

# 2026 Cultural Grant Program: Project Grant Guidelines

Deadline: Monday, Dec 1, 2025 at 3p.m. PST

These guidelines have been revised for 2026 – previous versions no longer apply.

If you have questions after reviewing these guidelines, you can obtain more information from Cultural Services staff. Please contact staff well in advance of the deadline:

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City of Kelowna Cultural Services Branch  
Smith Avenue Offices  
101-1360 Ellis Street  
Kelowna, BC V1Y 2A2  
HOURS: Monday to Friday, 8a.m. to 4p.m.

## CITY OF KELOWNA ACTIVE LIVING & CULTURE DIVISION

### CORE PRINCIPLES:

The City of Kelowna's Active Living & Culture Division administers a number of grant programs and services for the community which:

- encourage active healthy lifestyles
- build strong neighbourhoods
- nurture lifelong participation in sport
- enhance cultural vibrancy
- facilitate development of events
- enhance social sustainability
- support effective management and operation of sport, recreation and cultural facilities

Organizations seeking funding support from the City of Kelowna through any of the grant programs administered by the Active Living & Culture Division should be aware of and aligned with one or more these core principles.

### VALUES:

Any organization supported by the City of Kelowna Cultural Grant Program will commit to the following values:

- **Accessibility, diversity and inclusion:** we welcome everyone to engage in quality experiences that showcase the unique identity of our community.
- **Accountability and fiscal responsibility:** we use resources effectively to leverage opportunities that optimize value and create impact.
- **Innovation:** we support forward-thinking solutions that anticipate needs and brings together a range of experiences to see the future in a different way.
- **Partnerships and cooperation:** we achieve more through meaningful relationships of mutual respect and understanding.

The Cultural Grants Project Grants program is one of many grant programs provided by the City of Kelowna. Information about other grant opportunities is available on the City's website: [kelowna.ca/grants](https://kelowna.ca/grants)

## 1.0 PROJECT PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND DESCRIPTION

### 1.1 Objectives:

This program aims to provide assistance to projects offered by non-profit organizations which are publicly accessible, prominently feature arts, culture or heritage activities and are aligned with the 2020-2025 Cultural Plan.

The objectives for this program are to support projects that advance the 2020-2025 Cultural Plan goals and strategies. Goals of the 2020-2025 Cultural Plan include:

<p><b>STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS</b></p> <p><i>foster deliberate investments of time, money and people into demonstrated outcomes</i></p>	<p><b>Goal 1: Increase contribution of resources</b></p> <p>Develop a variety of approaches to increase support for the creative sector's spaces, capacity, vitality and connections</p>	<p><b>Goal 2: Understand our impact</b></p> <p>Leverage the value that culture contributes to the community</p>	
<p><b>SPACES</b></p> <p><i>use new and traditional approaches for enhancing the availability, affordability and accessibility of spaces for culture</i></p>	<p><b>Goal 3: Optimize existing spaces</b></p> <p>Improve the use of existing space and allow for alternative solutions to meet community needs</p>	<p><b>Goal 4: Commit to developing new facilities</b></p> <p>Actively plan and seek opportunities for the advancement of new cultural facilities</p>	
<p><b>VITALITY</b></p> <p><i>animate the community with a blend of programs, services and events that promote artistic excellence and share Kelowna's history</i></p>	<p><b>Goal 5: Learn from our past</b></p> <p>Engage the public in the protection and preservation of Kelowna's human and natural history and bring stories about our past to the forefront</p>	<p><b>Goal 6: Boost vitality at the street level</b></p> <p>Create excitement and activity throughout Kelowna</p>	
<p><b>CAPACITY</b></p> <p><i>build on the creative sector's ability to respond to changing demands and new opportunities</i></p>	<p><b>Goal 7: Support a viable creative sector</b></p> <p>Enhance administrative, financial, management and governance systems that create a strong foundation for the future</p>		
<p><b>CONNECTIONS</b></p> <p><i>promote ongoing interactions between people, sectors and disciplines</i></p>	<p><b>Goal 8: Share our story</b></p> <p>Celebrate local activities, initiatives and successes with the broader community</p>	<p><b>Goal 9: Broaden the reach</b></p> <p>Incorporate culture within other sectors as an integral piece of community growth</p>	<p><b>Goal 10: Convene and connect</b></p> <p>Bring the creative sector together for dialogue, exchange and action</p>

The 2020-2025 Cultural Plan can be found at [kelowna.ca/culture](http://kelowna.ca/culture).

This program is not intended to be an ongoing source of support and the entrance of new applicants and projects into the program is a key objective. **A project which has received a Project Grant three (3) times, regardless of the years in which support was provided, will no longer be eligible.**

Applicants are required to ensure that arts, culture or heritage professionals are engaged in the project and receive fair wages in accordance with industry standards.

### **1.2 Organization profile:**

Organizations participating in this program are Kelowna-based, established, non-profit organizations which have:

- been incorporated and are actively providing the majority of their public programs and services in Kelowna for at least one (1) year prior to the application deadline;
- an inclusive, diverse and welcoming approach in their operations and activities;
- sound governance and are fiscally responsible, with diverse sources of revenue and good recordkeeping practices; and
- a vision and a feasible plan and budget for the creation and delivery of a festival, event or project which has an arts, culture or heritage focus, has artistic or cultural leadership, and will be accessible and beneficial to Kelowna residents.

Organizations need not be from the arts, culture or heritage sector but must, through their application, demonstrate that their festival, event or project has an arts, culture or heritage focus.

This program welcomes submissions from organizations representing under-represented artists of all backgrounds including, but not limited to, Indigenous People, Black and racialized persons; refugee, newcomer and immigrant persons, two-spirit, LGBTQ+ and gender non-binary persons, persons with Diverse Abilities and those on low-incomes or living in poverty.

### **1.3 Eligibility:**

To participate in this program, the organization must:

- be a registered non-profit society or a registered charity with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and be registered for at least one (1) year at the time of the application deadline;
- be physically located, have an active presence and have the majority of its programs and services delivered within the city of Kelowna for at least one (1) year at the time of the application deadline;
- either solely, or in partnership with others, propose a project which is consistent with the vision, principles, goals and strategies of the 2020-2025 Cultural Plan;
- be committed to carrying out its project for the benefit of Kelowna residents without exclusion of anyone by reason of religion, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, language, disability or income;
- have an independent Board of Directors composed of volunteers and representative of its mission and audience. Directors must:
  - Meet the minimum statutory requirements imposed by the relevant incorporation statute (i.e. *BC Societies Act*); and
  - not be remunerated for their services as Director (except for reimbursement of reasonable expenses) nor hold concurrent staff positions.
- have fulfilled all reporting requirements for any previous grants from the City of Kelowna; and
- have other revenue sources for the project.

Cultural facility operators or recipients of General or Core Operating Grants from the City of Kelowna are eligible to apply but must clearly demonstrate that their proposed project is outside the scope of their annual programs and services which are already supported by the City. To be considered eligible, projects must:

- Provide something to the community that is unique, different or will enhance the cultural offerings and new experiences to residents of Kelowna.
- Not generally be expected of the organization as part of its core services (i.e. a concert by a presenting organization, exhibition by a visual arts organization, etc.).
- Not be programs and workshops within the artistic discipline represented by the organization.
- Not be similar offerings of the organization with a change of venue.

For the purpose of clarity, some strong examples may include:

- Hosting a regional, provincial or national conference or event in Kelowna.
- Initiating a new festival.
- Start-up of a collaborative initiative between multiple organizations.
- One-off initiatives that increase the capacity of the organization (i.e. feasibility studies).

**Pre-screening for eligibility of Project Grant applications is required for those receiving or applying for Operating support from the City.** Contact [culture@kelowna.ca](mailto:culture@kelowna.ca) with your request.

#### **1.4 Ineligible organizations:**

To participate in this program, the organization must not be:

- public or private educational institutions (public schools, universities, colleges, training organizations);
- religious and/or political groups;
- organizations which have outstanding indebtedness to the City of Kelowna or which have not fulfilled reporting requirements for any previous grants from the City of Kelowna; or
- unincorporated committees, groups, collectives or individuals.
- Organizations who hold non-market leases or other agreements providing use and occupation of City-owned property

#### **1.5 Eligible activities and expenses:**

##### **1.5.1 Eligible activities**

- **Festival** – an organized event which occurs over more than one day, incorporates an intensive level of planned activity into those days, and demonstrates established or potential audience support from a broad range of the community. Must have an arts, culture or heritage focus;

- **Event** – an organized performance, gathering, activity or cluster of activities which occurs on a single day. Must have an arts, culture or heritage focus;
- **Innovative activity** – a special project which may be one-time, with clear start and end date(s) and identified outcomes. Examples include new or unique collaborations, feasibility studies, publications, artist residencies, workshops or conferences, or other time-bound projects which have discrete budgets, plans and sources of support. Must have an arts, culture or heritage focus;
- **Production and presentation** – the production or presentation of any work in any artistic discipline;
- **Truth and Reconciliation initiatives** – honour the importance and share the history and culture of Indigenous people, establish a framework for including the voices of Indigenous artists and cultural leaders in the creative sector, support and celebrate Indigenous arts and culture, and/or mobilize the creative sector to take intentional action on truth and reconciliation. Projects will only be considered where Indigenous organizations, artists and/or cultural leaders are appropriately represented throughout the project;
- **Heritage** – includes events, materials, communications and/or services which interpret and convey the human and natural history of Kelowna and/or foster preservation, stewardship and public interpretation and appreciation of heritage knowledge, assets, collections and sites;
- **Multiculturalism** – includes public education, programs, events or services focused on building awareness, appreciation and celebration of language, traditions and artforms.

#### 1.5.2 *Eligible expenses*

Support from this program acknowledges that new projects often need 'seed money' to get started. Grant funds can be used for:

- venue rental and other venue related costs (tents, furniture, audio/visual/lighting and other equipment, technical/trade services);
- material costs relating to design, production/fabrication and installation of new or original works, structures, sets or costumes relating to the project;
- payment of fees and expenses for participating artists and cultural professionals;
- design, production and distribution of original material in any medium which is suitable for a public audience and does not contain commercial or advertising content (i.e. information brochures, interpretive signage, maps, video);
- fees for licenses, permits, insurance and security; and
- costs of volunteer recruitment, training and appreciation.

**Grants are available for up to 50% of the total project cost, to a maximum of \$10,000.**

Project grants require matching support from other sources which is equal to or more than the amount provided by the City. Matching contributions may be cash or in-kind and must be identified, even if not confirmed, in the application.

Projects must be completed by December 31, 2025, unless alternate arrangements are made with City staff.

## **1.6 Ineligible activities and expenses:**

### *1.6.1 Ineligible activities*

- projects which do not engage artists and/or cultural workers in a leadership role;
- trade shows or commercial business activity;
- public art projects;
- fundraising activities;
- projects which already receive financial or in-kind support (including site provision) from other City of Kelowna sources, including City of Kelowna Event Hosting Program and Major Events Program; or
- activities focused on sports, politics, education, religion, social service or healthcare.

### *1.6.2 Ineligible expense*

- organization start-up costs or ongoing operating or administration expenses;
- alcohol;
- expenses/events which have already occurred (prior to the date of application);
- deficit reduction;
- bursaries or scholarships; or
- construction, renovation, property purchase or major equipment purchases.

## **2.0 APPLICATION PROCESS**

The application process is online and can be found on the [City's website](#).

Organizations considering submission of an application are encouraged to do the following prior to completing an application form and well in advance of the application deadline:

- Review these guidelines;
- Attend an annual grant information workshop; and
- Contact City staff if you require more information
  - Sara Thirnbeck, [sthirnbeck@kelowna.ca](mailto:sthirnbeck@kelowna.ca), (250) 469-8474
  - Christine McWillis, [cmcwillis@kelowna.ca](mailto:cmcwillis@kelowna.ca), (250) 470-0640

Eligible applicants will submit the application form using the online system by the program deadline, **3 p.m. PST, Monday, December 1, 2025**.

**Only online applications will be accepted.** If you are having problems with the online system, please contact [culture@kelowna.ca](mailto:culture@kelowna.ca) for support.

We are committed to ensuring equitable access to our submission process. Submitting organizations are invited to contact [culture@kelowna.ca](mailto:culture@kelowna.ca) with questions or comments. Please ensure you receive email confirmation upon submission.

Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted. Submission of an application does not guarantee funding. Obtaining a project grant is a competitive process and demand often exceeds available resources.

### **3.0 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

The criteria listed below and in Schedule 1 represent 'good' practices for non-profit arts, culture and heritage organizations. Assessment will be based on the degree to which organizations meet the criteria, based on the information they provide.

All organizations are unique, and will be at different stages in their lifecycle; there is no expectation that an organization must be demonstrating exceptional performance in all areas in order to receive funding support. However, the assessment criteria provide an objective framework within which the organization's overall performance can be considered, and form the basis for constructive feedback to the organization.

Criteria are grouped into four (4) categories:

- Strategic Investments (25%)
- Vitality (10%)
- Capacity (40%)
- Connections (25%)

Detailed criteria for each category are listed in Schedule 1 of these guidelines.

### **4.0 ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS**

#### **4.1 *Review Process:***

##### **4.1.1 *Independent Evaluation:***

Applications in this program are adjudicated by a Cultural Grant Panel of peer and community representatives.

Panelists are selected to participate based on their experience, merit and familiarity with grantmaking practice and the local arts, culture and heritage community. To the extent possible, the panel will reflect the diversity of the community at large and the range of disciplines and activities in the list of applicants.

Panelists who have a real or perceived conflict of interest regarding any application will be required to declare that such a conflict exists and will not participate in decisions relating to that application.

Cultural Services staff will be present as observers during the adjudication process and to provide clarity on the Project program objectives and requirements as needed.

The Cultural Grant Panel will, within 60 days of the application deadline, provide its recommendations to City staff.

**4.1.2 Staff Review:**

Some applications will be diverted into a streamlined process. Returning applicants requesting a Project Grant of \$3,500 or less and are not requesting an increase from the prior year funding, will be reviewed by Cultural Services staff. Any application could be moved to Independent Evaluation at the discretion of the Cultural Services Manager. The results of the staff review will be forwarded to the Director of the Active Living & Culture Division for final approval.

**4.2 Interview:**

Following completion of the review process, applicants will be contacted to discuss the evaluation, build understanding about how the organization will address any concerns arising, and engage in a broader dialogue about the project.

**4.2 Notification and Distribution:**

All applicants will receive an email confirmation detailing the outcome of their application, terms and conditions, feedback or follow-up items. Successful applicants will receive payment following notification

**4.4 Request for Clarification/Request for Reconsideration:**

Applicants who do not agree with a funding decision may request further clarification from staff. If still in disagreement after clarification is provided, applicants may make a formal request for reconsideration by the Director of the Active Living & Culture Division, within 14 days of email confirmation. In the event of a formal request for reconsideration, the City may delay distribution of some or all of the funds in this program until all of the funding decisions have been resolved.

**4.5 Final Report:**

Successful applicants will provide a final report in a prescribed format to the Cultural Services Branch. Receipt of these reports is a pre-condition for future eligibility in any City of Kelowna grant program. Final Reports may be considered part of assessment of any future applications by the organization.

Applicants will be required to provide 3 high-quality photographs with the final report. These images must be accompanied by photo release waivers from both the photographer and people in the photographs, giving the photo rights to the City of Kelowna which allows the City to use them in future promotional materials.

Final reports for 2024 Project Grants must be submitted on or before November 1, 2024. To be eligible to apply for support in 2025, a Final Report for the 2024 Project grant must be completed unless alternative arrangements have been made in writing with Cultural Services staff.

### 5.0 TIMELINE

A typical timeline appears in the table below. The timeline is subject to change.

Deadline	Appn Review	Notification	Distribution	Final Report
Dec 1, 2025 at 3p.m.	Dec 2025– Jan 2026	Feb 2, 2025	By end Feb 2026	Nov 30, 2026

### 6.0 CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

In addition to any specific terms and conditions which may arise from the annual review process, the conditions below will apply to any organization receiving funding from this program:

- Grant funds must be applied to current expenses and must not be used to reduce or eliminate accumulated deficits or to retroactively fund activities prior to date of application;
- The organization will make every effort to secure funding from other sources as indicated in its application;
- The organization will maintain proper records and accounts of all revenues and expenditures relating to its activities and, upon the City’s request, will make all records and accounts available for inspection by the City or its auditors;
- If there are any changes in the organization’s activities as presented in its application, Cultural Services must be notified in writing immediately and approve such changes;
- In the event that the grant funds are not used for the project as described in the application, they are to be repaid to the City in full. If the activities are completed without requiring the full use of the City funds, the remaining City funds are also to be returned to the City;
- The organization must acknowledge the financial assistance of the City of Kelowna on all communications and promotional materials relating to its activities, such as programmes, brochures, posters, advertisements, websites, news releases and signs. Acknowledgement is provided by using the City of Kelowna logo in accordance with prescribed standards;
- The organization will be required to provide 3 high-quality, clear photographs that portray the programs and services you are offering to the community with the final report. The images must be free of copyright from the photographer (signed release waiver) and signed or written permission of any person included in the picture for unlimited usage rights by the City of Kelowna;

- The organization agrees to indemnify and save harmless the City and its elected and appointed officials, officers and employees, in respect of all claims for bodily injury or death, property damage or other loss or damage arising from the conduct of any work by or any act or omission of the organization or any directors, officers, volunteers or employees, of the organization;
- The organization agrees to not take any action, or permit any directors, officers, volunteers or employees of the organization; to take any action which is intended, or would reasonably be expected, to harm the City's reputation, or which would reasonably be expected to lead to unwanted or unfavorable publicity to the City; provided, however, the foregoing limitation shall not apply to compliance with any legal process or statements made in response to authorized inquiry from a court or regulatory body; and
- Receipt of a grant does not guarantee funding in the future.

## 7.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

Grant applicants should identify any information in their submission, or any accompanying documentation supplied in confidence for which confidentiality is to be maintained by the City. The confidentiality of such information will be maintained by the City, except as otherwise required under the Province of British Columbia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or other legal disclosure process. Grant applicants are advised that their qualifications will, as necessary during the selection process, be disclosed on a confidential basis, to the City's advisers for the purposes of evaluation, administration and analysis of their submissions. General information about the organization/project, including the funded amount and the organization being funded under the program may also be released.

## 8.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

Cultural Services Branch

Address: 101-1360 Ellis Street  
Kelowna, BC V1Y 2A2

Phone: (250) 469-8650

Hours: Monday – Friday, 8a.m. to 4p.m.

Email: [culture@kelowna.ca](mailto:culture@kelowna.ca)

SCHEDULE 1 – DETAILED ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	
	Description
<b>Strategic Investments</b> 25%	The project is clearly defined, has an arts, culture or heritage focus and there is an understanding of the community need the project addresses. If the applicant receives operating support from the City of Kelowna, the project is clearly distinct and separate from the applicant’s normal programs and services already supported by the City.
	The project embraces and demonstrates the guiding principles of the 2020-2025 Cultural Plan.
	The project advances the goals and strategies of the 2020-2025 Cultural Plan.
<b>Vitality</b> 10%	There is evidence of positive community impact to the program participants, organization volunteers and/ or the community at large.
<b>Capacity</b> 40%	There are appropriate personnel involved in the planning and execution of the project. Projects that focus on diversity, equity and inclusion require appropriate and meaningful inclusion of representatives.
	There is a realistic and achievable timeline for completion of the project.
	The project budget is realistic for the proposed activities. Artists and arts professionals are fairly compensated (when applicable to the project). The project budget reflects a good understanding of the cost to deliver the project as described
	The project budget reflects realistic and diverse sources of revenue, including earned revenue and community support that is likely to be secured. Matching requirements of the program have been met.
<b>Connections</b> 25%	The project has leveraged its human and financial resources by actively collaborating with other organizations
	The applicant has strategies in place to create awareness of, build appreciation for and drive participation.
	The project considers environmental impacts and strategies for mitigation.