

BC ARTS COUNCIL: COVID-19

Message from the BC Arts Council Chair, Susan Jackson

Dear colleagues in the arts and cultural sector in B.C.,

If you have not yet read the [letter from the Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture](#) I would encourage you to take the time to do so.

The measures we are taking at self-isolation and social distancing are necessary to help flatten the curve on the spread of COVID-19 and protect the most vulnerable members of our society. Not only do these actions protect public health, they also speak to the very best in who we can be, in our sense of community and solidarity with one another.

Without question, these actions are having real and direct consequences for arts and culture workers and organizations. COVID-19 is hitting our sector—our community—hard. Doors are being closed across the province. Hundreds of events are being postponed or cancelled outright; it's likely that many more cancellations will be announced in the days ahead. Museums and galleries have closed. Venues and performance spaces have shut down. Tours are being abandoned as artists and performers return home to quarantine, to do their part.

I write to let you know that the BC Arts Council is acutely aware of how vulnerable individuals and organizations are feeling right now. We know that it's particularly worrying when so many of you already operate on narrow margins, often working project-to-project, to create and share your work.

Actions like self-isolation and social distancing run directly counter to the very reason that many of us were drawn to the cultural sector in the first place. We want to connect, we want to build community. This unprecedented situation doesn't change the fact that the world needs its artists. We will continue to need you, through your work, to help us make sense of our collective experience and once again feel connected.

Alongside our Provincial and Federal counterparts, and colleagues across Government, the BC Arts Council acknowledges that it finds itself in an exceptional situation. We are doing our best to be responsive to the needs of the sector and all members of the arts and culture community. As soon as decisions are made about how we can best respond—how we can best support you—we will let you know through our website, as well as through social media channels, and, where possible, direct email. We will do our best to keep communications open. As always, [Program Officers](#) are available and will return your emails and calls as soon as they can.

For the time being, it is very important that you accurately document your lost revenues and other impacts as the results of deferrals and cancellations directly related to the measures taken to control the spread of COVID-19.

In addition, all BC Arts Council clients are expected to follow the direction provided by the Provincial and Federal Governments with the most up-to-date information available at:

- o [BC Centre for Disease Control](#), [HealthLink BC](#) and [BC Government News](#).
- o The [Federal Government COVID -19 website](#)

We have also posted a [FAQ](#) on the BC Arts Council website to support arts and culture grant applicants and clients in obtaining information about the impacts of COVID-19 on the sector. We will be updating this information on a regular basis. In addition, we will make updates on our [website](#) and send update notifications on our social media accounts, [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

These are difficult times, but the arts and culture community in this province is resilient; it has faced many challenges in the past and come back to excellent health. The doors will open again: on our performance spaces, galleries, museums; on the opportunities to tour and showcase our talents to the world. All of us at the BC Arts Council, members and staff alike, will be by your side until they do.

And, when those doors do open and we can once more gather, we will celebrate with you.

Sincerely,



Chair, BC Arts Council