



## 2021 Edmonton Arts Council Investment in Organizations

### Introduction

The Edmonton Arts Council’s work is guided by *Connections & Exchanges: A 10-Year Plan To Transform Arts and Heritage In Edmonton*. The Ambitions, Aims and Actions outlined in the plan are driving the EAC’s approach and decision-making in the renewal and retooling of its investment programs. The EAC Board is committed to supporting the arts community in these uncertain times through targeted investments. EAC will make investments to sustain operations, foster artistic and organizational resilience and facilitate dialogue to build organizational innovation and readiness for a gradual return to a wide range of artistic activities.

As the EAC builds structures and makes investment decisions for organizations, we are guided by the following Aim from Book 4 of *Connections & Exchanges*:

*New and existing arts and heritage organizational capacity enables innovation and builds resilience in the sector.*

The work to build new investment and support structures was underway before the COVID-19 pandemic. That work has been disrupted and changed, as has the work undertaken by the organizations that do the arts and festival work in our community.

In response to the current need to balance stability and flexibility, as well as looking forward to the future envisioned in *Connections & Exchanges*, the Edmonton Arts Council’s plan to support Arts and Festival organizations for 2021 is based on three pillars:

- Sustain Investments for the immediate, short term support of organizations to help maintain their *existing capacity*.
- Activate Investment to support organizations striving to *build resilience* through relevant arts, festival, and celebratory events, including programming in 2021 when possible.
- Invent and Adapt Tools, resources, and potential investments to enable innovation around organizational structures, governance and business models for the future.

The Sustain and Activate pillars are both related to investments in organizations in the short- and medium-term. Those processes are described later in this document, including guidelines, dates, and requirements.

The Invent and Adapt pillar will require the active engagement of organizations with the Edmonton Arts Council through meetings, virtual events, and shared work over the coming months and years.

## 2021 SUSTAIN and ACTIVATE

### Overview (Page 1 of 2)

#### Eligibility

Organizations seeking and receiving support from the EAC must work in the City of Edmonton, to the benefit of Edmontonians.

Only organizations with a history of annual operating support from the EAC (most recently Transitions Operating 2020) will be eligible to submit to the 2021 Sustain stream. Organizations that have received other types of support should contact the EAC to discuss eligibility.

Some organizations will only be eligible to apply for a 2021 Activate investment, including new applicants.

Please review each program's specific guidelines, and discuss with the EAC staff to clarify any eligibility questions before starting your application.

Organizations that have historically received more than one operating grant can expect the EAC to pursue amalgamation as part of this process.

#### Level of Support

Working towards the future outlined in *Connections & Exchanges*, the Edmonton Arts Council needs to balance stability and flexibility when making investments in organizations in 2021.

The wide range of circumstances at play means it is not possible to project the total level of support to any one organization in advance.

Organizations eligible to submit to the Sustain program that have demonstrated reasonable due-diligence in 2020, such as holding an AGM, having regular board meetings, and/or taking other steps to ensure the future viability of the organization, can expect a minimum of 50% of their 2020 operating grant amount. They will also be able to apply to Activate for further support if they intend to be active in 2021.

The combined 2021 investment level in any one organization through Sustain and Activate will be guided by factors that include the organization's 2020 grant amount(s), as well as the assessments outlined as part of the Activate process.

Applicants may be classified by type, size, or other factors that will inform those calculations.

#### Process

Each submission, application, review and assessment process is described separately in the sections that follow.

All points of assessment, review, and decision making will also consider the four principles that underpin the *Connections & Exchanges* plan:

- Inclusivity that reflects the diverse values of the communities in Edmonton;
- Leadership, excellence and innovation in the arts and heritage communities;
- A collective civic responsibility for arts and heritage;
- Strengthened economic security for arts and heritage.

*(Connections and Exchanges – Book 1, Page 42)*

In all cases the Edmonton Arts Council's Grants Review and Transitions committee will provide oversight and input. Every effort will be made to resolve issues to the benefit of the applicant.

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### Required Information

Applicant organizations will be required to provide the following information at their first submission to either 2021 Sustain or 2021 Activate.

All information will be delivered via [eacawards.fluidreview.com](https://eacawards.fluidreview.com).

When organizations are already users of CADAC, the EAC will also accept data from that system.

All Applicants must be prepared to provide at least:

- A statement of the organization's mandate, goals, and/or vision.
- Most recent annual documents (AGM minutes, approved financial statements, annual return, bylaws if applicable).
- Current financial information, such as an interim statement dated within the past 30 days.
- List of Board members / staff/contract positions.
- Material that shows evidence that the organization has:
  - Taken steps to preserve its ongoing existence, regardless of activity levels or financial circumstances – for example, holding an AGM, and actively communicating with your stakeholders.
  - Engaged governance, such as a board and senior staff team that meets regularly to consider and plan for the future for the organization.
- A very brief summary of the work of the organization in 2020, including changes the organization has had to undertake in programming, financial operations, organizational structure, and personnel.
- Responses to data-gathering and statistical survey questions included in the online application process.

### Reporting and Engagement Requirements

Organizations that receive 2021 Sustain and/or 2021 Activate investment must demonstrate ongoing planning and engagement in 2021.

This will include participation in the Edmonton Arts Council's planned 2021 Invent and Adapt work, which will encourage the building of new capacity, resilience and organizational innovation as the community builds for the future.

## 2021 Activate

### Specific Guidelines (page 1 of 3)

#### Purpose

2021 Activate invests in non-profit arts and festival organizations that are planning activity in 2021. Activity should be relevant to the organization's mandates and goals, or directly related to delivery of arts, festival, and celebratory events.

The intent is to assist organizations with costs related to work they undertake through the engagement of artists and arts professionals. This investment will help promote organizational resilience during this irregular period.

Activity can be anything that involves the engagement and compensation of artists, administrators and other sector professionals between January 1 and December 31, 2021. This includes:

- Practice, preparation, creation and commissioning of artistic work.
- Programming or public presentation that takes health restrictions and risks into account.
- Work which is relevant to and advances the organization's goals, including skills training for the staff and artists, or work in support of the broader community of artistic practice.

#### Who Can Apply?

Applicants must be a registered non-profit organization that pursues work in Edmonton with a primary mandate in creation, production, presentation, or support of arts and festival activity, or has a history of delivering festival and celebration events.

Organizations may only apply to Activate if they have realistic plans to pursue arts and festival activity and programming in 2021.

New applicants are encouraged to consult with Edmonton Arts Council staff before applying. Organizations that have been registered for less than one full year may only apply after consultation.

Ineligible organizations include those that:

- Are in arrears with the City of Edmonton at the date of application.
- Have outstanding final reports for previous Edmonton Arts Council support.

#### Level of Support

Investment levels are guided by factors that include the organization's 2020 grant amount(s), and any support already provided in 2021.

New applicants without a history of support from the EAC may request funding for up to 50% of their costs towards the implementation of their planned activities, to a maximum of \$20,000.

Application does not guarantee a grant, or a specific amount.

#### Process

There are two planned deadlines for 2021 Activate applications: January 15th, 2021 and June 15th 2021.

Organizations without clear activity plans for the first half of the year may defer to the second deadline. The EAC will work to ensure financial resources are available at the second deadline so that applicants are not penalized for choosing to defer.

Applications will be reviewed by the EAC staff for administrative and eligibility factors. In some

## Specific Guidelines (page 2 of 3)

cases, organizations may be contacted to provide updated or clarified information.

A peer assessment process will provide input and recommendations, which will be reviewed and finalized by the EAC's Grants Review and Transitions Committee.

A number of organizations may be invited to further discussion as part of the assessment and review process. This will require the participation of leadership staff and Board members.

Investment recommendations from that process will be reviewed by the EAC Board and may need to be ratified by Edmonton City Council.

### Assessment

The peer assessment and subsequent review of recommendations will be guided by all the text in these guidelines and the *Connections & Exchanges* plan, including this specific Aim:

*New and existing arts and heritage organizational capacity enables innovation and builds resilience in the sector. (Book 4, Page 12)*

In practice this means:

- The merits and clarity of the organization's goals and plans, particularly in terms of the artistic goals when relevant.
- The potential of the organization to undertake the proposed work, as demonstrated by their past record and existing capacity.
- The potential of the work proposed to advance the purposes of the organization.
- The paid engagement of artists and other arts professionals to undertake the activity proposed.
- The degree to which the organization has considered and planned for risk.

Assessment, review and decision making will also take into consideration the EAC's commitment to reflecting the full diversity of Edmonton's demographics.

2021 Activate will only invest in organizations that exhibit clear planning and consideration of public health restrictions. Organizations must remain flexible and responsive to changes in the external environment, and the Edmonton Arts Council will be supportive of thoughtful changes to planned activity.

### Application Materials

Unless they have already submitted to the Sustain 2020 investment stream, applicant organizations will be required to submit the "Required Information" listed in the Overview (page 2 of this document). There will also be statistical and data-gathering questions about the work of the organization in 2020.

All information will be delivered via [eacawards.fluidreview.com](https://eacawards.fluidreview.com). The application may be worked on and saved any number of times before the deadline. When appropriate, that data may be accepted via the CADAC system.

### Application Narrative Information

Activate is neither an operating grant, nor a specific project grant. It is an investment to support the programming and other activities that an organization intends to undertake in 2021.

## Specific Guidelines (page 3 of 3)

The EAC is committed to being flexible in response to changes in the external environment, and the challenges related to COVID-19.

Therefore, the EAC is piloting this new way of asking organizations to describe their work. Instead of asking for detailed descriptions of activity plans, we are asking organizations to reflect and respond to the following questions. Applicants may provide this narrative information in any form, presentation, structure or format.

*What are the primary purposes that the organization pursues?*

- You may refer to mandates and vision statements, as well as goals and strategic plans that have been developed over time.

*How is the organization planning to pursue its goals and purposes in 2021?*

- The applicant should describe directions have been considered and what choices have been made.
- When organizations are formally collaborating or informally working together towards common goals, then those arrangements and plans should be well described.

*Who will the organization be engaging to do this work, and how will they be paid?*

- You will need to provide clear information about the people who will be undertaking the work being considered.
- In some cases, it may be relevant to name individuals and provide a resume, for example if an artist is being commissioned, the organization is founder-led, or a specific artist/curator/programmer drives the work of the organization.

*When and where is the organization planning to do this work?*

- The applicant should provide as much detail as is reasonably possible, including to what extent the timelines are uncertain or unknown.

*What resources are available to the organization?*

- Artistic resources, human resources, financial and physical resources are all relevant.

*What will success look like for the organization?*

- You may refer to how this compares to previous visions of success.
- What filters or processes does your organization use to determine if it has reached those goals?

*What risks has the organization considered, and what steps have been taken to mitigate those risks?*

- Please reference at least your thinking around health risks and financial risks.
- Organizations should also consider the risks to future capacity or reputation, if current plans cannot be completed.

After providing the narrative response outlined by these questions, please attach a brief timeline and budget projection that supports your organization's activity plans for 2021 as of the application date.