

Creative Spark Vancouver

Grant Application Guidelines

Deadline: April 30th, 2025 at 11:59pm

Small projects can make a big impact. Emerging artists across all artistic and cultural disciplines living in the **City of Vancouver** who have an interest in building their careers and working with young people in an arts or culture-based capacity are invited to apply for Creative Spark Vancouver.

If you connect to the statements below, this grant is for you:

- I'm an Emerging Artist in any artistic or cultural discipline and I am interested in exploring my career opportunities
- I'm interested in working with young people (ages 5-18) and need support to start
- I have a project idea but don't have the funds to cover the required materials and supplies

Creative Spark Vancouver supports emerging artists (of any age) to engage with young people (ages 5-18) in arts-based projects. The grants offer 100% funding for small projects, and offer up to \$3,000 for individual projects and up to \$5,000 for multiple artists working together. Grant funds are intended to cover artist fees, project materials and supplies, rentals and honoraria.

Creative Spark Vancouver enables emerging artists to gain experience on small projects that could lead to new career opportunities, new community relationships, different perspectives on arts and education, future learning opportunities and exciting multi-faceted projects. We take the broadest possible definition of emerging artists – we strongly encourage emerging artists working in their cultural traditions, outsider artists, and other creative folks to apply.

Goals

Before you apply, please make sure your application meets the Creative Spark Vancouver goals:

- To build the capacity and confidence of emerging artists working with young people and art and culture-based learning;
- To provide young people opportunities to engage actively in art and culture, particularly artists and young people from equity-deserving communities*; and
- To critically engage with reconciliation, decolonization, equity, and accessibility.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions about eligibility or goals. We are here to support you in putting together a successful grant application. You can email us at creativespark@artstarts.com.

**Equity-deserving communities include those who identify as Musqueam, Squamish, and/or Tsleil-Waututh; Indigenous and urban Indigenous people; Black people and people of African descent; people of colour and racialized people; disabled people and people who live with mental health challenges; Deaf and hard of hearing people; LGBTQ2S+ and gender diverse people; low-income people; refugees, newcomers, and undocumented people; minority language communities; women and girls; or youth and seniors.*

Eligibility

Applicants can apply for one grant per intake. If you are applying as an individual artist, you cannot also be part of a collective application. In order to be considered for funding, applications must meet the following criteria:

The applicant(s) must:

- Be a resident of the City of Vancouver or a member of the Musqueam, Squamish, or Tsleil-Waututh First Nations and live in that Nation's unceded territories.
- Be an emerging artist of any age in any artistic or cultural discipline (e.g. community arts, dance, disability arts, Indigenous arts or culture, interdisciplinary, literary, media, multidisciplinary, music, textile/fiber art, theatre, visual arts).

For the purpose of this grant, an emerging artist is defined as one who:

- o is enrolled in, or has specialized training in arts and culture (university graduation or equivalent, self-training, or training in a culturally-specific tradition);
- o is in the early stages of their career, usually within the few first years of pursuing a career in their field;
- o has a small history of presentation, production, or publication;
- o is looking for support and resources to build confidence in their practice;
- o is committed to devoting more time to artistic activity, when possible financially;
and
- o self-identifies as emerging.

Registered organizations and businesses are not eligible to apply.

The project must:

- Take place in the province of British Columbia
- Involve young people (ages 5-18)
- Focus on arts-based learning in any artistic or cultural discipline
- Proactively address health and safety risks
- Be planned for the future (ie: after the application deadline – projects cannot be funded retroactively)
- Be completed by **December 31, 2025**

ArtStarts in Schools staff will review all applications for eligibility. Applications not meeting the above eligibility criteria will not be considered for funding.

Submission

The link to the online application form can be found at artstarts.com/creativesparkvancouver. A draft of the application can be saved while you are working on it. The system will send you a link that allows you to resume. The application must be submitted by **Wednesday, April 30th, 2025**. A copy of the completed application form will be emailed to each applicant. For collaborative projects, we will follow up with the main applicant for any missing information and application updates.

The application form has six sections: applicant information, artistic practice, project overview, project details, project budget and conditions of funding. Each applicant must also provide the following:

1. **Portfolio** in one of these formats:
 - a. A link to a video or sound piece (max 5 minutes)
 - b. Up to 5 images of your work (images should be under 8mb in total)
 - c. A written sample of poetry, creative writing or short story (max 500 words)
2. **Artist CV:** for information on how to write an artist CV, visit:
<https://www.agora-gallery.com/advice/blog/2018/07/16/the-artist-cv/>
 - a. Instead of writing a CV, you may choose to answer questions about your artistic practice and presentation history.

If you are working with a **community group or organization**, please submit a **letter of reference from that group** which speaks to the already established relationship between you (the applicant) and the community group or organization.

Awards

Creative Spark Vancouver offers up to 100% funding for projects. Individual artists can apply for up to \$3,000. Collectives or groups of emerging artists working together can apply for up to \$5,000. Projects with budgets over those amounts will need to secure additional funding to balance their budgets.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome within two months of the application deadline. Funds must be spent and the project must be completed before **December 31, 2025**.

Successful applicants must ensure their project's compliance with the Criminal Records Review Act of the Province of British Columbia.

To fulfill this requirement, all adults working with children during the project must complete an online Criminal Record Check through the online [British Columbia Ministry of Justice's Criminal Records Review Program](#) and have no criminal record found for the purpose of working with children. The applicant must pay the \$28 fee, however you may include this fee as an eligible expense in your grant application budget. Please ensure ALL adults working with children submit a Criminal Record Check.

Once an applicant is cleared, The BC Ministry of Justice will send ArtStarts a clearance letter directly. Please note that these clearance letters do take time to get through to ArtStarts. The grant cheque will be sent to the successful applicant when ArtStarts receives clearance letters for every artist working on the project.

Assessment

Only applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be considered for funding. Grants are reviewed and scored on a merit basis by an external assessment committee made up of peer emerging artists and community members.

Applications will be evaluated based on the project’s viability, the ability of the project to achieve the goals of the grant, and the quality of the applicant’s art practice. Additionally, the reference letter (if provided) will provide further evidence of community support.

Successful applicants may reapply after successfully completing and reporting upon a Creative Spark Vancouver funded project. However, in such cases, projects must incorporate learnings from and/or build upon previously successful Creative Spark Vancouver projects completed by the applicant. When demand exceeds available funds, preference will be given to new applicants. We will ensure that at least 50% of funding in each intake goes to equity-seeking artists.

The committee will consider each application against the following criteria:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Project Viability | The project is well planned and is achievable with the resources provided. The project has thoughtfully addressed risks through intentional timeframes, health and safety considerations, roles, and budget plans to safely bring art to young people. |
| Goal #1 | The project will build the capacity and confidence of emerging artists working with young people and art and culture-based learning |
| Goal #2 | The project will provide young people with opportunities to engage actively in art and culture, particularly artists and young people from equity-seeking communities |
| Goal #3 | The applicant(s) will critically engage with reconciliation, decolonization, equity, and accessibility (see below for more context) |
| Portfolio | All artists involved in the project have strong portfolios within the realm of emerging artists |

Project Viability

It is important that applicants continue to consider health and safety within their project. We have revised the COVID-19 question to ask applicants to identify and mitigate risks to health and safety. Your response to this question could include the following considerations, as well as any others you consider under the umbrella of health and safety. We hope this question will help contribute to safer spaces for artists and participants.

- Physical Health and safety
 - Ex: Access for d/Deaf and disabled folks
 - Ex: Communicable disease plans including COVID-19, the flu, RSV, and other communicable diseases
- Emotional health and safety
 - Ex: What kind of sharing do you expect applicants to do? What containers or community agreements do you need for that to happen?
- Psychological health and safety
 - Ex: How do you address trauma - historic, generational, or personal - with your attendees?
- Legal Health and Safety
 - Required: All artists over 18 need to pass an online Criminal Record Check through the BC Ministry of Justice

Goal #3

ArtStarts is applying an anti-oppression lens to all of our work. We revised Goal 3 to bring Creative Spark Vancouver in line with our anti-oppression work and the new Culture|Shift policy from the City of Vancouver. When writing your grant application, we encourage you to take a critical look at your art practice and your project idea with a lens of Reconciliation, Decolonization, Equity, and Accessibility. This does not mean that every project needs to be explicitly about reconciliation or decolonization. It does mean that each project should be aware of its cultural context (ie: Western, European, Canadian, Indigenous, Queer, South Asian, Filipino, etc.) and be able to speak to how that context is part of the greater art context in Vancouver – including your relationship to the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh people.

We understand that some folks may not have heard these terms and processes referred to in a grant before and we want to explain how we expect artists to meet this criteria. We are constantly learning and evolving and welcome feedback on our criteria. We also offer

support to artists through our Learning Lab program. Please get in touch if you have any questions or are looking for guidance on your application.

Some definitions:

Reconciliation: . . . Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement [reparation] for the causes, and action to change behaviour. – From the Truth and Reconciliation Commission - Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 6

Decolonization: Decolonization, once viewed as the formal process of handing over the instruments of government, is now recognized as a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power - Linda Tuhiwai Smith 2012 (sourced from Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. www.intinc.ca)

Equity: Considers the appropriate allocation of resources and opportunity for access and outcomes. Equity is about accommodating differences to address barriers or disadvantages faced due to social inequalities in order to achieve the same goal. Equity is not necessarily the same as equality, although at times it can be. – From ArtStarts' Anti-Oppression Guidelines
(https://artstarts.com/assets/uploads/Anti-Oppression%20Guidelines_2019.pdf)

Accessibility: One definition of accessibility is “an umbrella term for all aspects which influence a person’s ability to function within an environment.”* Put another way, accessibility is a measure of how simply a person can participate in an activity. - From Accessible U -
<http://www.accessibleuniversity.com/accessibility-basics/defining-accessibility>

*Iwarsson, S., & Ståhl, A. (2003). Accessibility, usability and universal design—positioning and definition of concepts describing person-environment relationships. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 25(2), 57-66.

Positionality: The recognition that where you stand in relation to others in society shapes what you can see and understand about the world. - Sensoy, Ö., & Robin, D. A. (2017). *Is everyone really equal? An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

We have chosen these areas to focus on because they are integral to the current conversations in the art world, especially in Vancouver. “Art” has historically been majorly classified as “High” Art that practices within a narrow Western-European cultural tradition. This tradition does not reflect the full breadth of art and the many ways it is created around the world. We want to be part of the acknowledgement of the breadth and encourage the range of creative possibilities that move away from the old, narrow definition of art. We want to see projects that encourage young people to engage with art and culture and to express themselves creatively with the support of an artist. These projects can be all kinds of art forms, engage with creativity and thoughtful ideas, and stem from any and all cultural traditions.

We want to see applications that critically reflect on the applicant’s positionality as it relates to their art practice. You should think about which cultural context you create in, your relationship to it, and how that relationship will be expressed to the participants in your project. Everyone is creating in a cultural context; you should be able to speak to that context and how your work relates to the larger art world, including the understanding that Vancouver is on unceded territory.

We are also looking for you to discuss how your project will be accessible to folks with different needs. That does not mean that all projects need to happen with the general public – you can still choose a specific audience or group of youth to work with. We do want you to consider how participants with different access needs will join the project and participate in the activities.

Here are some questions to ask yourself to guide your answers:

- How are you unlearning things about your art practice?
- We all have culture, what cultural context are you working in?
- How does that context inform your creative work?
- How will you challenge dominant assumptions about art and culture?
- How will you work to make your practice more accessible and equitable?

There is no one right answer to this question, we are looking for your individual reflections. Each applicant should participate in answering this question. You will each have a different answer that informs the group's response.

Budget

All applicants are required to submit a detailed budget that includes a clear breakdown of how funds will be spent. The budget must:

- Only include expenses directly related to the proposed project
- Show a clear breakdown of the material costs involved in the project
- Only include eligible expenses (see below)

| Eligible Expenses |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Artist Fees for the Applicant(s). (see FAQ for more details about fees) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For a solo artist project, only that artist's fees may be included. ○ For a collaborative project, only the emerging artists who are co-applicants may be included. ○ Any non-emerging artists should be paid via Honoraria. ○ CARFAC Fee Schedule for Reference ● Criminal Record Check fees for all adults working with children (5-18) ● Materials and Supplies; this can include any technical needs to deliver your project online and PPE ● Venue rentals* ● Tool and equipment rentals including any technical needs to deliver your project online ● Honouraria for other contributors are not to exceed \$500 for the total project budget. Honoraria could be paid to Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Mentors, Subject Matter Experts, etc. |

* We are unable to provide use of the ArtStarts Lab to applicants during this intake due to the ongoing construction taking place at 808 Richards Street.

All expenses not listed explicitly as eligible are ineligible. Examples include, but are not limited to: capital expenses (items that are not used up through the project, such as iPads or tools), classes and/or professional development. Ineligible expenses cannot be included in the budget.

For more guidance on your budget, please the Budget section in the FAQ below.

Reporting Requirements

All grant recipients are required to submit a Final Report within 30 days of project completion and no later than **January 31, 2026**. The Final Report form can be found at artstarts.com/creativesparkvancouver. If a previously successful applicant applies for a subsequent grant, the Final Report must be received on or before the application deadline. If a Final Report is not submitted by the noted deadline, the applicant may be ineligible for future funding through ArtStarts in Schools.

How to Apply

- The link to the online application form can be found at artstarts.com/creativesparkvancouver.
- Fill out the application form while referring to these Grant Guidelines and the Frequently Asked Questions below. Both solo and collaborative projects use the same form.
- A draft of the application can be saved while you are working on it. The system will send you a link that allows you to resume.
- Ensure all sections of your application are complete and files uploaded.
- The application must be submitted by **Wednesday, April 30, 2025 11:59pm**. A copy of the completed application form will be emailed to you.
- Late applications will not be considered for funding.

For more information, please contact creativespark@artstarts.com
Tel: 604.336.0626 | Toll free: 1.855.292.7826 | Email: creativespark@artstarts.com

Creative Spark Vancouver

FAQ

Budget and Eligibility Requirements

Can I still apply if I live outside the City of Vancouver and am not a resident and member of one of Vancouver's three Host First Nations?

No. Only artists who live in the City of Vancouver or who are members and residents of the Musqueam, Squamish or Tsleil-Waututh First Nations are eligible to apply. However, your project can take place anywhere in British Columbia.

How should I calculate my artist fees?

Applicants should determine their own fees based on their prior level of experience keeping in mind a living wage. Fees are calculated based on the number of hours spent developing, preparing and executing the project. Artist fees can only be paid to the emerging artist(s) listed on the application; other artists working on the project can only be provided honoraria (see below).

For your reference, here is a list of organizations that offer guidelines on professional artist fees:

[Canadian Artists Representation/Le front des artistes canadiens/CARFAC](#)

[Canadian Actors Equity Association](#)

[Canadian League of Composers](#)

[Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists](#)

[Professional Writers Association of Canada](#)

I'm working with other artists on this project. Can we include all of our artist fees in the budget?

Yes. You can apply in groups of artists (collaborative project) as long as all the artists qualify as emerging (see definition above). If you have an established artist coming in to mentor or another key collaborator like an elder or a subject matter expert they can be paid through the honoraria section of the budget. Honoraria can be up to \$500 of the total budget.

The form is set up for up to 5 artist collaborators. If you have more than 5 collaborators, please email us at creativespark@artstarts.com for support with the application.

I see that only the Main Applicant gets sent the funding cheque. Do you have a resource for making sure all participants receive the funding they are awarded?

For collaborative projects we encourage all artists to sign a contract that stipulates how much each artist will be paid and what can be expected of them.

For tax purposes, it is a good idea to use invoices to keep track of funds changing hands. Each artist should invoice the artist who receives the funding cheque so that the Main Applicant can send other folks the correct amount for the grant and materials.

The grant does not require you to use or submit contracts or invoices to ArtStarts. We want to support you in running a successful project!

How do I create my budget?

List all eligible expenses in the Expenses table with details of how each cost was calculated. Additionally, list all sources of income, including the grant funds and donations, in the Revenues table. Total Project Expenses must equal Total Project Revenues. If you are receiving goods or services for free or “in-kind” – be sure to list their estimated value in both the expenses and revenue sections in your budget (see below for an example).

Artist fees should be broken down into hours spent. The Criminal Record Check fee of \$28 per collaborator can be added. All of your other project expenses should fall into one of the following three categories: Materials and Supplies, Rentals, and Honoraria.

Health and Safety Measures: You can list materials or rentals for supplies you may need in addition to regular materials in order to safely deliver your project. This could include PPE to prevent spread of communicable diseases, software or tech to do your project online, resources to support safer space facilitation, etc. You are the best suited to determine risk and prevention for your project. Please make the case for what you need in the budget and project viability section.

Examples of eligible expenses are:

| Materials and Supplies | | Rentals | Honoraria |
|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint • Markers • Paper • Clay • Wood • Hardware (assembly or mounting) • Brushes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ink • Dye • Fabric • Wool • Printing (e.g. instructions) • Cleaning supplies • Tech needs to deliver your project online | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venue (performance hall, workshop, rehearsal space etc.) • Specialized tools (woodworking, etc.) • Technology/Equipment (iPads, cameras, sound system, lighting, etc.) • Instruments (violins, etc.) • Sets or props | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to exceed a total of \$500 for the entire project |

The items listed in this table are provided as reference only, and are not intended to be a complete list of all eligible expenses.

EXAMPLE 1: Project expenses equal to or lesser than \$3,000 – Solo Application

| Expenses | Cost |
|---|----------------|
| Artist 1 preparation fees: \$40/hour x 10 hours | \$400 |
| Artist 1 artist workshop fees: \$50/hour x 5 workshops x 3 hours each | \$750 |
| Criminal Record Check fee: Artist 1 and Elder | \$54 |
| Wool | \$100 |
| Natural Dyes (in-kind) | \$100 |
| Honourarium for Elder | \$500 |
| Room Rental @ Community Centre | \$200 |
| TOTAL PROJECT EXPENSES | \$2,104 |
| TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED (up to \$3,000) | \$2,004 |

| Revenues | Cost |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Creative Spark Vancouver | \$2,004 |
| Natural Dyes (in-kind) | \$100 |
| TOTAL PROJECT REVENUES | \$2,104 |

EXAMPLE 2: Project expenses equal to or lesser than \$5,000 – Collective Application

| Expenses | Cost |
|--|----------------|
| Artist 1 preparation fees: \$35/hour x 14 hours | \$490 |
| Artist 1 workshop fees: \$50/hour x 6 workshops x 3 hours each | \$900 |
| Artist 2 preparation fees: \$35/hour x 14 hours | \$490 |
| Artist 2 workshop fees: \$50/hour x 6 workshops x 3 hours | \$900 |
| Criminal Record Check fee: Artist 1 and 2 | \$54 |
| Materials for costumes | \$150 |
| Makeup/Face Paint | \$50 |
| Artist 1 photo editing fees: \$30/hour x 5 hours | \$150 |
| Sewing Machine rental | \$200 |
| ArtStarts Space Rental (in-kind) | \$900 |
| TOTAL PROJECT EXPENSES | \$4,284 |
| TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED (up to \$5,000) | \$3,384 |

| Revenues | Cost |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Creative Spark Vancouver | \$3,384 |
| ArtStarts Space Rental (in-kind) | \$900 |
| TOTAL PROJECT REVENUES | \$4,284 |

EXAMPLE 3: Project expenses greater than \$3,000 – Solo Application

| Expenses | Cost |
|--|----------------|
| Artist 1 artist fees: \$60/hr x 30 hrs (Workshop and Prep) | \$1,200 |
| Criminal Record Check fee: Artist 1 and House Technician | \$54 |
| Rental of theatre: \$800/day x 2 days | \$1,600 |
| House Technician for theatre: \$35/hour x 10 hrs | \$350 |
| Studio Rental – Rehearsal/workshop space: \$20/hr x 10 | \$200 |
| Materials for costumes | \$100 |
| TOTAL PROJECT EXPENSES | \$3,504 |
| TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED (up to \$2,000) | \$3,504 |

| Revenues | Cost |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| Creative Spark Vancouver | \$3,000 |
| Fundraiser | \$504 |
| TOTAL PROJECT REVENUES | \$3,504 |

What can I do if my budget exceeds the \$3,000 or \$5,000 grant amount?

If your project budget exceeds the maximum (\$3,000 or \$5,000), you should look for other sources of funding. You might consider asking for in-kind donations of supplies, materials, or services, a fundraising event, soliciting private donations, seeking corporate sponsorship or other grants (aside from those administered by ArtStarts).

What is a Curriculum Vitae (CV)?

A CV is an artist's resume. For tips on writing one, please see this great guide from Agora Gallery in New York. It is written with visual artists in mind but you can use it for all art disciplines. Please get in touch if you need more guidance on your CV.

<https://www.agora-gallery.com/advice/blog/2018/07/16/the-artist-cv/>

How often can I apply?

Artists are able to apply once per intake. Creative Spark Vancouver typically has two intakes: April and October. Applicants may reapply after successfully completing and reporting upon a Creative Spark Vancouver funded project. However, in such cases, projects must incorporate learnings from and/or build upon previously successful Creative Spark Vancouver projects completed by the applicant. When demand exceeds available funds, preference will be given to new applicants.

Application and Assessment

Who reviews my Creative Spark Vancouver application?

Grants are adjudicated on a merit basis by a selection committee made up of artists and community members. Applications will be evaluated based on the project's viability, the ability of the project to achieve the goals of the grant, and the quality of the applicant's art practice. Additionally, the reference letter (if provided) will provide further evidence of community support.

What can I do if my application is not approved?

If your application is not approved, you will receive a letter that provides context as to the decision making process. You will have an opportunity to sign up for a feedback call with Grants staff. You are eligible to reapply for the same project in future intakes after incorporating feedback recommendations into your application.

When will I know if my project is receiving funding?

Applicants will typically be notified of their status within two months of submission. Successful applicants can expect to receive their funds one month after the criminal record check condition is met. Please note that the criminal record check takes time to get to ArtStarts staff, so please be sure to complete this first!

Reporting and Documentation

When is my Final Report due?

Final Reports are due 30 days after project completion and no later than **January 31, 2026**. The Final Report form can be found at artstarts.com/creativesparkvancouver. If a previously successful applicant applies for a subsequent grant, the Final Report must be received on or before the application deadline. If a Final Report is not submitted by the noted deadline, the applicant may be ineligible for future funding through ArtStarts in Schools.

How should I document my project?

All grant recipients are required to provide documentation along with their Final Report. There are lots of fantastic ways to capture the impact of a project. Try to take photos during the creation process as well as pictures of the actual event or project. Capture any memorable quotes relating to the project and save any newspaper or magazine articles if your project is featured. You can take video, write blogs, or document the project in any other way that seems fitting!

Please note that by submitting this information you authorize ArtStarts to use the submitted photos and material for media requests and ArtStarts publications including, but not exclusively limited to, brochures, posters, website, e-newsletters and annual reports. You need to secure consent from the individuals involved or from their parent or guardian if they are minors. An Image Release Form template is provided at artstarts.com/resources-artists.