



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

Canada Council for the Arts Granting Policy

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Granting Policy

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1. Preamble

I. Effective date

The Granting Policy is effective as of April 1, 2017.

II. Purpose

The Granting Policy of the Canada Council for the Arts (the Council) governs and supports the Council's granting activities.

III. Objective

The objectives of this policy are to outline and communicate the values, instruments, administrative roles and processes underpinning granting activity at the Council; and to support management accountability, oversight and transparency of granting activities.

IV. Authority and administrative responsibility

Authority for the Granting Policy resides with the Council's Director and CEO. The Director General, Strategy and Public Affairs, is responsible for the development and oversight of the Policy. The Director General, Arts Granting Programs, is responsible for the administration of the Policy.

V. Approval and revisions to the Policy

Recommendations regarding the Granting Policy may be brought forward to the Director and CEO by the Senior Management Committee or the Arts Granting Committee, through the Director General, Strategy and Public Affairs. The Council's Director and CEO approves the Policy and any revisions or amendments to this policy.

VI. Relationship to other Council activities

The Council's granting activities are a key component of the Council's activities, which also include:

- ❖ Prizes
- ❖ Partnerships
- ❖ Council-led initiatives
- ❖ Research
- ❖ Communications and public engagement activities
- ❖ Canadian Commission for UNESCO initiatives
- ❖ Canada Council Art Bank
- ❖ Public Lending Right program

While these activities may share many of the same objectives, values and administrative processes as the Council's granting activities, they are not governed by this policy.

2. Funding principles

The Canada Council for the Arts is a Crown corporation created by an Act of Parliament in 1957 ([Canada Council for the Arts Act](#)) "to foster and promote the study and enjoyment of, and the production of works in, the arts." All of the Council's activities are guided by its mandate and are rooted in its responsibilities and duties as a Crown corporation.

The Council must also meet the highest ethical standards. Its staff and management are required to adhere to the internal Code of Ethics, as well as the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector. This ensures the Council's objectivity and safeguards the public's trust.

All of the Council's work is guided by its [core organizational values](#). These values are rooted in humility, openness, listening and empathy and include mutual trust, respect and reciprocity; shared leadership; curiosity and continuous learning; and the passion and care staff bring to their work to help build a more just, equitable and sustainable arts sector.

The Council's granting activities are further guided by the following funding principles, which provide the philosophical and ethical framework for the Council's internal operational policies and procedures.

I. Arm's length relationship

The Council operates at arm's length from government by virtue of its founding legislation, the [Canada Council for the Arts Act](#), and in accordance with the [Financial Administration Act](#) (s. 85 (1.1)). This permits the Council to develop policies and programs and make decisions independent from political interference or influence.

II. Stewardship of public funds

As a Crown corporation that dispenses public funds, the Council has a high degree of responsibility to maintain the public trust and account fully and openly for its operations and decisions. The Council is committed to the sound stewardship of public funds, and the prudent use of public resources through sound financial systems, effective risk management, efficient and accountable granting processes, and timely and transparent reporting.

III. Peer assessment

Peer assessment is the basis for the majority of the Council's funding decisions. The Council's commitment to peer assessment is based on the conviction that:

- ❖ Peer assessment provides a means of bringing together the relevant knowledge to evaluate grant applications against the Council's published assessment criteria;
- ❖ This decision-making process values and protects freedom of thought and artistic expression and encompasses a diverse range of knowledge from within the arts and culture sector and beyond;

- ❖ The use of a wide and diverse range of peer assessors is a way to ensure accountability, fairness and transparency in the Council's funding decisions; and
- ❖ The peer assessment process should reflect the diversity of Canada's population through representation from Indigenous, Black, racialized, Deaf and disability, official language minority, 2SLGBTQI+ and gender-diverse communities, women, and individuals at the intersection of these groups, as well as regional representation and a balance of gender, age and official languages.

The Council's peer assessment process is explained on the Council's [website](#).

IV. *Respectful workplaces*

The Council's policies promote respectful workplaces not only for its own employees, but also for the recipients of its grants. Organizations that accept a grant must declare their commitment to providing a workplace free from discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. When applicable, funded organizations must show that they have policies in place that protect and promote healthy workplaces.

The Council's [Application Assessment Process and the Awarding of Grants](#) describes the mechanisms to deal fairly with concerns relating to a grant recipient's capacity to provide safe working conditions and to foster a workplace free from discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct.

V. *Cultural self-determination of Indigenous peoples*

The Council respects the histories, traditions, languages and contemporary practices of Indigenous peoples and seeks to foster the development of Indigenous artists and organizations.

The Council is committed to reaffirming its relationship with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. It believes that an Indigenous-centered approach that respects Indigenous artistic expression, cultural protocols, and Indigenous rights and a focus on cultural self-determination will stimulate Indigenous artists, artistic practices and communities. It acknowledges the cultural sovereignty of Indigenous peoples and affirms Indigenous self-determination.

This means that the Council's granting programs and strategic funds targeted to support Indigenous arts will be guided by Indigenous artists' values and worldviews, administered by Indigenous staff, assessed by Indigenous professionals, and their impact will be measured and reported on in alignment with Indigenous perspectives and worldviews.

Through its programs and other activities, the Council affirms the following:

- ❖ Respect for Indigenous worldviews, and the rights of Indigenous peoples as articulated in the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (2007) and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (2021);

- ❖ Support for and commitment to the principles of truth and reconciliation articulated through the report of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) (2015);
- ❖ Support for and commitment to the findings and recommendations articulated through the [Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) (2019);
- ❖ A commitment to advancing Inuit prosperity, wellbeing and self-determination in alignment with the principles articulated in the [Inuit Nunangat Policy](#) (2022);
- ❖ The importance of artistic activities that respect and encourage First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultural self-determination and the vitality of Indigenous artistic practices, languages and communities;
- ❖ Recognition of the distinct and unique place of First Nations, Inuit and Métis artists in Canada as creators, interpreters, translators and transmitters of an inherent Indigenous cultural continuity, as well as their unique contribution to Canadian cultural identity;
- ❖ Recognition and support of customary and contemporary artistic practices by First Nations, Inuit and Métis artists and cultural carriers;
- ❖ Support and encouragement of a Canadian arts landscape that is deeply ingrained with perspectives, voices, stories, struggles and aesthetics of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada;
- ❖ Recognition of the distinctiveness of the many unique and self-defining First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in Canada.

VI. *Equity*

The Council, in alignment with its organizational values, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, recognizes the individual worth and dignity of all people and actively opposes discrimination in all its forms.

The Council believes that all citizens deserve to benefit from a vibrant, accessible and diverse arts sector. Through its role as a public arts funder, the Council seeks to contribute to a just and equitable society where the consequences of colonialism, racism, and other forms of oppression and exclusion have been eliminated.

In accordance with its Equity Policy, the Council serves the breadth and diversity of Canada's artistic communities and aspires to:

- ❖ Define and implement its own path to decolonization, considering this to be a fundamental part of its equity principles and practices, as well as a commitment in its own right;
- ❖ Identify and address historic and persistent barriers to access faced by underserved and marginalized groups in all regions of the country;
- ❖ Monitor and adapt in response to evolving equity concepts and practices, dialogues with communities, and data and research from internal and external sources.

VII. Official languages

The Council recognizes the distinct contribution that Canada's two official languages make to the diversity of the arts in Canada, as well as in the important role the arts can play in promoting linguistic duality and the vitality of official language minority communities (OLMCs).

As a federal institution, the Council is subject to the [Official Languages Act](#) (OLA). The Council's granting activities follow the requirements of the OLA by ensuring that services are available to the public in both official languages. Further, the Council has an obligation under the OLA to take positive measures to enhance the vitality of OLMCs, to support and assist in their development, and to foster the full recognition and use of both official languages in Canadian society.

The Council's approach to official languages is described in its Official Languages Policy. In its granting activities, the Council provides equal treatment to applications in both official languages, including through its use of peer assessment procedures that enable participation by peers in the official language of their choice.

The Council's compliance with the OLA and support for linguistic duality and OLMC vitality is monitored internally on a regular basis and reported on in the annual *Review on Official Languages* that it submits to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

VIII. Comparative assessment

Funding is awarded to those applications that best respond to the Council's published assessment criteria, within a comparative and competitive context, taking into account budgetary limitations. In order to arrive at this determination, it is important to compare similar applications. As such, applications are grouped for the assessment process, and assessors are asked to rank applications in order of merit according to the published program assessment criteria.

IX. Outcome-based approach

Through its granting activities, the Council works to fulfill its mandate to foster and promote the study and enjoyment of, and the production of works in, the arts. In so doing, the Council works to achieve results for the arts, for Canadians and for society.

Each of the Council's granting instruments has clearly articulated objectives and expected outcomes. These are measured and monitored over time to help the Council meet its objectives and communicate the impact of its activities, and those of the arts sector, to Canadians.

3. Granting instruments

I. *Granting programs*

The Council's principal granting instrument is its suite of national, non-disciplinary arts granting programs:

- ❖ Explore and Create
- ❖ Engage and Sustain
- ❖ Creating, Knowing and Sharing: The Arts and Cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples
- ❖ Supporting Artistic Practice
- ❖ Arts Across Canada
- ❖ Arts Abroad

These programs encompass a comprehensive range of artistic activities, including the creation and presentation of new works, development of capacity among artists and arts organizations, and fostering public engagement in the arts. The granting programs and their components are intended to have inherent flexibility to accommodate a range of artistic disciplines and activities.

II. *Strategic funds and initiatives*

In addition to its granting programs, the Council also makes use of strategic funds and initiatives. These are special funds and funding mechanisms that are designed to support the Council's strategic priorities.

Compared to the Council's regular granting programs, strategic funds and initiatives are designed to address shorter-term strategic needs and commitments. They are often time-limited funding opportunities that have targeted outcomes.

Details about strategic funds and initiatives are available on the Council's [website](#).

III. *Evolution of granting instruments*

Granting instruments – namely the Council's granting programs, strategic funds and initiatives – may need to evolve over time. Modifications to such instruments may be triggered by:

- ❖ Trends and developments in artistic practice;
- ❖ Operational concerns;
- ❖ Opportunities to adopt best practices and find efficiencies;
- ❖ Opportunities to enhance Council's investments and initiatives;
- ❖ Audit and program evaluation results and recommendations.

Program evaluation and performance measurement will be the major driver of change. Granting instruments will be evaluated on a regular basis in alignment with the Evaluation and Performance Measurement Policies. Findings will inform changes in program design.

Program evaluations may occur earlier than planned if directed by Senior Management Committee.

4. Administration

I. Administration of granting instruments

The administration of granting instruments is guided by the principles identified in this policy and the Council's operational policies and procedures.

II. Delegation of authority

The Council's Delegation of Authority Policy is updated on a regular basis, upon approval by the Board. It sets out authorities and accountabilities related to grants, payments, spending and contracts.

III. Conflict of interest

In all its assessment processes, the Council relies on clear procedures to manage conflicts of interest in an ethical manner. A conflict of interest can be real, apparent or potential:

- a) "Real" means that the conflict of interest exists at the present time;
- b) "Apparent" means that the conflict of interest is perceived by a reasonable observer to exist, whether or not it is the case;
- c) "Potential" means that the conflict of interest can be reasonably foreseen to exist in the future.

The Council recognizes that the potential for conflict of interest will always exist in its granting activities, given that most peer assessors have strong ties to the artistic milieu. The Council's approach is to avoid conflict of interest whenever possible and to be ready to manage it when it does occur. Accordingly, peer assessors, employees and Board members are all subject to the Council's procedures on managing conflicts of interest, and are expected to disclose any and all conflicts of interest to ensure the integrity of assessment and decision-making processes.

IV. Transparency and confidentiality

The Council is committed to the principles of transparency and accountability. While proactive disclosure is not mandatory for Crown corporations, the Council does adhere to the Government's guidelines on proactive disclosure. The Council's policy is to publish information on all grant recipients on its website. The Council also proactively publishes the names of peer assessors who serve on a committee, on a quarterly basis. The Council

does not make public the names of unsuccessful individual applicants, and guidelines on confidentiality are enforced throughout and following the peer assessment process.

Through its Open Data initiative, the Council offers the public detailed statistical data regarding grant recipients, in line with the Government of Canada's initiative to work with the national and international open government community.

All information collected by the Council is subject to the [Access to Information Act](#) and the [Privacy Act](#). The Council adheres to all requirements under these laws, and may only use personal information for the purposes for which it was originally collected or for uses consistent with that purpose.

V. Compliance, audit and evaluation

Regular internal audits are conducted to ensure that the Council's granting activities are in compliance with this policy and the Council's operational policies and procedures. The Granting Policy and operational policies may be subject to internal audits, at the determination of the Board, within the responsibility of the Council's internal audit function.

The Granting Policy will be reviewed in alignment with the Council's Evaluation and Performance Measurement Policies.

Changes to related policies, legislation, goals or operations, and the need to foster continuous operational improvement, are circumstances that may also trigger a review of the Policy.

Approved by the Board on October 5, 2016; amended June 14, 2018; updated by Senior Management Committee on December 19, 2023.