



# Consultation Report

City of Peterborough Pilot  
Program for Grants to  
Professional Arts Organizations

*June 18, 2024*



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## Introduction

The City of Peterborough, in line with recent recommendations from City Council, has set out to create a pilot program for grants to Professional Arts Organizations. As part of a commitment to consult with the arts community, the City engaged Arising Collective, as an independent third party, to help design and facilitate an engagement process that included one in-person consultation session and one online survey.

This report outlines findings from the two engagement methodologies and will be used by the City to inform development of the pilot.

## Background

In 2023, the City of Peterborough reviewed the Community Investment and Projects Grants Program, and in October 2023, Council approved staff report [CSAC23-008](#) recommending changes to the existing program.

Recommendations included:

- That the City of Peterborough set up an Arts Investment Fund in 2025 to include the following programs:
  - Individual Artists Grants (existing)
  - **Professional Arts<sup>1</sup> Organization Grant (new)**
  - Artsweek Funding (existing)
  - Poet Laureate Program (existing)
  
- That the Professional Arts Organization program be developed through a two-year pilot led by the Art Gallery of Peterborough staff in collaboration with the Electric City Culture Council.

The work to create the pilot includes development of funding goals and objectives, program guidelines, eligibility requirements, application processes, evaluation criteria and assessment processes, reporting and acknowledgement requirements “based upon best practices utilized by other municipalities”<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In this report, “arts” is intended to include performing, visual, literary, interdisciplinary, and media arts.

<sup>2</sup> From Report CSAC23-008 “Community Grant History and Future Direction” < <https://pub-peterborough.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=36611>>, page 2.

## Overview of the Consultation Process

To inform the development of questions that were asked during the consultation process, an environmental scan of best practices from other municipalities with similar granting programs was completed. In this scan, applicable grant processes from Kingston, London, Winnipeg, and Toronto<sup>3</sup> were reviewed by AGP staff, an EC3 representative, and Arising Collective consultants.

Results of the environmental scan were used to identify **five key themes** and related best practices to be addressed through the consultation process. The five themes are:

1. Pilot Program Goals and Objectives
2. Definition of a Professional Arts Organization/Other Eligibility Criteria
3. Assessment Criteria
4. Selection and Role of the Peer Assessment Committee
5. Reporting

## Consultation Methodology & Participation

Arising Collective led an **in-person consultation** at the McDonnell Street Community Centre March 27, 2024, between 6:30 and 9pm. EC3 and the AGP staff compiled a comprehensive contact list of stakeholders which was used to invite local arts community members and to distribute pilot background information. **There were about 60 people in attendance at the in-person session.**

The session began with introductions and a land acknowledgment, followed by context setting and time for questions and answers. The bulk of the session was devoted to an interactive World Café activity to illicit input from the participants on each of the five themes and their related best practices. More detailed session information is provided in [Appendix A](#).

An **online survey** was hosted on SurveyMonkey by Arising Collective. A series of questions were formatted around the same five themes, with demographic questions added to ensure, that while anonymous, feedback was from people representing various aspects of the Peterborough arts community including artists, administrators, Board members and (other) volunteers.

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<sup>3</sup> These were recommended by Art Gallery of Peterborough staff and the Electric City Culture Council as examples of strong and successful municipal arts councils with effective programs of grants to professional arts organizations exhibiting well-articulated policies, procedures, and guidelines.

**A total of 49 people responded to the survey, however, only 29 people responded fully to all questions,** with the majority identifying as independent artists living in the City of Peterborough and many of those also volunteering with an arts organization.

## High-Level Findings

The responses collected from the in-person and online survey were consistent and aligned. Overall, participants<sup>4</sup> felt that the **best practices presented with each theme were what they would want to see used for a Professional Arts Organization Grant program pilot framework.** This is a testament to the initial research compiled by Art Gallery of Peterborough staff and the Electric City Culture Council and reviewed by the consultants.

Additionally, some best practices (like paying artists, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and increased funding) appeared in feedback across themes as they were seen as key to building a successful, meaningful granting program that fosters a thriving and sustainable arts community.

### Key Best Practices

Best practices identified by participants as being key to include:

1. Professional arts organizations must pay artist fees.
2. Grant applications should be peer reviewed and assessed.
3. Organizations should be led by professional artistic and administrative personnel with an important caveat that “professional” is not solely defined by financial compensation. For example, leadership is often fulfilled by a volunteer – i.e., Boards of Directors.
4. Organizations must be able to demonstrate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion principles and practices.
5. Grants should be multi-year in funding.
6. Community support and involvement should be demonstrated by either audiences, membership, fundraising, and/or volunteer involvement.

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<sup>4</sup> Participants and respondents are used interchangeably in this report and refer to everyone who provided input cumulatively in-person and via the online survey.

## Vital Considerations

Other relevant suggestions from participants that did not necessarily pertain in particular to one of the 5 key themes but are important to consider overall, include the following:

1. It is vital that the City invest more money into this granting stream. The investment as stated in the report is considered insufficient and is significantly less than other municipalities with Kingston, London and Barrie<sup>5</sup>.
2. Depending on the definition and eligibility requirements, professional arts organizations are only one aspect of a thriving arts ecosystem. Funding to other entities such as community-based arts organizations, individual artists, collectives, and emerging professional organizations should be considered in concert with this stream.
3. Collectives should be able to qualify for operating grants in this funding stream and may fit under this stream with additional thought and flexibility to qualifying and accountability criteria needed.
4. Financial accountability is important but should not become an insurmountable barrier. “Audited” or even Financial Engagement Reviews financials are not always realistic for a small organization.
5. The idea of artistic merit is subjective and needs to keep in mind principles of diversity equity and inclusion and should be informed by arts community peers.
6. There needs to be ongoing involvement of the arts community in the development, evaluation, and implementation of arts granting and this pilot.

Relevant participant quotes:

- *“Creating a City of Ptbo grants program for professional arts organization will heighten the credibility of the arts organization and individual artist at the provincial and federal level - both government and private endowment funds. Our City's arts community is highly respected within the larger arts community in Canada and internationally. The City needs to stand behind and support the growth of this very viable economy.”<sup>6</sup>*
- *“This whole exercise is futile, as the amount of funding allocated to the program is a paltry \$60,000. The program needs AT LEAST 3x THAT AMOUNT. Unless this is addressed, you are wasting yours and everybody else's time. Honestly, \$60,000 is like a joke, and an insulting one at that.”*

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<sup>5</sup> As perceived by participants during the world café activity.

<sup>6</sup> Quotes in this report are all pulled directly from the in-person session and the online survey.

## Feedback by Theme

For both the in-person session and the online survey, questions were asked to illicit input into the 5 key themes. For each theme, noted best practices gathered from municipal arts councils and arts council guidelines were provided, in addition, extra contextual information was included for some themes.

### Theme One: Program Goals and Objectives

As part of the pilot granting program, input was asked about how to best **define the goals and objectives** of the grant to professional arts organizations.

#### Context

Effective grant programs have clear stated purposes and objectives. These guide potential applicants and assessors, and most importantly, they clarify the vision, goals, and purpose of the funding.

The purpose of this new grant program should consider the City of Peterborough's strategic priority pillar Community and Wellbeing: *"Foster community resiliency, neighbourhood identity, civic pride, sense of belonging, and intercultural harmony. Enhance and protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of all in our City. Provide robust, affordable, and accessible sport, recreation, wellness, the arts, and social programs for people of all ages and abilities."* Link to the City's [Strategic Plan](#)

#### Noted Best Practices

- Nurture and support a flourishing and sustainable arts community.
- Engage local artists in professional opportunities and fair compensation.
- Nurture creativity and arts engagement for all Peterborough residents.
- Build capacity through professional development, mentorship, and investment in sustainable, relevant, high-quality artists work.
- Encourage public awareness and appreciation of the arts.
- Increase access to quality local arts programming.
- Strengthen and expand access to the arts and volunteer opportunities.
- Create inclusive activities and equity practices.
- Foster collaboration and partnerships.

### Theme One Feedback

- Discussions related to this theme **support and build on the identified best practices**.
- One key issue that was highlighted during engagement is that additional money and multi-year funding is critical to the success of any city arts funding program intended to foster arts as a pillar of a thriving inclusive Peterborough.

- Participants noted that some of the expectations suggested by the best practices, including having paid administrative staff, paying artists appropriately, developing, and engaging audiences and volunteers, and maintaining arts spaces, **all have significant budget/financial implications.**
  - *“The program needs more money! Pay peanuts, get monkeys.”*
  - *“The biggest challenge to this program may be finances. Without sufficient funding, the program will either be ineffective (spread too thin) or will be left to choose winners and losers, instead of developing a wider arts scene.”*
  
- Participants noted that **fostering the sustainability of arts organizations** in Peterborough should be a key objective of this granting stream. It is clear from feedback that for an organization to build a professional profile or designation and thrive, they must be able to plan in years, not months. Operating and programming funds that allow for longer-term investment in professional leadership, artists, and audiences are a critical part of multi-year grants.
  - *“Single year makes it impossible to plan for future and only provides Band-Aid solutions.”*
  - *“We need sustainable funding, as in multi-year funding operational funding/investing in sustainability – not seed funding.”*
  - *“Best practice objectives cannot be achieved with \$60,000.”*
  - *“Grants should be multi-year as creative works takes so much time and workshopping. All of the goals (best practices) listed above are really good. Nurturing arts engagement and making it accessible to everyone, including peoples with less income and new Canadians, is really important.”*



## Theme 2: Definition of a Professional Arts Organization

As part of the pilot granting program, the City asked for input about how to **define a Professional Arts Organization and Eligibility Criteria.**

### Noted Best Practices

- Organizations that have as their primary mandate or core activity the creation, production, presentation, or education of/in the performing, visual, literary, or media arts.
- Pays appropriate fees to artists/ demonstrates an ongoing commitment to the employment of Peterborough artists.
- Led by professional artistic and administrative personnel (FTE, PTE, or contract).
- Artist fees must be part of their expenses.
- Defined geographic boundaries for eligibility.
- Have community support and involvement as demonstrated by either audiences, membership, fundraising, and/or volunteer involvement. Partnerships, collaborations
- A minimum number of years of sustained, regular, presentation/programming activity open to the public and publicized city wide
- Financial requirements:
  - Sound financial management.
  - Can demonstrate a range of revenue sources on an annual or seasonal basis, including earned and public funding.
  - Verification of finances based on amount applying for (i.e. audit, financial engagement review, compilation review / note to reader, budget form).

### Theme Two Feedback

- Overall, the **best practices presented for this theme were supported** as being appropriate for Peterborough.
- While there was significant agreement that artists should be compensated based on a standardized fee schedule, there was mixed feedback about how strictly this should be applied.
- It is clear respondents believe Peterborough needs to have a flexible framework for defining professional arts organizations that applies across disciplines. *“Professional arts organizations can and are run by volunteers not just paid staff”* was a sentiment expressed repeatedly both in-person and in the survey.

- *“Professional arts organizations are led by both paid and unpaid professional staff - They pay professional artists fees.”*
- *“Caliber of management rather than pay levels of management should be prioritized.”*
- *“The other piece I'll re-state--Volunteers can run professional arts organizations, so the pay standards of leadership staff should not be a barrier to artistic viability. The MAIN thing to assess, with the heaviest weight, is the programming. Only the biggest arts organizations have the funding to check all the boxes of administrative and organizational viability. (A City grant could ask how an arts org plans to grow its organizational viability--sometimes an org will need City funding to be able to do so, thus it shouldn't be a disqualifying factor.)”*
- The definition of a “professional arts organization” should be determined by professional artistic peers based on professional practice within the field.
- Granting to not-for-profit organizations and collectives was largely endorsed by respondents. Respondents highlighted the importance of keeping sight of the fact that there is an entire arts and culture ecosystem in Peterborough and that professional arts organizations are just one moving part, was repeatedly emphasized.
  - *“Yes, collectives should be eligible, and decisions should be based on equitable criteria.”*
  - *“I believe only not-for-profits should be eligible.”*
  - *“Define arts group **AND** think about who it excludes, not just who it includes.”*
- Some participants suggested that ad-hoc groups should also be included as part of this funding stream. While this isn't likely to happen in the Professional Arts Organization stream, it does further highlight the concerns of many participants that other arts groups are not left out of funding discussions and opportunities.
  - *“Allow freedom for ad hoc groups who are often organizing for marginalized communities, their needs, representation, BIPOC, youth, etc.”*
  - *“NFP incorporation must NOT be a requirement. Welcome collectives and ad hoc groups.”*

### Theme 3: Assessment Criteria

As part of the pilot granting program, the City asked for input into the criteria that will be used to **assess Professional Arts Organizations**.

<b>Context</b>	<p>Clear assessment criteria are an essential component of any successful grant program. Assessment criteria are used in the review process by peer assessors and should be considered by applicants as they prepare grant applications. Grantors should provide access to assessment criteria.</p> <p>Grants to Professional Arts Organizations are often assessed according to criteria relating to Artistic Merit, Impact, and Viability. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are also crucial components of a good assessment process.</p>
<b>Noted Best Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Artistic merit of programs</li><li>• Contribution to the artistic field or practice</li><li>• Demonstrated relevance to the Artistic Community (relationships with artists and/or other arts organizations)</li><li>• Demonstrated proper support of artists (artist fees in line with sector standards)</li><li>• Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (demonstration of DEI accountability in programming and all levels of operation)</li><li>• Public Impact</li><li>• Financial viability (stability, records management, feasibility)</li><li>• Organizational viability (staff structure, pay standards, governance, sustainability, strategic planning)</li></ul>

### Theme Three Feedback

- Generally, **participants endorsed the best practices for this theme, with some caution suggested in how “artistic merit” and “relevance to the Artistic Community were defined** so as not to re-enforce “old guard norms” and to leave room for diverse, equity seeking groups.
- Developing a communications framework to assist with communications between applicants and the city/reviewers was emphasized for completing applications, providing opportunities to answer questions that may arise during assessment, and for understanding assessments/rejections to improve future applications.
  - *“Allow a process for seeking clarification of grant content, don't make this a writing contest.”*

- *“Applicants could access feedback on their applications and on criteria.”*
- *“Applicants need access to constructive feedback.”*
- It was noted that a multidisciplinary assessment framework needs to have flexibility to accommodate the diversity of organizations and disciplines in Peterborough. This was highlighted as critical, not just to encompass all arts disciplines, but to lift up diversity, equity and inclusion for artists and audiences. Having access to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility frameworks or guiding documents was indicated as important and would enhance any assessment framework.
  - *“Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (demonstration of DEI accountability in programming and all levels of operation) is increasingly vital in assessing an arts organization's overall programming efforts.”*
  - *“A DEI lens should be used at every juncture. Without this perspective we risk falling back into old ways of rewarding the “successful” norms. Demonstrated relevance to artists is important. Fees should be in line with sector standards. Artist merit is a fuzzy line that will have a different definition from everyone and could be problematic. What is art? Etc.”*
- Several comments reflected the idea that further engagement with the arts community or at least a selection of peers should be done as the pilot is rolled-out.
- While theme four discusses the role and selection of a peer assessment committee or jury, the critical importance of peer involvement was emphasized throughout this section as well.
  - *“A peer review process conducted by multidisciplinary and representative professional artists can include artists from Peterborough and outside the community; Especially to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion and representation of different art forms.”*
  - *“Peer assessment as a factor in defining “established” and artistic merit.”*
  - *“Who judges artistic merit? I would be cautious and intentional about this if it were a criteria item. See EC3 for possible jury models, impact and contribution to the artistic field or practice.”*

## Theme 4: Selection And Role Of The Peer Assessment Committee

Peer Assessment is used in many municipalities to assess grant applications – the City of Peterborough is interested in doing the same and asked for input about **implementing a peer assessment committee** as part of this process.

<b>Context</b>	A Peer Assessment committee reviews the eligible grant applications submitted considering the purpose and guidelines of the grant and the assessment criteria. Grants to professional arts organizations are often assessed according to criteria relating to Artistic Merit, Impact, and Viability. The process of selecting and preparing peer assessors and considerations of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are critical components of a good Peer Assessment process.
<b>Noted Best Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Peer assessors are artists and arts professionals</li><li>• Peer assessors are selected with the support of an open Expression of Interest. Chosen for their:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Knowledge of the arts</li><li>- Experience in the field</li><li>- Awareness of the local context and broader arts environment</li><li>- Peer Assessment committees must reflect the whole of the community and be built with strong commitments and accountability to DEI priorities</li></ul></li></ul>

### Theme Four Feedback

- Overall, there is **strong support for the noted best practices** and the importance of a peer review committee or jury to complete the assessment/evaluation of applications with general agreement that peers should be paid.
- There was also strong sentiment that the decisions of peer assessment committees be final.
  - *“Decisions of peer assessment should be final.”*
  - *“Assessors should be paid.”*
  - *“All assessors should have some experience related to professional art creation. Peer Assessment Committees should be compensated and should be built to ensure Diversity, Equity and Inclusion with members committed to local arts creation and presentation.”*

- While participant noted that it is important that peer assessors understand the local context, it was suggested that peers could come from outside of the Peterborough area to contribute to a diverse and a robust jury.
- Having an orientation/onboarding process which might include mentoring for people new to assessing applications was recommended along with a staggered schedule of term limits for assessors to ensure there is overlap of people with a mix of experiences.
  - *“Do not have the same people every year.”*
  - *“Peer reviewers\ jury should only sit for two years with half changing annually.”*
- As reflected in theme three, the need for a clear commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Accessibility in all aspects of both the granting process, including peer selection/jury composition, and organizational eligibility was expressed. The need to have peers reflect the multidisciplinary nature of the funding stream was also emphasized.
  - *“Each cycle of applications should determine the balance of disciplines on the assessment committee.”*
  - *“Not necessarily experienced peer reviewers, invite new people, ensure multi-generational diversity.”*
- Many respondents noted the challenges of creating a neutral peer group with the needed arts expertise, including administrative and financial, if only choosing from within the confines of Peterborough. Suggestions included expanding peers to include people with a broader range of experience with the arts, as well as inviting people from the arts, but from an expanded region around Peterborough.
  - *“To be a peer of professional artists in the community, means that you would need to be a professional artist yourself, or someone with a long history of work in the professional arts sector. In a city the size of Peterborough, it will be very difficult/near impossible to find qualified peer assessors who are not somehow enmeshed in the artistic field itself, with implicit biases toward and against fellow companies, with potential for vested interests in seeking funding themselves. Most of the artists I know are seeking City funding or are frequently hired by or volunteers with local arts groups, so they would not be able to properly assess without bias. With this in mind, I would urge that a peer assessment committee should be largely comprised of artistic peers from outside the region, with at least one local representative who is a non-practitioner but with educational/professional experience in a particular artistic discipline, and who can provide context to non-regional peers that goes beyond the written word in a grant.”*

- *“There should be a wide pool of assessors in the committee, so that selected assessors for each application will have direct professional experience with the particular sub-genre being evaluated. For the assessors to not be involved with the applicants, this will probably require assessors from other geographical areas. As a suggestion, perhaps Peterborough could “trade” assessors with other communities that have similar programs.”*
- *“I’ll also flag that folks are concerned about conflicts of interest in seating the administration and evaluation of this grant program in EC3, given that it is also a presenting organization. It seems like we need a proper municipal arts council to head all this, which would entail disentangling some of EC3’s advocacy work from its programming and grant administration.”<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Advocacy and programming are in EC3’s mandate from their incorporation articles following the recommendations from the City of Peterborough’s Municipal Cultural Plan and is a requirement of their funding.

## Theme 5: Reporting

As part of the pilot granting program, the City asked for input into **the reporting process**.

<b>Context</b>	An important component of grant programs for professional arts organizations are reporting processes. Organizations may be required to report back on the use of funds, outcomes of program plans, administrative updates, and financial and statistical actuals to the grantor. For multi-year grants, there are annual reports in addition to final reports at the completion of a funding cycle.
<b>Noted Best Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes to program plans</li><li>• Highlights and achievements</li><li>• Administrative and operational changes</li><li>• Statistics demonstrating audience impact and effectiveness</li><li>• Financial reports with explanation of substantial budget changes (variances, deficits, surpluses)</li><li>• Multi-year grants require annual reports as well as final reports at the end of a funding cycle.</li></ul>

### Theme Five Feedback

- Introducing a **reporting/accountability framework based on the noted best practices is soundly supported** by participants.
- As with the application process, participants noted a need to keep the framework simple for people so as not to be unduly onerous. Suggestions include seeking ways to foster efficiency by reducing unnecessary duplication in reports and application content; and establishing timelines for deadlines that consider arts schedules.
  - *“There should be some kind of grant reporting--currently there is none. Yet it should not be an onerous, time-consuming process that consumes precious resources to produce.”*
  - *“More time to report, and conscious of time of the year (important holidays and transition times i.e. not December) ... Consider holidays and busy season, December is the worst time of year.”*
  - *“I agree again with the research. These are all important factors to capture. That said, I think the reporting mechanisms should be as streamlined and low-demand as possible. Reporting should not require a bunch of excessive tracking that the organization isn't already doing for their own purposes.”*



- *“Multi-year granting is a must. A yearly shortform reporting the above best practices. The grant application is time consuming and takes away from the creative process.”*
- *“Include short form questions on changes to programs and operations, financial effectiveness, artistic achievement, outcomes of organizational goals, impact, and statistical and financial reports”*
- Feedback about financial reporting/accountability included creating a framework that provides options other than audited statements as this is unrealistic for some groups/organizations.
  - *“Don't subject organizations to costly audits unless their threshold is well beyond the capacity to afford these activities. \$2k-\$5k audits are a massive hit to organizations that count every penny. Hold organizations to account, absolutely, but be sensible around this.”*
  - *“Quantification of financial reports only tells one part of the story and should not be judged in a vacuum. Highlights and achievements are helpful to depict how the organization has performed and this may bear some statistical evidence, but again, arts organizations will not suddenly turn matters around with a single season of programming. Reputation building takes time and organizations must be given the opportunity to prove how they have gradually influenced the local arts scene with their annual programming.”*
  - *“Grant recipients should provide yearly financial reports and should be able to contact the appropriate grant representative if there are problems either with deadlines or changes to plans. Recipients should be able report on what the money allowed them to accomplish and provide financial details related to the uses of given funds.”*

## Appendix A: Engagement Questions

The in-person consultation session was held March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, from 6:30 to 9:00 PM at the McDonnell Street Activity centre in Peterborough.

### Session Agenda:

6:30 to 6:45 PM	Arrival
6:45 to 7:00 PM	Land Acknowledgement
	Welcome and Introductions
	Presentation: project background information including session objectives and overview of the agenda
7:00 to 7:15 PM	Explain the world café format and move into groups
7:15 to 8:45 PM	World Café Activity
8:45 to 9:00 PM	Wrap up

The bulk of time was spent in a World Café activity, which is a highly interactive engagement activity designed to encourage meaningful dialogue around a set of defined questions. It is especially useful when there is a large group.

As part of the world café activity, participants were asked to form 5 small groups and to start at one of the 5 themes. Engagement questions, contextual information, and best practice research was provided for each theme. Group members were asked to review and discuss the information and then add their thoughts to paper. Each group had about 20 minutes to complete each theme. 4 rounds were completed.

The activity not only enabled meaningful dialogue but also provided an opportunity for participants to get to know one another and to discuss their own/organizations work.

### Engagement Themes

Participants were provided the following information for each theme. The survey followed the same format and had similar questions.

## Theme One: Program Goals and Objectives

### Context

Effective grant programs have clear stated purposes and objectives. These guide potential applicants and assessors, and most importantly, they clarify the vision and goals of the purpose of the funding.

The purpose of this new grant program should consider the City of Peterborough's strategic priority pillars.

Strategic Priority Pillar – Community and Wellbeing: *“Foster community resiliency, neighbourhood identity, civic pride, sense of belonging, and intercultural harmony. Enhance and protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of all in our City. Provide robust, affordable, and accessible sport, recreation, wellness, the arts, and social programs for people of all ages and abilities.”* **Link to the City’s Strategic Plan:** <https://www.peterborough.ca/en/city-hall/plans-and-policies.aspx#Community-and-wellbeing>.

### Engagement Questions

- What goals and objectives should the Grants to Professional Arts Organizations pilot program aim to accomplish? Consider both the arts sector and the wider community. What should the purpose of this program be?
- Should this grant be organized as a single-year or a multi-year?
- What are the benefits and drawbacks of single-year funding and/or multi-year funding?

### Noted Best Practices

Based on Program Goals & Objectives gathered from municipal arts councils and arts council guidelines:

- Nurture and support a flourishing and sustainable arts community.
- Engage local artists in professional opportunities and fair compensation.
- Nurture creativity and arts engagement for all Peterborough residents.
- Build capacity through professional development, mentorship, and investment in sustainable, relevant, high-quality artists work.
- Encourage public awareness and appreciation of the arts.
- Increase access to quality local arts programming.
- Strengthen and expand access to the arts and volunteer opportunities.
- Create inclusive activities and equity practices.
- Foster collaboration and partnerships.

## Theme 2: Definition of a Professional Arts Organization

### Context

The City is separating funding from the former Community Investment Grants stream in 2025 for professional arts organizations into a distinctive, stand-alone program called Professional Arts Organization Grants. This program is part of a newly named **Arts Investment Fund**. The Arts Investment Fund includes Individual Artists Grants (existing), **Professional Arts Organization Grant (new)**, Artsweek Funding (existing), and Poet Laureate Program (existing).

The definition of Professional Arts Organizations has not been drafted nor have the eligibility requirements for the new Professional Arts Organization Grant. The goal of this engagement process is to assist us in the definition of these two elements.

### Engagement Questions

- What does your ideal definition of a Professional Arts Organization include? Think about structure, activities, leadership, payment to artists and staff, etc.

#### *Secondary questions:*

- Does the organization need to be a non-profit and should collectives be included?
- Should the organization be required to paid artists/management professional staff?
- Should the organization be required to pay artists fees?
- Should the organization be required to have had a minimum number of operating years?
- Should the organization be required to have a documented track record of activities, programs, and financials?
- Should eligible organizations be located in the City of Peterborough with majority of programming in the City? Should surrounding areas be considered?

### Noted Best Practices

Based on definitions of Professional Arts Organizations and eligibility criteria gathered from municipal arts councils and arts council guidelines:

- Organizations that have as their primary mandate or core activity the creation, production, presentation, or education of/in the performing, visual, literary, or media arts.
- Pays appropriate fees to artists/ demonstrates an ongoing commitment to the employment of Peterborough artists.
- Led by professional artistic and administrative personnel (FT, PT, or contract).
- Artist fees must be part of their expenses.
- Defined geographic boundaries for eligibility.
- Have community support and involvement as demonstrated by either audiences, membership, fundraising, and/or volunteer involvement. Partnerships, collaborations
- A minimum number of years of sustained, regular, presentation/programming activity open to the public and publicized city wide
- Financial requirements:
  - Sound financial management.
  - Can demonstrate a range of revenue sources on an annual or seasonal basis, including earned and public funding.
  - Verification of finances based on amount applying for (i.e. audit, financial engagement review, compilation review / note to reader, budget form).

## Theme 3: Assessment Criteria

### Context

Clear Assessment Criteria is an essential component of any grant program. Assessment Criteria is used in the review process by peer assessors and is considered by the applicants as they

prepare grant applications. Grantors should provide access to assessment criteria and evaluation tools (sometimes called a rubric).

Grants to Professional Arts Organizations are often assessed along a rubric with criteria relating to **Artistic Merit, Impact, and Viability**. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are also crucial components of a good assessment process.

### **Engagement Questions**

- How should Professional Arts Organizations be assessed? What rubrics should the peer assessors be provided with?

#### *Secondary Questions:*

- What criteria should be considered to assess artistic merit?
- How should the impact of a professional arts organization be assessed?
- How should financial viability and organizational stability be assessed?
- How should organizations' commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion be assessed?
- What types of statistics are useful in assessing public impact?

### **Noted Best Practices**

Based on Assessment Criteria gathered from municipal arts councils and arts council guidelines:

- Artistic merit of programs
- Contribution to the artistic field or practice
- Demonstrated relevance to the Artistic Community (relationships with artists and/or other arts organizations)
- Demonstrated proper support of artists (artist fees in line with sector standards)
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (demonstration of DEI accountability in programming and all levels of operation)
- Public Impact
- Financial viability (stability, records management, feasibility)
- Organizational viability (staff structure, pay standards, governance, sustainability, strategic planning)

## **Theme 4: Selection And Role Of The Peer Assessment Committee**

### **Context**

Peer assessment is used in many municipalities to assess grant applications. A Peer Assessment committee reviews a cohort of submitted grant applications considering the purpose of the grant and the assessment criteria and guidelines. Grants to Professional Arts Organizations are often assessed along a rubric with criteria relating to Artistic Merit, Impact, and Viability. The process of selecting and preparing peer assessors and considerations of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are critical components of a good Peer Assessment process.

### **Engagement Questions**

- What skills, knowledge, and experience should a peer assessor have?
- This grant program will cover many artistic disciplines. What are the most important considerations in the construction of a Peer Assessment committee for multidisciplinary grant programs.

#### *Secondary questions:*

- What process should be used to select Peer Assessors?
- Should Peer Assessment committee members be paid?
- How should Peer Assessors be oriented to the process?
- What should the Peer Assessment committee's review and decision-making process look like?
- Should the outcome of the Peer Assessment Committee's review be final?

### **Noted Best Practices**

Based on Peer Assessment gathered from municipal arts councils and arts council guidelines:

- Peer assessors are artists and arts professionals
- Peer assessors are selected with the support of an open Expression of Interest. Chosen for their:
  - Knowledge of the arts
  - Experience in the field
  - Awareness of the local context and broader arts environment
  - Peer Assessment committees must reflect the whole of the community and be built with strong commitments and accountability to DEI priorities

## **Theme 5: Reporting**

### **Context**

An important component of grant programs for professional organizations are reporting processes. Organizations are required to report back on the use of funds, outcomes of program plans, administrative updates, and financial and statistical actuals to the grantor. For multi-year grants, there are annual reports in addition to final reports at the completion of a funding cycle.

### **Engagement Questions**

- What are some key metrics you would want to (would be able to?) include as a grant recipient in a report?
- What should a grant report include? (i.e. short form questions on changes to programs and operations, financial effectiveness, artistic achievement, outcomes of organizational goals, impact, and statistical and financial reports)

### **Noted Best Practices**

Based on Reporting gathered from municipal arts councils and arts council guidelines

- Changes to program plans
- Highlights and achievements
- Administrative and operational changes
- Statistics demonstrating audience impact and effectiveness
- Financial reports with explanation of substantial budget changes (variances, deficits, surpluses)
- Multi-year grants require annual reports as well as final reports at the end of a funding cycle.