

OPERATING INVESTMENT GUIDELINES

DEADLINE:
DECEMBER
15, 2021

This document outlines the guidelines for **Operating Investments** at the Edmonton Arts Council (EAC). This includes EAC's approach, methods of engagement with organizations, eligibility requirements, investment amounts, decision-making frameworks, commitments, and expectations.

Organizations may be considered for annual or renewable support from either an Operating Investment or an Annual Programming Grant. The Annual Programming Grant program guidelines can be found in a separate document at grants.edmontonarts.ca.

For assistance or questions about EAC grants, please contact grants@edmontonarts.ca or call (780) 424-2787.



The investment relationship between the Edmonton Arts Council and organizations is driven by Book 4 of the City of Edmonton's *Connections & Exchanges: A 10-Year Plan to Transform Arts & Heritage In Edmonton.*

AMBITION

A Thriving and Well-Funded Arts and Heritage Ecosystem

AIM

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

ACTION

Build funding mechanisms for arts and festival organizations with an emphasis on: multi-year operating grants; annual programming grants; commissions, co-productions and co-presentations of work by artists and ad-hoc groups

SECTION 1

APPROACH

OPERATING APPROACH

Operating Investments help organizations fulfill their arts and festival mandates, and assist with costs related to the activities of non-profit organizations in pursuit of their mandates and objectives, including general administration and governance. By supporting the capacity of organizations with arts and festival mandates, we invest in the innovation and resilience of the arts and festival ecology as a whole.

Investments by the Edmonton Arts Council are guided by an understanding of the organization's place in the arts ecosystem, its strengths and challenges, and the impact of its work on artists, artforms, audiences, and communities. Our understanding of arts and festival organizations comes from engagement and relationships, rather than any one application, evaluation, or any other stand-alone information gathering process.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Annual Operating Investments have a degree of flexibility. Investment levels may change based on yearly renewal, review and decision cycles. This allows the EAC to respond to growth and other organizational changes in a timely manner.

Multi-Year Operating Investments are based on longer-term commitments in support of financial and artistic planning for organizations with stable operating models.

- Payments follow a series of engagement and reporting expectations.
- Investment levels will be committed for a period of up to three years.
- Changes in investment levels normally only occur between commitments.

The EAC is committed to connection and a wide range of regular engagements with organizations, regardless of the length of funding commitment.

The Edmonton Arts Council follows the City of Edmonton fiscal calendar. All programs and cycles correspond to the calendar year: January 1 to December 31.

METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

Operating Investments are based in ongoing relationships and engagement, which builds shared understanding.

To inform a complete understanding of arts and festival organizations, the Edmonton Arts Council engages with the organization, gathers information and assessments about the impact of the work being performed or delivered, and considers the capacities of the organizations relative to their position in the community. Relationships are renewed and kept current through information sharing, reporting and engagement at regular intervals in multiple formats.

Engagement helps the EAC and the community to connect, develop, share, and otherwise build capacity and resilience in the sector. The EAC is committed to being present in the community, through attendance at events, exhibitions, and performances, to celebrate and engage in the work of arts and festival organizations.

Methods of engagement the EAC may use include:

- Peer assessment and advice from artists, arts and cultural workers, and other community members with the skills, knowledge and abilities to provide evaluation and context.
- External evaluation and review of artwork, programming, facilities, finances, artistic and/or business processes.
- Formal discussions between organizations and the EAC.
- Community engagement and discussion sessions facilitated by the EAC.
- Analysis of statistical and financial information.
- Surveys, interviews, case studies and other work done by the EAC's research team to gather qualitative information.

Engagement methods will reflect the organization, its work, and its impact according to the criteria outlined below.

CRITERIA

Criteria that guide the understanding of organizations are broken into two categories. Detailed criteria can be found in the process section of this document (page 5).

1) Impact of Activities and Work

Organizations that have similar objectives and do similar work will be considered using similar criteria. Relevant criteria will be based on the objectives and activity of the organization. Not all criteria are equally applicable to every organization. The four areas of impact are:

Impact on Artists and Practitioners
Impact on the Art Form
Impact on Audiences
Impact on Communities

The intent is to understand the cumulative impact of an organization's activities and work, which in turn will inform the relationship with the EAC.

2) Organizational Effectiveness

Effectiveness means the organization's capacity to pursue its objectives and manage itself. Effectiveness is relative to the size, scope and scale of the organization.

FRAMEWORK AND PRIORITIES

Principles that were the foundation of the [Connections & Exchanges](#) plan provide the framework for the Edmonton Arts Council's investments in the community:

- 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;
- Indigenous peoples have agency in their journeys of revitalizing and participating in traditional, contemporary, and future manifestations of their culture.

Operating Investments will also be guided by:

- The EAC's understanding of the organization's role in the community and contribution to the arts and festival ecology.
- The impact of the organization's work, based on the relevant assessment criteria.
- Strategic investment priorities set by the EAC in pursuit of the relevant Aims from [Connections & Exchanges](#).
- Historical data about the organization and its previous funding from the EAC.

DECISION MAKING

Input and advice of peer assessors and/or outside experts is the primary source of information about the organization's work and impact.

EAC staff will summarize all the information available when presenting draft investment outcomes to the EAC Board.

Outcomes will be subject to the active review and approval of the EAC's Board through its various committees.

In some cases, as outlined in [City of Edmonton policy C211H \(2017\)](#), investments will be subject to City Council ratification.

SECTION 2

PROCESS

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to request and receive Operating Investments of any duration, an applicant must:

- Be a registered, non-profit organization that has arts and/or festival mandates and objectives.
 - Mandates can relate to artistic creation, production, presentation, the support of sectors or artistic disciplines in the Edmonton arts community, promote active participation in art making, and/or other objectives and actions that enable innovation and build resilience in the arts and festival sector.
- Have a significant portion of its activities occurring within the City of Edmonton for the benefit of Edmontonians.
- Have a record of activity that shows ongoing pursuit of arts and festival mandates.
- Conduct their activities on a regular, recurring basis.
- Maintain their organizational profile in the [EAC online portal](#).

Operating Investments will **not** be considered for organizations:

- Funded through other City of Edmonton operating programs (or their equivalents).
- Focused on education, religious outcomes, competitions, demonstrations, street markets, capital construction development, or fundraising.
- In arrears with the City of Edmonton.
- With overdue Edmonton Arts Council reports.
- Before one full year of activity and operations are complete.

Organizations ineligible for Operating Investment may be eligible for other EAC programs such as projects or programming grants.

REGISTRATION

Organizations receiving or seeking Operating funding must register in the Edmonton Arts Council online portal (eac.smartsimple.ca). Registration is a required step that gathers formal information, including basic categorization of mandates and activities.

Registration does not guarantee support from the EAC.

OPERATING INVESTMENT PROCESS

The Operating Investment process is managed through information exchanged through the EAC's online portal (eac.smartsimple.ca). For any technical support needs, contact the EAC by emailing support@edmontonarts.ca or by phone 780-424-2787.

Annual operating processes will have a deadline for submission that will be open to organizations registered in the EAC's online portal.

Multi-year operating processes will follow engagement, discussion, and shared agreement between the organization and the EAC.

Deadlines will be publicized at least 60 days in advance and materials must be submitted no later than 11:59 pm on the deadline date.

In keeping with commitments in [Connections & Exchanges](#), the information requested will be only that which is most impactful and important.

USE OF INFORMATION

Information is gathered in the online portal to guide the EAC towards methods of engagement and information sharing based on the relevant criteria. It contributes to:

- An understanding of the organization, and its role within the ecosystem.
- An understanding of the community at large.
- Measurement of statistical and financial impact.
- Assessments and evaluations.

The Edmonton Arts Council may use all the information available about any one organization and the ecosystem to guide internal decision-making such as investments and other services.

This may include sharing information to coordinate programs with other funding bodies, to assist with research, reporting, program evaluation, or to provide networking and economic opportunities for the intended benefit of the organization and community.

When research is published, individually identifiable or protected data not otherwise publicly available will be anonymized or aggregated.

WRITTEN INFORMATION

Written information will be entered directly in the online system, with word limits to encourage brevity and clarity. Written information is not the primary basis for assessment.

Organizations seeking or reporting on Operating Investment will provide information about:

- The organization's goals and activities.
- The people who lead the organization's work.
- How the organization defines success and reviews its own work.
- The organization's structure.
- The organization's approach to equity and Indigenous participation (if any).
- A list of key dates for the coming calendar year.

FINANCIAL AND STATISTICAL INFORMATION

All organizations seeking and receiving Operating Investment will provide specific financial and statistical data.

Larger or more complex organizations may be required to use the CADAC (Canadian Arts Database/Données sur les arts au Canada) system, which shares information amongst multiple funders including the EAC.

Those that do not use CADAC will use the parallel financial and statistical template found in the online portal. A sample template can be found [here](#).

If annual financial documentation or statistical information is not complete, it may delay or interrupt any funding relationship with the Edmonton Arts Council.

INVESTMENT AMOUNTS

In keeping with [City of Edmonton policy C211H \(2017\)](#), organizations will not normally receive an operating grant that represents more than 25% of their expenditures from the prior year. This does not suggest that 25% is a target amount. Due to disruptions in activity caused by the pandemic, for applicants who have received grants from the EAC in the past, their most recent funding history will help establish funding levels for 2022.

DETAILED ACTIVITIES AND WORK CRITERIA

Criteria that guide the understanding of organizations are broken into two categories – Impact of Activities and Work, and Organizational Effectiveness.

Impact on Artists: Targeted impact on the specific creators and the arts professionals who are doing the work.

- Relevant for organizations that create/produce and present artwork, in terms of the quality of the support and engagement with the individual creators, and by extension the resulting quality of that artwork.
- Relevant for organizations that provide supports and services, in terms of the quality of programming and services, and the reach of that programming to Edmonton artists and/or arts and cultural workers.
- May also be relevant and measured in terms of the fair remuneration of artists and cultural workers.

Impact on the Artform: Broad impact in terms of contribution to, and development of the artistic discipline.

- Relevant for organizations that create/produce and present artwork, in terms of the quality of the artwork, its merit and influence on the community of practitioners locally, nationally, or internationally.
- Relevant for organizations that provide supports and services, in terms of the support, promotion or advancement of a broad artform, sector or community of practice.
- Relevant for organizations that manage facilities in terms of the accessibility, availability, and capacity of the facility.
- May also be relevant in terms of an historical body of work and its influence and contribution to an artistic discipline or community of practice.

Impact on Audience(s): Targeted impact in terms of the specific audiences that attend or otherwise engage with presentation of artistic work and/or attend a festival.

- Relevant for organizations that present work in terms of quality of work presented, and quality of dissemination methods.
- Relevant to organizations that seek to gather and develop audiences, in terms of the communication with both known and potential audiences through publicity, promotion, personal contact, technology, and other dissemination, engagement and marketing strategies.
- May be relevant for organizations that work to expand, or otherwise develop the public's connection, appreciation, and understanding of art in any form.
- May be relevant for organizations that manage facilities in terms of the accessibility, availability, and capacity of the facility.
- May also be relevant and measured in terms of the volume of audience that attends or otherwise engages in the presentation work of an organization.

Impact on Community(ies): Broad impact in terms of the organization's relationship with and influence on the stakeholders they work with, the people they engage with, and society as a whole.

- Relevant for organizations that enable active participation in art practice, arts education, or engage in community arts practices, in terms of the quality of the programming, artwork, and/or production process.

- Relevant for organizations that work to expand, connect, or otherwise advocate on behalf of specific communities in terms of their engagement of those communities in supporting arts practice, participation and contribution to art.
- May be relevant for organizations that manage facilities in terms of the accessibility, availability and capacity of the facility.
- Community can be defined geographically, by demographics, heritage and cultural factors, or shared interests including the participation in art practice. Communities can be small, large, local, national or international.

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA

Governance / Management Capacity consistent with the size and scale of the organization and its goals.

This includes:

- Clarity of the mandate and objectives of the organization.
- Board policy, planning, and decision-making processes.
- Qualifications and skills of staff.
- Recruitment and retention of volunteers.
- Equity, diversity and inclusion policies and practices.

Sustainability and Organizational Capacity consistent with the size and scale of the organization and its goals.

This includes:

- Financial Capacity
 - Financial stability and long-term planning, ability to forecast risks, diversification of revenue, prudent planning and judicious allocation of resources, viable budgets and/or financial reports.
 - Appropriate financial review and audit.
- Human Resources
 - Available human capacity, commitment of key personnel, consideration of succession planning.
 - Appropriate remuneration for artists and cultural workers.
- Physical Resources
 - Management of capital assets on a short- and long-term basis, including collections when they exist.

EXPECTATIONS

Operating support will be subject to agreements, with expectations outlined in writing and agreed to before the investment is confirmed and provided. This includes reporting, engagement and review.

All organizations supported by EAC Operating Investments are expected to:

- Pursue their mandates and objectives.
- Ensure that their policy documents that define direction such as mission, vision, and values, reflect the current reality of the organization's aspirations and goals.

- Take all necessary steps to ensure the legal status and compliance of the organization. This may include but is not limited to:
 - Abiding by any applicable laws and standards, such as labour regulations, health and safety, human rights and privacy legislation, etc.
 - Maintain an understanding of and adherence to intellectual property standards, including payment to holders of any intellectual property used by the organization in its activities.
 - Maintain current and accurate reporting to any relevant government agencies and departments including Service Canada, Alberta Registries, and the Canadian Revenue Agency as needed.
- Take the necessary steps appropriate to the size and scale of the organization to ensure its continuity and survival. This may include but is not limited to:
 - Maintain appropriate fiscal and human resource management practices.
 - Maintain appropriate information technology practices to provide a secure work environment protecting its artists, patrons and stakeholders.
 - Assess insurance needs periodically, and ensure adequate protection of/for the organization's activities, people, and physical resources.
 - Create, monitor and execute financial plans for the organization that ensure the long-term fiscal viability of the organization and its assets, or conversely that plan for an orderly wrap-up of activities.
- Inform the Edmonton Arts Council if any legal, financial, or other circumstances arise that might threaten the status or reputation of the organization.

The EAC may re-evaluate the relationship with any organization at any time, including funding commitments, based on these expectations.

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