to acknowledge the CRD Arts Development Service, along with logos, will be provided with the grant award letter. This information can also be requested through the CRD Arts Community Outreach Coordinator at artsdevelopment@crd.bc.ca.
- Grow Forward Grants must be used for the project for which they were requested.
- Projects must be completed within 12 months of receipt of funding.
- A Grow Forward Grant Final Report must be submitted using the provided form within two months of completion of the project, and prior to submitting a new application to the Grow Forward program. To accompany the final report, grant recipients may submit one or more high-quality digital photos of the event to artsdevelopment@crd.bc.ca. Images **may** be included in the CRD website, social media, presentations, and other promotional materials to represent arts activity in the CRD; provide photo credit.

Organizations should notify CRD Arts staff if there are significant changes to the timing or nature of a funded project. In the event the project is not completed and/or a final report not submitted, the CRD may request the return of the grant and/or consider future applications to be ineligible.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

In order to foster constructive communication and maintain a physically and psychologically safe workplace environment, inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated. Specifically, CRD Arts and Culture does not tolerate any form of physical, verbal, or non-verbal abuse, harassment or intimidation of its staff, the Arts Advisory Council, or anyone working or volunteering with its department in any capacity. This includes all communication verbal and non-verbal by phone, by written word (including in grant applications), in person or online, of an abusive nature, including:

- Using language or a tone that is aggressive, antagonistic, and/or vulgar;
- Making direct or indirect threats;
- Making comments of a defamatory or derogatory nature; and
- Communicating with unreasonable or excessive frequency and/or at inappropriate times.

While rare, abusive, aggressive, threatening or vexatious conduct is unacceptable. In those instances, CRD staff may end or alter communication with any applicant.

Inappropriate behaviour could compromise the relationship of the applicant with CRD Arts & Culture and the chances of obtaining its support in the future

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

No late applications accepted. Digital files of the full application must be received by **4:30 pm on THURSDAY, JULY 16th.** You will receive confirmation of receipt of your application within two business days.

What to Submit:

□ Completed Part A – Applicant info & answers to questions (Word Doc not pdf), signed

□ Completed Part B – Budget (Excel not pdf)

□ List of current Board of Directors with full names, residential addresses, and Board positions

□ Financial Statements (as per Financial Statement Requirements)

□ A copy of your BC not-for-profit Society registration certificate if not previously submitted

How to submit:

1. **Complete** all materials listed in 'What to Submit'
2. **Save** a copy of all documents for your own records.
3. **Email** 'What to Submit' documents by the published deadline to: **ApplytoArts@crd.bc.ca**

If you have questions about the application or eligibility of your project, contact CRD Arts Staff:

Telephone: 250-360-3215 Email: artsdevelopment@crd.bc.ca

Website: Arts Funding | Capital Regional District