



Evaluation Framework for Annual Funding 2026-2027

Operating Assistance to Cultural Organizations



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Application evaluation and assessment emphasis

Applicants self-select one of the three categories for their organization: Facility, Festival or Service Organization.

While the application questions for each category are the same, the assessment weighting is different for Facilities, Festivals and Service Organizations. The weighting is a prioritization method that is demonstrated through the percentages found next to each criterion.

Below summarizes the assessment focus for each category. Emphasized areas are weighted at 20%, while other areas receive 10–15% weighting.

Facilities

- **Stability** and consistency provided by the organization within the community served.
- **Access** to the programs and services delivered to the community.

Festivals

- **Quality** of the organization's presentations and programming.
- **Engagement** with existing and new audiences (uptake, retention, and growth).

Service Organizations

- **Relevance** of the work to the organization's target communities and membership.
- **Impact** of services, programs and activities on the sustainability and growth of the sector.

Evaluation Matrix for Facilities

Stability – 20%

- Demonstrates professionalism within Nova Scotia’s arts and culture community.
- Proven ability to negotiate and adapt to change, and manage risk effectively.
- Operations are directed by a strategic or program plan.
- Shows commitment to learning and innovating for its community/members.

Access – 20%

- Provides programs and services that are accessible and inclusive for people of diverse ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- Shows strong and growing attendance/participation.
- Maintains meaningful, collaborative relationships with community.
- Supports participants at multiple levels of creative involvement through programming.

Quality and Engagement – 15%

- Delivers high-quality programming and services.
- Engages and trains qualified staff, creators, and instructors, prioritizing Nova Scotians.
- Aligns programming with community interests and needs.
- Demonstrates active audience development and outreach to new audiences.

Relevance and Impact – 15%

- Regularly assesses operations and programming.

- Adapts programming to sector or industry trends and issues.
- Supports broader public understanding of arts and culture.
- Provides meaningful opportunities for Nova Scotian artists and cultural workers.

EDIA Performance – 10%

- Demonstrates an ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) through meaningful relationships with Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, Deaf, disability, newcomer, and other underrepresented or underserved communities.
- Actively identifies and reduces barriers to participation, including financial, physical, cultural, and other accessibility-related barriers.

Organizational Standing and Effectiveness – 10%

- Has active, engaged Board members.
- Has appropriate policies and procedures in place to support effective operations.
- Demonstrates strong leadership, governance, and healthy workplace practices.

Financial Stewardship – 10%

- Provides reviewed financial statements signed by the Board.
- Submits a clear, feasible, accurate budget.
- Demonstrates that proposed programs/services are achievable through sound planning and resource allocation.

Evaluation Matrix for Festivals

Stability and Access – 15%

- Demonstrates professionalism within Nova Scotia’s arts and culture community.
- Proven ability to negotiate and adapt to change, and manage risk effectively.
- Provides programs and services that are accessible and inclusive for people of diverse ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- Shows strong and growing attendance/ participation.

Quality – 20%

- Delivers high-quality programming and services.
- Engages and trains skilled staff, creators, and instructors, prioritizing Nova Scotians.
- Plans effectively for marketing and promotion.
- Maintains strong, professional relationships with artists and service providers.

Engagement – 20%

- Aligns programming with community interests and needs.
- Demonstrates active audience development and outreach to new audiences.
- Shows strong community support and satisfaction.
- Uses formal or informal audience assessment in planning and programming.

Relevance and Impact – 15%

- Regularly assesses operations and programming.
- Adapts programming to sector or industry trends and issues.

- Supports the broader public appreciation and understanding of arts and culture.
- Provides meaningful opportunities for growth and development to Nova Scotian professional artists and cultural workers.

EDIA Performance – 10%

- Demonstrates an ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) through meaningful relationships with Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, Deaf, disability, newcomer, and other underrepresented or underserved communities.
- Actively identifies and reduces barriers to participation, including financial, physical, cultural, and other accessibility-related barriers.

Organizational Standing and Effectiveness – 10%

- Has active, engaged Board members.
- Has appropriate policies and procedures in place to support effective operations.
- Demonstrates strong leadership, governance, and healthy workplace practices.

Financial Stewardship – 10%

- Provides reviewed financial statements signed by the Board.
- Submits a clear, feasible, accurate budget.
- Demonstrates that proposed programs/ services are achievable through sound planning and resource allocation.

Evaluation Matrix for Service Organizations

Stability and Access – 15%

- Demonstrates professionalism within Nova Scotia’s arts and culture community.
- Proven ability to negotiate and adapt to change, and manage risk effectively.
- Provides programs and services that are accessible and inclusive for people of diverse ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- Shows strong and growing attendance/participation.

Quality and Engagement – 15%

- Delivers high-quality programming and services.
- Engages and trains skilled staff, creators, and instructors, prioritizing Nova Scotians.
- Aligns programming with community interests and needs.
- Demonstrates active audience development and outreach to new audiences.

Relevance – 20%

- Regularly assesses operations and programming.
- Adapts programming to sector or industry trends and issues.
- Designs programs based on the interests and needs of the communities served.
- Proposed programming responds effectively to learnings from previous programming.

Impact – 20%

- Supports the public understanding and appreciation of professional arts and culture
- Provides meaningful opportunities for

growth and development to Nova Scotian professional artists and cultural workers.

- Maintains active partnerships and relationships with relevant sector organizations.
- Builds positive community relationships through mentorship and collaboration.

EDIA Performance – 10%

- Demonstrates an ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) through meaningful relationships with Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, Deaf, disability, newcomer, and other underrepresented or underserved communities.
- Actively identifies and reduces barriers to participation, including financial, physical, cultural, and other accessibility-related barriers.

Organizational Standing and Effectiveness – 10%

- Has active, engaged Board members.
- Has appropriate policies and procedures in place to support effective operations.
- Demonstrates strong leadership, governance, and healthy workplace practices.

Financial Stewardship – 10%

- Provides reviewed financial statements signed by the Board.
- Submits a clear, feasible, accurate budget.
- Proposed programs/services are achievable through sound planning/resource allocation.