



**Canada Council
for the Arts**

**Conseil des Arts
du Canada**

DANCE SECTION

Artists and Community Collaboration Program

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What makes a project likely to be funded by the Artists and Community Collaboration Program?

Community arts projects can take many forms. For this program, projects generally involve groups of people coming together—either individually or through a community partner organization—to create dance activities with the help and guidance of professional dance artists. These projects can involve a large or small number of people, more than one community partner or group, and other sectors (such as health, justice, education or social causes or agencies).

A commitment to cooperation, flexibility, and reciprocity (mutual benefit) is required. A well-founded community collaboration project is one where:

- The artists who will lead the projects have confirmed the communities' interest through discussion and consultation.
- The participants have mutually agreed on the process of collaboration (how they will work together). Everyone involved understands and accepts that the collaboration is more important than the product.
- Decision-making is shared, and input is encouraged from all participants throughout the collaboration.
- Both the artists and the communities share ownership and responsibility for the process and result.
- The artists working on the projects work to high artistic standards.
- All participants accept that the project may not result in what they originally thought it would. In other words, neither the artist(s) nor the community is only interested in achieving one particular result for the project, such as the completion of a specific number of dance works or the creation of work for a public presentation. Participants agree to be open to other possibilities that arise from the process of collaboration.
- The working style, knowledge and skills of the artists involved are suited to the interests, capacities and goals of the communities. They are a good match for each other.
- The project allows participants to evaluate their experience.

In addition:

- Applicants must be professional dance artists, dance collectives or non profit dance companies.
- Applications must include a letter or other written proof of intent from the artistic and non-artistic partners.
- Projects should generally include at least one public presentation (a public workshop, showing or performance). A paying audience is not required.

What is meant by “community”?

For this program, “community” is defined by the project itself.

It can refer to a geographical community, such as a city, town or neighbourhood. Or it can refer to a group of people who have a common interest, such as a hobby or social cause, or a common bond, such as membership in the same organization. A community may also share a common experience, such as being veterans. In general, these are non-artistic partners.

A project can involve communities of more than one kind.

I am a dance artist interested in this type of work. How do I know that a community is interested in working with me? And how do I prove this?

Typically, you must do research and consult with a community before applying for funding for a community collaboration project. This may include identifying and approaching a community you wish to work with, meeting with community partners who share similar interests, researching issues of interest to particular communities, or presenting ideas for dance collaboration to community members to see if they are interested.

You can demonstrate proof of the community’s interest by detailing this consultation in the activity description part of your application. You will also demonstrate it with letters of intent from community partners.

Who receives the grants?

Applicants to this program (professional dance artists, arts organizations or collectives) would receive the grant on behalf of the project.

Who controls the projects? And if we collectively create movement material, who owns it?

Project participants must make these decisions collectively. You must describe the process for decision-making and credit for authorship in the activity description or in the letters of intent.

The program states that it does not fund pedagogical activities, yet it says that arts education and working with youth are priorities. Isn’t this a contradiction?

The artists who work on these projects often wish to share their knowledge. Sometimes they have been invited to participate because they have a particular expertise. In most projects, some teaching or skills transfer will be necessary to ensure the best possible participation of all involved.

However, the program does not fund activities that feature only teaching, such as conducting classes or establishing schools, where there is no intent to actively collaborate with the community or to share project leadership. Nor would it fund activities within an educational institution (for example, an after-school program).

The program requires letters of intent between the artists and community partners involved in the project. What should the letters say? If I am working with a large group of people that aren’t represented by a community organization, do I have to get letters from everyone?

The letters of intent are vital to the assessment process. They verify what the participants have agreed to. They should outline the expectations, roles and responsibilities, as well as the expected benefits for everyone involved. Both the artists and community partners should sign these letters. Your application should include letters from the artist or artists and community partners outlining their expectations, their reasons for participating, and their point of view on the proposed activity.

If it is not possible to get letters, you could convey community members’ interest by including petitions, sign-up sheets or minutes from meetings.

Do projects have to create new dance works, or can they rehearse or workshop existing ones?

A project can involve existing works if the community is actively involved in a creative process.

I am a professional dance artist collaborating with another professional dance artist from my community. Is this eligible?

No, this program only funds collaboration between professional dance artists and community members. The Dance Section has other programs that support professional collaborations, including the Grants to Dance Professionals or the Production Project Grants programs.

Instead of working with community members to collectively create choreography, I plan to interview and consult community members on a particular subject, and use their knowledge and experiences as a source to create new works on my own. Is this eligible?

In general, this program funds community arts work that is created collaboratively with community members. Research that is informed by the community, even if it is about their experiences, is not what this program directly intends.

However, this type of project could be eligible if you could demonstrate that community members would have substantial direct involvement in the creative process. Your application should make it clear that the community understands this. The project description should detail how community members will be engaged, how they will be credited for their contributions, and how you will resolve any copyright issues.

My project involves collaboration with community members, where they are involved as part of a production or administrative team but not involved in the creative work. Is this type of collaboration eligible?

No. To be eligible for funding, projects must directly involve community members in a creative collaboration. However, community members may also participate in a production or administrative capacity **in addition to** the creative collaboration.

Does this program fund annual activities?

This program funds one-time projects with a start and finish date. It does not provide operating funding. It can support projects that take place within an annual event, such as an artist and community collaboration within a festival, if the project is distinct from the annual activity.

I am an Aboriginal dance artist and wish to work with Elders or knowledge keepers from my own or a different community. Is this eligible?

Yes. An active collaboration between Aboriginal dance artists and Elders or knowledge keepers is eligible. Elders or knowledge keepers must be integrated into the creative and collaborative process alongside other participating community members. Your application must address and explain any elements of cultural protocol involved with your project.

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