Provincial Arts Service Organizations Operating Funding

All disciplines
Organization

This grant provides funding in three-year cycles to eligible member-based arts organizations that provide educational, resource-based, promotional and advocacy services as the umbrella organization for an artistic discipline or sector in the province.

Deadline information
February 1, 2027
Who can apply

To be eligible for Provincial Arts Service Organizations operating funding, organizations must:

- have the promotion of an artistic discipline or sector as your organization’s principal mandate as stated in their incorporation documents
- engage in on-going development of, support for, and advocacy on behalf of that discipline or sector as their core primary activity
- serve a province-wide membership of both individuals and organizations and engage in regular communication to their members
- offer regular programs and development opportunities for their artistic discipline or sector
- advocate at the provincial level on behalf of their artistic discipline or sector
- employ at least one permanent full-time equivalent staff member as Executive Director or comparative administrator
- comply with all Canadian Arts Data/Données sur les arts au Canada (CADAC) financial and statistical data requirements
- have a board-approved cash reserve policy
- be legally registered and operating in Alberta for a minimum of three full fiscal years and in good standing under one of the following Acts:
  Provincial Legislation:

-Societies Act of Alberta
-Companies Act of Alberta, Part 9 (Nonprofit companies)

Federal Legislation:

-Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act and registered in Alberta under Part 21 of the Business Corporations Act
-Special Act of the Parliament of Canada
-Income Tax Act of Canada, operating in the Province of Alberta as a charity

Eligible organizations must also:

- have an Alberta-based address that is accessible to the membership
- have 50% or more of their organization’s board members living in Alberta
- derive revenue from sources other than the AFA
- demonstrate the ability to operate using good governance principles, effective administration practices, and a commitment to fiscal responsibility
    - operate as stand-alone arts organizations, at arm’s length from municipalities, commercial enterprises, or other organizations and institutions receiving annual operating funds from other Government of Alberta sources or their affiliates

First-time applicants

Eligible first-time applicants are accepted only at the beginning of each three-year cycle.

If this is your organization’s first application for Provincial Arts Service Organizations operating funding, you must contact the AFA at least three months before the deadline for a preliminary eligibility assessment and program fit.

As a first-time applicant, your organization must have met all eligibility requirements for the three annual fiscal periods prior to application. You must also provide board-approved financial statements that demonstrate your organization has positive net assets and has been operating with no annual deficit for each of these three fiscal periods.

Ineligible applicants

The following applicants are not eligible for AFA operating funding:

- municipalities
- for-profit organizations
- funding agencies or other funders
- organizations not registered under one of the above-mentioned Acts
- organizations that primarily benefit those outside of Alberta
- organizations engaged primarily in competition-based activities or events
- organizations focused on the applied arts including, but not limited to, gaming, architecture, interior design, commercial photography, graphic arts, and fashion design
- organizations that are eligible for operating funding under another AFA funding opportunity
- organizations with overdue or incomplete accounting/reporting related to any grant previously awarded by the AFA or Alberta Arts, Culture and Status of Women
- individuals

Your organization must:

- be a not-for-profit organization
- be registered and in good standing under the appropriate legislation and have been in operation in Alberta for at least two years
- have at least 50% of the organization’s board members living in Alberta
- employ an Executive Director or equivalent
- demonstrate the ability to operate using good governance principles, effective administration practices, and a commitment to fiscal responsibility while maintaining its mandate
- operate as a stand-alone arts organization at arms-length from municipalities, commercial enterprises, or organizations and institutions receiving annual operating funds from the Government of Alberta or its affiliates
- comply with all Canadian Arts Database (CADAC) financial and statistical requirements
- have a board-approved cash reserve policy

What does this funding support?

This funding is designed to support your organization’s operations, which are specific to your organization’s mandate, strategic and/or business plan and activities as described in your application and/or reporting.

Acceptable Use of Funds

AFA operating funding supports expenses including, but not limited to:

- administration
- fees for artists, curators, and technicians
- production and programming
- cultural protocol, including honoraria, tobacco offerings, and fees for Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Cultural Advisors
- marketing, communications, and promotion
- salaries and professional fees
- rent, utilities, and insurance
- maintenance of equipment and fixed assets and costs for facility operations
- other expenses as required to fulfill your organization’s mandate

Unacceptable Use of Funds

AFA operating funding cannot be used for expenses including, but not limited to:

- scholarships, prizes, gratuities, and awards and payments for individual benefit
- endowment funds
- third-party funding to another organization, including donations, grants, scholarships, or prizes
- consignment fees
- capital costs for renovations or facility improvements, land or facility purchases, and major equipment and/or vehicle purchases
- bad debt or debt reduction
- other expenses deemed unreasonable by the AFA

How to apply

The AFA only accepts applications through the GATE (Grant Administration Tracking and Evaluation) Front Office online application system.

Applications must be received through GATE Front Office no later than 11:59 p.m. Alberta Time on the deadline date. If the deadline falls on a statutory holiday or a weekend, it will be extended until the next working day.

Applications will be ineligible for consideration if they are received after the deadline, are incomplete, or the applicant has overdue or incomplete accounting/reporting related to any grant previously awarded by the AFA or Alberta Arts, Culture and Status of Women.

GATE Front Office username

Applicants require a GATE Front Office username and password. If you are a first-time applicant – or your organization requires updates to its registered users – requests for usernames and passwords must be received at least five business days prior to the application deadline.

Please complete the GATE Front Office Registration form and email it as an attachment to registrationAFA@gov.ab.ca, quoting the funding opportunity or grant program to which you are applying. GATE Front Office usernames and passwords will be sent to the email addresses provided on the registration form.

What to include in your application

GATE Front Office online forms:

- an Application Contact List which designates one contact as your organization's primary contact and signing authority for this application
- your organization's street address and mailing address
- your organization's registration details, including legal name, Alberta Registration number and incorporation date
- CADAC number for your organization's last three years of financial and statistical data
- an Organization Applicant Agreement, which must be agreed to by your organization's Signing Authority
- a current board list which includes names and titles, mailing addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and start dates for all current members
- a completed Statement of Eligible Expenses form, using the data from the corresponding lines from CADAC, and includes both eligible and ineligible

expenses as well as your organization’s membership information
- a completed Diligence Questionnaire

Attachments

Attachments must be developed prior to application, using either original documents specific to your organization or preformatted AFA templates, and uploaded to your online GATE Front Office submission.

You’ll be required to complete and upload the following attachments:

- a current, board-approved business or strategic plan
- a listing of planned activities for the upcoming three-year cycle
- your most recent annual financial statements including Balance Sheet, Statement of Revenues and Expenditures, and Statement of Cash Flows. See note below on Acceptable Financial Statements.
- a confirmation of your organization's most recent annual return from Alberta Corporate Registry
- a current list of your organization's core staff and their positions
- a copy of your organization’s Cash Reserve Policy

Cash Reserve Policy Requirements

Your organization’s submitted Cash Reserve Policy must:

- be approved by your organization’s Board of Directors
- establish a base Cash Reserve amount as a percentage of your organization’s annual operating expenditure and provide a rationale for that base amount
- outline that the Cash Reserve be clearly identified on your organization’s annual financial statements
- define the Cash Reserve as an unencumbered, restricted cash account that can only be accessed upon a resolution of your organization's Board of Directors, approved by a majority vote
- outline that the Cash Reserve funds may only be used to temporarily finance unforeseen operating deficits
- outline that funds removed from the Cash Reserve must be replenished within three fiscal years from the end of the fiscal year in which the Cash Reserve funds were used

- outline that base Cash Reserve amounts, once approved by the AFA, may not be reduced without prior approval by the AFA

We strongly encourage all organizations to strive for a cash reserve of no less than 10% of the organization’s average annual operating expenditures. However, we recognize that individual organizations have unique operating requirements. In considering the savings target for the Cash Reserve, your organization’s Board of Directors is expected to consider its own operating requirements and determine an appropriate target, which may be more or less than 10% of average annual operating expenditures.

Eligible organizations in this funding opportunity are encouraged to consult department staff as they develop the Cash Reserve Policy and associated plan for implementation.

Acceptable Financial Statements

For returning applicants, the level of financial statements required is determined by an organization’s prior-year AFA grant. Financial statements must include a Balance Sheet, Statement of Revenues and Expenditures, and Statement of Cash Flows. If the prior-year grant was:

- $25,000 or less include, at minimum, a financial statement approved and signed by the treasurer and two additional board members
- $25,001 to $50,000 include, at minimum, a Notice to Reader or Compilation Engagement financial statement provided by an independent, professionally designated accountant
- $50,000 to $100,000 include, at minimum, a Review Engagement financial statement provided by an independent, professionally designated accountant
- $100,001 or higher, include a full audited financial statement provided by an independent, professionally designated accountant

For first-time applicants, board-approved financial statements should comprise a Balance Sheet, Statement of Revenues and Expenditures, and Statement of Cash Flows. The level of financial statement is determined by your organization, but future applications must meet the conditions outlined above.

How will my application be assessed?

Staff convene an internal panel whose members are representative of a broad range of artistic disciplines. Panelists assess the merits of each application on its own terms and in relation to all other applications received for a given deadline.

Assessment of an application is based on the following general criteria:

- An organization’s demonstrated role and long-term impact as a service organization, with province-wide membership and relevant programming delivered on a provincial scale
- Quality, accessibility, and impact of an organization’s services, communications, advocacy, and development opportunities
- An organization’s demonstrated capacity to deliver on its mandate through effective governance, financial health, and administrative practices
- an organization’s operational sustainability as demonstrated through the application materials, including the strategic and/or business plan(s)

Panel recommendations cannot exceed 50% of average eligible operating expenses as determined by an organization’s last three board-approved financial statements. Actual funding recommendations may vary between applicants and are informed by the relative merits of all applications received, program priorities, and available funding.

Funding for Provincial Arts Service Organizations is established by the AFA Board of Directors based upon the annual AFA Budget allocated by the Government of Alberta. Department staff evaluate applications according to eligibility criteria and prepare recommendations to the board, which reviews and approves all funding.

All decisions are final and no appeals will be considered.

When will I hear?

Applicants will receive email notification upon AFA board approval, generally four to six months after the application deadline.

Conditions

Organizations are only eligible to receive support from one AFA operating grant stream at any given time. Multiple applications to the Provincial Arts Service Organizations program or to other AFA operating grant programs will not be

accepted.

Funding is intended for the activities planned for your organization’s current or next fiscal year, based on information provided in your application, and in accordance with the acceptable use of funds.

The AFA or its authorized representatives may examine your financial and other records to ensure funding is used for its intended purpose:

- Recipients must return unused portions of the grant to the AFA
- The AFA may require your organization to return funds if reporting requirements are not met
- If you do not meet reporting requirements, your organization may be ineligible for further funding from the AFA for a period of three years from the time the delinquency is resolved

The AFA Fair Notice Policy applies to this grant program. The AFA may cancel, suspend, reduce, or demand repayment of the grant in circumstances where the AFA is concerned with the viability of the organization.

Funding acknowledgement

Your organization must credit the AFA for financial support in any publicity prepared in relation to your organization’s activities, including electronic, print or visual material.

- if your organization fails to satisfy AFA recognition requirements, it may be subject to a 10% funding reduction in subsequent payments.
- subsequent infractions may result in ineligibility to apply for AFA funding opportunities

Download versions of the AFA logo and guidelines for usage.

Reporting

You are required to complete and submit satisfactory interim and final reports in GATE Front Office that demonstrate funding awarded for the previous fiscal year was spent on the activities described in the application. If your organization does not intend to continue to seek AFA operating funding, you are still required to submit a final report.

Your organization’s interim and final reports are due February 1 each year of the three-year grant cycle. We must receive your online report through GATE Front Office no later than 11:59 p.m. Alberta Time, unless the deadline falls on a statutory holiday or a weekend, when it will be extended until 11:59 p.m. on the next working day. Please give the system time to process your report so we receive notification of your submission before the deadline falls.

Interim Report

What to include in your interim report:

GATE Front Office formlets:

- **Statistical Report:** Aligned with your organization’s most recently completed fiscal year end and its board-approved financial statements
- **Statement of Eligible Expenses:** Aligned with your organization’s CADAC filing for its most recently completed fiscal year
- **Current Board List:** Including executive details of all current board members

Attachments:

- Copies of related promotional and publicity materials form the most recently completed fiscal year, showing compliance with AFA recognition requirements (scanned into one PDF file of no more than 4 MB)
- Detailed budget for the current or upcoming fiscal year
- Listing of completed arts activities from your most recently completed fiscal year, using the provided template
- Listing of planned arts activities for your current or upcoming fiscal year, using the provided template
- Material Change Report, using the provided template
- Most recent approved financial statements including Balance Sheet, Statement of Revenues and Expenditures, and Statement of Cash Flows. Accepted financial statements must conform to the specifications outlined in the *How to apply* section of the program guidelines.
- Confirmation of filing of your most recent return from Alberta Corporate Registry

Final Report

Final reports are required at the end of year three of your grant agreement and require the completion of GATE Front Office forms and the upload of two attachments. It is recommended you prepare your attachments as PDF documents prior to starting your report.

GATE Front Office online forms:

- **Statistical Report:** Aligned with your organization's most recently completed fiscal year end and its board-approved financial statements

Attachments (applicable templates are available under the Helpful Resources section)

- Most recent approved financial statements including Balance Sheet, Statement of Revenues and Expenditures, and Statement of Cash Flows. Accepted financial statements must conform to the specifications outlined in the *How to apply* section of the program guidelines.
- Copies of related promotional and publicity materials form the most recently completed fiscal year, showing compliance with AFA recognition requirements (scanned into one PDF file of no more than 4 MB)

Helpful resources

Visit the Help and Resources section of our website to:

- download the new Front Office User Guide
- find additional resources for organizations

Apply Now

Arts Development Consultant

Justina

Verboom
Phone
780-422-3250
Email
justina.verboom@gov.ab.ca