Professional Performing Arts Organizations Operating Funding

Dance
Music
Theatre
Organization

This grant provides funding in three-year cycles to eligible professional organizations that self-create and self-produce performing art productions.

Deadline information
November 1, 2028
Who can apply

Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for Professional Performing Arts Organizations operating funding, organizations must:

- have public performing arts programming as their principal mandate as stated in its incorporation documents
- engage in on-going development, implementation and promotion of performing arts programming as their core primary activity in an annual program or full season of professional self-created and self-produced work for public presentation
- employ at least two permanent full-time equivalent staff in administrative and/or programming capacity (i.e., Executive Director, Artistic Director)
- pay a fee for service at minimum industry standard rates (such as a union or nationally recognized rate) to at least 75% of the artists involved in the organization’s performance program for all performances
- comply with all Canadian Arts Database (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)
- Special Act of the Alberta Legislature

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
- have at least 50% of the organization's board members living in Alberta
- demonstrate good governance principles, effective administration practices, and a commitment to fiscal responsibility
- operate as a stand-alone arts organization, at arms-length from municipalities, commercial enterprises, or 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 Professional Performing Arts Organizations operating funding, you must contact us at least three months before the deadline for a preliminary eligibility assessment to ensure your organization meets the eligibility criteria.

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 the organization has positive net assets and has been operating with no annual deficit for each of these three fiscal periods.

Ineligible organizations

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

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:

- fees for artists, curators, and technicians
- cultural protocol, including honoraria, tobacco offering and fees for Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Cultural Advisors
- production and programming
- marketing, communications, and promotion
- salaries and professional fees
- rent, utilities, and insurance
- maintenance of equipment, 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 purchase, and major equipment and/or vehicle purchase
- bad debt or debt reduction
- other expenses deemed unreasonable by the AFA

Creative Year option

Organizations which have an average annual CDR under $1 million, and have been in an AFA funding stream for a minimum of three years, may apply to the Creative Year option under this funding. This option allows organizations to receive non-reduced funding in a year without a performing season. Discipline-specific project expert panels assess the proposals for this option. To prepare for this option, organizations must contact the AFA at least one year prior to the proposed Creative Year.

How to apply

The AFA only accept applications through the GATE (Grant Administration Tracking and Evaluation) Front Office online application system. For detailed step-by-step instructions on how to apply through GATE Front Office download the GATE Front Office User Guide.

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 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.

First-time applicants or organization contacts that require access to GATE Front Office must submit their request at least five business days prior to the application deadline by completing the the GATE Front Office Registration form and emailing it to registrationAFA@gov.ab.ca as an attachment. 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 formlets:

- **Contact List:** Includes the primary contact for your application and signing authority for your organization
- **Address:** Includes street and mailing address
- **Organization Information:** Includes the organization's legal name, registration and incorporation details, and vision/mandate
- **Applicant Agreement:** Includes the name and position of your legal signing authority
- **Current Board List:** Includes names, titles, contact information, and start dates for all current board members
- **Community Derived Revenue Calculation:** financial information for the last three years of operations, using the data from the corresponding line entries for CADAC.
- **Diligence Questionnaire:** Includes questions about your programming outcomes, financial management, accounting, and governance
- an Organization Applicant Agreement, which must be agreed to by your organization’s Signing Authority

Attachments:

Attachments must be developed prior to application and uploaded to your online GATE Front Office submission in PDF format. You will be required to complete the following attachments:

- **Business or Strategic Plan:** Most recent, board-approved Strategic Plan for your current years of operation.
- **Cash Reserve Policy:** A copy of your board-approved cash reserve policy.

- **Promotional materials:** Copies of promotional materials from the past year, including print and online, combined into one document.
- **Upcoming Activities:** Listing of planned activities for your current and/or upcoming fiscal years.
- **Annual Financial Statement:** Most recent, board-approved annual financial statements -- signed by the Board Chair/President, Treasurer, and one additional board member
- **Corporate Registry Information:** Most recent proof of filing with Alberta Corporate Registry
- **Staff Listing:** List of staff members, indicating position titles, type of employment, i.e. permanent, full-time, part-time, temporary, contract, or seasonal. For management or leadership personal, include email and phone contact information.
- **Electronic Funds Transfer Information:** Direct Deposit form with void cheque or online banking information, combined into one document

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 statement
- 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 utilized
- outline that the base Cash Reserve amount, 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 your 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 are 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, professional designated accountant

For first-time applicants, 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?

Funding awarded through this opportunity is calculated based on Community Derived Revenue (CDR). CDR is defined as an organization’s total annual revenue minus all federal, provincial and municipal government grants.

Funding amounts are calculated in two stages:

1. First, your organization’s three-year average CDR is adjusted to the following percentage tiers:

- 14% of such CDR for organizations with a three-year average CDR equal to or greater than $2,500,000 million;
- 18% of such CDR for organizations with a three-year average CDR of less than $2,500,000 and equal to or more than $1,000,000
- 20% of such CDR for organizations with a three-year average CDR of less than $1 million and equal to or more than $250,000
- 25% of such CDR for organizations with a three-year average CDR of less than $250,000.

2. Your organization’s adjusted CDR is then divided by the sum of the adjusted CDR for all eligible Professional Performing Arts Organizations, and then multiplied by this funding opportunity’s budget to determine your funding grant allocation.

Note: If your organization has been approved for a Creative Year option, your organization’s average CDR will consist of the most recent three years, excluding the Creative Year.

Funding for Professional Performing Arts 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 between four to six months from the application deadline.

Conditions

Organizations are only eligible to receive support from one AFA operating grant system at any given time. Multiple applications to the Professional Performing Arts 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 was 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 your grant in circumstances where we are concerned with the viability of your 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 demonstrates that 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 November 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 application so we receive notification of your submission before the deadline falls.

Interim Report

GATE Front Office online formlets:

- **Statistical Report**: Using information that corresponds to your most recent board-approved Financial Statements.
- **Current Board List:** Includes names, titles, contact information, and start dates for all current board members

Attachments

- **Promotional materials:** Copies of promotional materials from the past year, including print and online, combined into one document.
- **Corporate Registry Information:** Most recent proof of filing with Alberta Corporate Registry
- **Completed Activities:** Listing of completed activities for your most recently completed fiscal year.
- **Upcoming Activities:** Listing of planned activities for your current and/or upcoming fiscal years.
- **Material Change Report:** Indicating any substances changes to your professional activity, artistic mandate, cash reserve policy, or other material changes within your organization.
- **Annual Financial Statement:** Most recent, board-approved annual financial statements – signed by the Board Chair/President, Treasurer, and one additional board member
    - Refer to Acceptable Financial Statements (see "How to Apply") for the necessary level of reporting required

Final Report

GATE Front Office online formlets:

- **Statistical Report:** Using information that corresponds to your most recent board-approved Financial Statements.

Attachments:

- **Promotional materials:** Copies of promotional materials from the past year, including print and online, combined into one document.
- **Annual Financial Statement:** Most recent, board-approved annual financial statements – signed by the Board Chair/President, Treasurer, and one additional board member
- Refer to Acceptable Financial Statements (see "How to Apply") for the necessary level of reporting required

Helpful resources

Visit the Help and Resources section of our website to:

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

Download additional resources

- Financial Statement Board Approval Form
- Planned Activities List
- Completed Activities Report (Word doc)
- Material Change Report
- Direct deposit form

Apply Now

Arts Development Consultant - Theatre and Performance Arts



Luay
Eljamal
Phone
780-415-0306
Email
Luay.Eljamal@gov.ab.ca