

Program Guidelines

Operating Assistance to Cultural Organizations

About the Operating Assistance to Culture Organizations Program

The Operating Assistance to Cultural Organizations Program enhances stability within organizations that develop and sustain Nova Scotia's arts and culture community. Support is provided to organizations that produce cultural products, own and/or manage cultural facilities, provide services to the cultural sector, and produce or present cultural festivals or events. Such organizations are fundamental to the vitality and long-term health of the arts and cultural life in Nova Scotia.

Program Objectives

Applicants must demonstrate how they meet the following program objectives in their application:

Artistic development: supporting creation and expression in the arts

- support people at all levels of artistic involvement
- support artistic expression and the pursuit of excellence and innovation
- promote learning in the arts for people of all ages through education and participation
- develop new and maintain existing audiences

Community development: supporting opportunities for people to participate in and build community life

- develop new and strengthen existing relationships among groups and organizations engaged in cultural activities
- encourage more cultural activities that explore and/or celebrate a community's or a cultural sub-sector's identity
- encourage more participation in and access to cultural activities
- encourage the development of Nova Scotia's cultural diversity
- support activity that contributes to the long-term development of the cultural sector

Cultural sector stability: supporting stable organizations that oversee the development and address the specific concerns and opportunities for various cultural sub-sectors

- foster stewardship of cultural resources through effective governance and planning
- encourage development and stability of key programs and services
- reach all parts of the province or of a designated region

Industry growth: providing a stable environment for cultural economic growth

- enhance out-of-province sales of Nova Scotia's cultural products
- enhance market readiness of cultural producers
- improve technical and export capabilities of a product, skill, or facility
- expand market opportunities, earned revenues, and earned revenue potential

Nova Scotia's Culture Action Plan: Creativity and Community

Applicants must demonstrate how their organization will further the objectives of Nova Scotia's Culture Action Plan: Creativity and Community.

Types of Organizations Assisted

Professional arts and culture organizations that support, present, or produce work by professional or established artists, and/or employ qualified paid staff to administer on-going arts and culture programs and services

Under this program, the department supports arts and culture organizations, including:

Facilities – organizations that own and operate facilities that primarily serve arts and cultural interests.

Festivals – organizations that present professional or established artists to the public by way of performances, exhibits, demonstrations or lectures.

Service Organizations – organizations that promote the development of a specific arts discipline, education and training, and/or specific forms of cultural expression (includes community arts councils).

Youth Organizations – organizations which have a provincial mandate that produce annual arts events or offer ongoing arts programs for youth which attract participation from across Nova Scotia.

Types of Activities Assisted

Support is provided towards annual administrative and core program costs.

*NOTE: Organizations that receive annual funding under Operating Assistance to Cultural Organizations may submit applications to the Culture & Heritage Development Division's project funding programs or Arts Nova Scotia's programs **only if** the projects proposed are special one-time activities or pilot projects. Activities that enhance or add to on-going or core programs or events are not eligible for project funding.*

Eligible Applicants

Registered not-for-profit society or not-for-profit cooperative in good standing with the Provincial Registrar of Joint Stock Companies or federally registered under the Corporations Act as a not-for-profit society or cooperative based and operating in Nova Scotia and meet the following criteria:

- has been operating for at least 2 years before the date of application
- has successfully completed 2 project grants available through Communities, Culture and Heritage or Arts Nova Scotia
- does not receive operating assistance from any other provincial government agency or department
- maintains an active membership or shows a form of community support that includes Nova Scotia residents and persons other than those who serve on the board of directors
- operates programs year round, except for presenting festivals which may have seasonal programs
- secures additional sources of revenue, such as corporate contributions, donations, sales, and membership fees, and must pursue other sources of public or private funding

Level of Funding

- Combined municipal, provincial, and federal funding cannot exceed 90% of total revenues for annual administrative and core program costs.
- When a previously funded organization is performing poorly in a key area, as reflected in its application, its funding level may be decreased, but normally by no more than 15% from the previous year.
- Organizations that do not apply to the program in the following year will be required to submit a final report.

Disclosure and Relevance of Surplus and Designated Funds

Organizations may acquire funds for long-term designated use. Details regarding designated funds must be disclosed in the organization's submission to this program. The department respects the organization's declaration that such funds are protected for long-term use and does not deem them as funds available for the organization's general operations. Thus, organizations with designated funds are eligible to receive assistance towards annual operating expenses.

- Such funds can result from donations and contributions for assigned purposes. This could include gifts of money on condition they are invested in perpetuity (or for a designated period of time) and that funds or interest income earned be used for a prescribed purpose such as a scholarship.
- As well, an undesignated gift of money may be designated for long-term investment from which interest earned, or interest and a portion of the principle, be used to fund specific programs.
- Undesignated funds may be accumulated for contingency or cash flow purposes. If this amount exceeds 25% of an organization's annual budget, the excess should be designated or reinvested into operations.

Application Submission Procedure

First-time applicants **must** contact Culture & Heritage Development Division staff before submitting an application.

Applicants may submit one application annually indicating one of the following categories: Facility, Festival, Service Organization (includes Community Arts Councils) or Youth Organization.

Applicants must submit a completed application form, signed and dated by the organization's chair, with required supporting documents.

Applications can be delivered by hand, by courier, or sent by regular mail, but in all cases must be either received in the Culture & Heritage Development office by 4:30 pm on the deadline date or be postmarked no later than the deadline date.

Applicants: Do not submit application materials bound in folders, binders, or plastic sleeves, because materials must be duplicated to circulate to assessment panel members.

Three-Year Status *(for current OACO recipients only)*

As a result of the assessment process, applicants can secure Three-Year Status. This designation provides a qualified three-year commitment. Organizations that attain Three-Year Status submit new applications once every three years.

To be considered for three-year status, applicants must indicate so on the application and must meet the following criteria:

- have been in continuous operation for at least three years at the time of application during which time the organization's activities have been stable or developing in a planned manner
- have been funded under the Operating Assistance program in the previous year
- have a record of effective and consistent financial performance
- have prepared a three-year plan outlining goals, planned programs and services, and budget targets

Support Materials

Applicants may include a small amount of the following types of materials:

- those materials you use to promote and make known your organization's programs and services, such as printed programs, catalogues, flyers, posters, newsletters, and press releases
- those materials that show community support, such as letters of support or endorsement and feedback from participants or consumers

Select **up to 6 items** that will enhance the assessment panel's understanding of your organization.

Application Assessment

First, applications are reviewed by staff in the Culture & Heritage Development Division for completeness and eligibility.

Next, applications that are both complete and eligible are reviewed by an assessment panel whose recommendations are forwarded to the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage for final decisions.

The assessment panel considers five key areas of organizational effectiveness:

- 1. Program planning and evaluation:** The department believes that setting goals and objectives and undertaking evaluation (quantitative and qualitative) of program results contribute to an organization's success in pursuing its vision and mission. Thus, your organization's program goals and evaluation should be discussed in your response to Question 1.

2. Audience and community engagement: the assessment panel evaluates the quality of the organization's level of engagement with the following communities: the general public, the artistic community, and relevant cultural and community partners. The panel considers:

- Dissemination, meaning the ways in which an organization reaches its audience (programs, services, performance, presentation, etc.)
- Audience/program participation numbers
- Audience/program development, education, and engagement, meaning how the organization provides opportunities for the public to engage and interact with artists and art (like workshops, artistic talks, blogs) and serves the communities addressed
- How the organization's community engagement practices serve the organizations mandate and vision.
- How the organization develops and maintains collaborative relationships/partnerships within the broader community
- How the organization provides opportunities and support for the professional development of professional and pre-professional artists.
- The effectiveness of marketing and communication activities within the community

Outline and discuss the types of relationships your organization has in your response to Question 2.

3. Organizational effectiveness: the assessment committee evaluates the quality of the organization's management practices, governance, and planning. The committee considers:

- Governance practices and policies, including structure, strategic planning, and governance practices
- Human resources, including staff, board, and volunteers
- Operational effectiveness, including, but not limited to, work planning, communication, marketing, and facility management (*if applicable*)
- Current issues or concerns: what issues or challenges is your organization currently facing that you have not yet addressed in answering other questions? What actions are you taking to respond to these issues or challenges?

Outline and discuss these topics in your response to Question 3.

4. Nova Scotia Culture Action Plan: Creativity and Community

Demonstrate how your programs and services will further the objectives of Nova Scotia's Culture Action Plan: novascotia.ca/culture/Culture-Action-Plan--English.pdf

Outline and discuss the culture action plan in your response to Question 4.

5. Financial management

Demonstrate your organization's financial management – including such things as budgeting, expenditure management, and revenue generation – in enough detail so that we can determine the financial health of your organization. Both the completeness of financial statements and the effective organization of financial information are a reflection of your organization's financial management.

Submit a copy of financial statements for the most recently completed fiscal year – including a balance sheet (assets, liabilities, equity/debt) and income statement – signed by an authorized representative of your organization.

Submit also the table described under “Financial Information.” However, if your organization applied to the Canada Council for Operating Assistance, you may submit a printout of the financial information submitted to CADAC instead of the table format outlined in Question 5.

Notification of Results

Funding decisions are made after the annual provincial budget has been passed in the Provincial Legislature. Applicants are informed of funding decisions often within 120 days of application deadline.

Payment Conditions of Funding

- If your application is approved for funding, you will receive a letter outlining the terms and conditions of funding. Funding recipients must meet the following conditions:
- You must notify the department of any significant change in plans for the year.
- You may need to submit a revised budget if you do not receive the amount you requested.
- If your organization does not apply to the program in the following year, it must submit a final report.
- Your organization must recognize the province's support as outlined in “Requirements for Acknowledging Funding”: cch.novascotia.ca/investing-in-our-future/acknowledgement-guidelines

Overdue Final Reports: If your organization has received funding through any of the department's funding programs or Arts Nova Scotia's project funding programs for which the Final Report is overdue, no funds can be released for any subsequent project approved through the departments or Arts Nova Scotia programs, including your Operating Assistance grant, until the overdue report has been received.

Deadline for Applications: February 15

Applications must be postmarked on or before the deadline date to be eligible. Should the deadline date fall on a weekend or holiday, applications received on or postmarked for the following business day will be accepted.

Send completed applications to

In person/courier:

Operating Assistance to Cultural Organizations
3rd Floor, 1741 Brunswick Street
Halifax, NS B3J 3X8

By regular mail:

Operating Assistance to Cultural Organizations
Culture & Heritage Development Division
PO Box 456
Halifax, NS B3J 2R5

For more information:

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