



# Winnipeg Arts Council

2026 Corporate Plan



## **Winnipeg Arts Council**

103 - 110 Princess Street

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Treaty 1 Territory

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[winnipegarts.ca](http://winnipegarts.ca)

The Winnipeg Arts Council is located on Treaty 1 Territory and on the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene Peoples and in the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. We offer our respect and gratitude to the traditional caretakers of this land.

## **PHOTO CREDITS**

**COVER** South Osborne Street Banners. Artwork by Cato Cormier. • **PG 2** *A Being of Tutti Frutti* by Takashi Iwasaki from *Crafting Wellness - Mind + Body... but at a Cost*, a Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library exhibition. Photo by Leif Norman. • **PG 3** *Encaustic Paintings* at Tim Schouten's studio. Photo by Tim Schouten. • **PG 4** *Wiikondiwig : to feast together.* by Destiny Seymour and *Murmurings* by Paul Robles for Lights on the Exchange. Photo by Michelle Holigroski. • **PG 6** Chinatown Banners by artist Natalie Mark 麥月明. Photo by April Carandang. • **PG 7** *Swans* by Chase Martin. Oil & acrylic on cotton canvas, 84"x78", 2024. Documented by Leif Norman. • **PG 8** *Crowd in front of Rooster Town Kettle* by Ian August. Photo by April Carandang.

# Winnipeg Arts Council 2026 Corporate Plan

The Winnipeg Arts Council was created in 2002 in recognition of the well-documented social, cultural and economic advantages that the city derives from investing in the arts. For nearly 25 years, WAC has served as Winnipeg's cultural hub with a mandate from the City of Winnipeg to deliver arts and cultural funding programs on its behalf, to advise the City on cultural policy, and to manage its Public Art Program. Our work leads to festivals, events, exhibitions and performances which are enjoyed by millions of people in Winnipeg every year. These result in social and economic benefits far beyond the investment they require.

We believe that the arts are essential because a creative city is a healthy city, a prosperous city, and an inclusive city. Our approach is one of creativity, connection, accessibility and sustainability. We strive to reflect the city we live in and to honour our Treaty and TRC responsibilities in the services we provide on behalf of the City. We believe in artistic excellence, freedom of expression and support for both new and established artforms and practices, by artists at all stages of their careers.

After a maintenance period resulting from the departure of its long-serving Executive Director, the Winnipeg Arts Council enters 2026 with an eye to transition. New leadership at both the staff and Board levels, and a new strategic plan being developed late 2025 will provide focus for the organization as it moves into its next chapter.

The organization will continue to fulfill its mission of supporting artists and arts organizations, and initiating and promoting development of the arts for the people of Winnipeg.

This includes grant programs to support creation and presentation of the arts in Winnipeg, engaging in arts development activities which facilitate public participation in the arts, and managing a public art program.

# Core Programs & Activities

## **Grants**

Grants are the single biggest expense for the Winnipeg Arts Council. Over 83% of the funds provided by the City go directly back into the community in the form of operating and project grants to arts organizations and collectives, as well as for creation and professional development grants to individuals.

Grant programs are designed to be responsive to community needs, to new and evolving artforms, as well as to reflect artists at all stages of their careers, and represent the diverse populations of Winnipeg. Grant programs undergo annual review to ensure they meet their objectives.

All granting activities are conducted at arm's-length from the City with the exception of the funding that WAC provides to five museums. Museum Grant recipients and funding amounts are directed by the City; WAC acts as an agent but has no discretion or other authority over the allocation of these funds.

## **Partnerships**

Partnerships allow WAC to work with other organizations to present special initiatives and expand the reach of our own programming such as Nuit Blanche Winnipeg for which WAC has been a primary partner since 2016. WAC facilitates public participation in the arts through standing partnerships with Jane's Walk, Winnipeg Architecture Foundation, and Bike Winnipeg, and with others as opportunities arise.







### **Celebrations**

By drawing attention to variety of artistic excellence in our city, WAC celebrations create community and build civic identity. The Mayor's Luncheon for the Arts, which includes the presentation of the annual Winnipeg Arts Council Awards, boosts awareness of the level of the arts in Winnipeg. Launches for public art projects, tours and educational programs help to connect people with public spaces in creative and participatory ways. The Poet Laureate invites citizens to take part in exercising their own creative flow, and represents Winnipeg on a national and international scale.

### **Special Programs**

The Winnipeg Arts Council is active in creating large-scale and meaningful opportunities in the arts. This results in unique programs, in many cases supported by external fundraising from both public and private sources, such as City of Song, a celebration of the City's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday, as well as Winnipeg – Cultural Capital of Canada, The Year of Urban Ideas, Mass Appeal, and more. The Indigenous Arts Leaders Fellowship has provided numerous paid opportunities for Indigenous arts administrators to develop their skills (this program is currently undergoing a programmatic update).



## **Public Art**

Since Winnipeg's Public Art Policy was formally adopted by City Council in 2004, the Winnipeg Arts Council has worked with City Administration, artists and communities to develop and integrate more than one hundred artworks into public spaces so that art and ideas can be encountered on a daily basis throughout Winnipeg. In addition to major artist commissions and infrastructure design projects, WAC facilitates community-based collaborations and public events – all of which explore the social, historical, cultural, and natural environment, giving meaning to place and celebrating Winnipeg's unique character.

Despite this success, public art has had no program funding since 2023, and currently operates through a series of ad hoc projects. WAC continues to advocate for the City to adopt a percent-for-art strategy to provide stable funding and ensure all communities share in the benefits of public art.

Through strategic use of resources, WAC has the ability to manage public art program operating costs through 2026, but these funds will not last. Without additional investment in 2027 there will not be resources to retain staff with the expertise to oversee completion of existing projects like the South Winnipeg Recreation Complex, to coordinate the general upkeep of the existing collection, to manage repair and maintenance in response to unforeseen events and vandalism, or to respond to City staff questions about public art.

WAC is committed to working with the City of Winnipeg on a solution that will restore stability and protect the future of public art in our city.



# 2026 Planning

The Winnipeg Arts Council is guided by its planning framework, under the following themes:

- inspiring Winnipeggers to deepen their engagement with, and value for, the arts;
- intentionally serving diverse communities and artistic disciplines;
- facilitating a culture where art is understood as essential to city building; and
- expanding support to artists and arts organizations, and increasing the public's opportunity to interact with art.

In order to achieve these ends and pursue the mission, vision and mandate, the Winnipeg Arts Council will require the City Council-approved allocation of \$4,645,787 which supports grants, programs and operations. To provide museums funding, an additional City Council-approved amount of \$258,570 is needed. Public art is unfunded beyond a handful of ad hoc projects embedded in municipal capital projects. Program costs, including collection management and maintenance, are partially offset by a 15% fee included in project management agreements.

As noted above, 2026 will be a transitional year for WAC. Activities in the coming year will ensure the core programs and activities move forward and that the arts community is supported by WAC to the degree which it is accustomed, while at the same time moving into the next chapter. Ongoing program management will be complemented with consultation, advocacy, and a new communications plan.

WAC will continue to operate its core granting programs:

## **Organizations**

Operating Grants (year 3 of a 3-year agreement)

Program Support Grants (year 2 of a 2-year agreement)

Project Grants to Organizations and Collections (specific project only)

## **Individuals**

Individual Artist Grants (creation, experimentation or research; two cycles, spring and fall)

Professional Development Grants (travel and/or professional development; rolling deadline)

WAC will continue to develop community partnerships and facilitate public participation in the arts. Standing partnerships with Nuit Blanche Winnipeg, Jane's Walk, Winnipeg Architecture Foundation, and Bike Winnipeg will be maintained, and other opportunities will be investigated and implemented as they arise. WAC will continue to celebrate the community through the Winnipeg Arts Council Awards and Mayor's Luncheon for the Arts. WAC will continue to support the Poet Laureate, specifically with a marquee program to create a city-wide mini-book installation which invites all Winnipeggers to create and share their own poetry about the city.



## **Public Art**

Several public art projects will be underway or completed in 2026. Ongoing maintenance of the existing public art collection will occur as budgets allow. Importantly, a civic election scheduled for October provides the opportunity to place the arts – and specifically public art – on the municipal agenda.

WAC will continue to work with elected and administrative officials at the City of Winnipeg to ensure a sustainable future for public art. This includes advocacy for a proper percent-for-art structure which will allow the City to fulfill its Council-approved Public Art Policy and will bring Winnipeg into line with best practices in cities across Canada.





# Selected 2025 Outcomes: Grants, Programs, & Operations

The Winnipeg Arts Council made some significant achievements in 2025. The leadership was deftly handled by Operations Manager Tanya Christensen, who acted as Interim Executive Director until the appointment of Dominic Lloyd in March. Both Tanya and Dominic have many years of experience with the organization, ensuring both continuity and professionalism during the period of change.

WAC continues to provide outreach to potential grant applicants to ensure access. This is showing results as the numbers of first-time applicants and recipients, as well as applications from Indigenous and other equity-seeking artists continue to trend upward. Additionally, WAC continues to engage a majority of jurors from equity-seeking communities.

With some staffing shortage during the year, program review for the Indigenous Arts Leaders Fellowship was not completed though it remains a priority for the organization and work will commence on this project in 2026.

A new Poet Laureate was appointed. While the intended Youth Poet Laureate position has yet to be established, this too will be prioritized in the near future.





# Selected 2025 Outcomes: Public Art

In March 2024, City Council directed the public service to work with the Winnipeg Arts Council to develop a framework for including public art budgets in Major Capital Projects. The results of this were presented to Winnipeg's Executive Policy Committee in April 2025, who recommended that instead of adopting this policy and bringing Winnipeg in line with most major Canadian cities, the report be deferred to Council's strategic planning process over the next few years. While disappointing from a city-building perspective, WAC staff continued to meet with elected and administrative officials to underline the need for a stable future for public art in Winnipeg.

Meanwhile, three artist commissions were awarded for projects in Odeon Park, St. Vital Bridge, and the St. James Civic Centre. Additionally, progress was made on the South Winnipeg Recreation Centre project, slated for completion in 2028.

A key step in these ad hoc projects was creating a standardized management agreement, developed through a collaborative process with Legal Services and other City departments including Assets and Project Management, Public Works and Planning, Property & Development. This template can accommodate different funding sources and departmental practices, and will help deliver future public art projects across Winnipeg wherever budgets allow.

WAC worked with Sage Solutions to undertake a community dialogue and advise on the development of an ethical, transparent, and inclusive approach to Indigenous identity verification for public art commissioning. The process centers Indigenous voices and experiences (including First Nations, Métis, Inuit, status, non-status, and urban Indigenous people), upholds cultural humility, and explores the complexities of legal identity, community belonging, and cultural continuity.

# Budget

OPERATING EXPENSES	2026	2027	2028
Committee Expense/Hospitality	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,500
Courier/Trsp./Parking	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$5,500
Audit	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Legal Fees	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,500
Equipment/Furniture	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Board Expense	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
Insurance/Bank Charges	\$8,500	\$8,500	\$9,000
Seminars/Conferences/Prof. Dev.	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$6,500
Communications/Advertising	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$18,000
Phone/Internet/Web	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$9,500
Postage	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,200
Office Expenses	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,500
Print Costs	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$11,000
Rent	\$64,000	\$65,000	\$70,000
Utilities	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$11,000
Memberships/Subscriptions/Library	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$4,000
<b>Office sub-total</b>	<b>\$178,500</b>	<b>\$179,500</b>	<b>\$192,200</b>
Staff	\$400,000	\$410,000	\$432,000
Casual & Consultants	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$12,000
Benefits	\$63,357	\$64,857	\$68,000
<b>Staff sub-total</b>	<b>\$473,357</b>	<b>\$484,857</b>	<b>\$512,000</b>
<b>Operations sub-total</b>	<b>\$651,857</b>	<b>\$664,357</b>	<b>\$704,200</b>
<b>PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>			
Multi Year Grants Program	\$3,412,100	\$3,412,100	\$3,600,000
Project Grants	\$155,000	\$150,000	\$200,000
Individual Artist Grants	\$267,000	\$267,000	\$360,000
New Creations			
Carol Shields Wpg. Book Award & Prizes	\$7,500		\$7,500
Poet Laureate	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$12,500
Professional Development Grants	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$50,000
Arts Development	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$100,000
Museums Grants	\$240,900	\$240,900	\$290,000
Translation Services	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Jury Fees	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$30,000
Jury Expenses	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Technology			\$10,500
Emergency Fund	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Program sub-total</b>	<b>\$4,252,500</b>	<b>\$4,240,000</b>	<b>\$4,680,500</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$4,904,357</b>	<b>\$4,904,357</b>	<b>\$5,384,700</b>
Operations as % of total:	13.3%	13.5%	13.1%



# Budget Notes

The 2026 and 2027 budgets reflect City Council's four-year budget allocation to the Winnipeg Arts Council: \$4,645,787 per year for programs and operations, as well as \$257,700 for Museums funding and administration. *This budget does not reflect any costs associated with public art commissions, programming, maintenance or administration.*

The Winnipeg Arts Council will maintain programs at current levels throughout 2026 and 2027. The City's next four-year budget will go into effect in 2028, at which time WAC will seek increased investment of \$480,000 per year. The following areas will be prioritized:

Grants amounts for project-based organizations have not changed since 2014; grant amounts for individual artists have not changed since 2017. Increased investment in 2028 will support the same number of grants to these constituencies as at present, but at a level more suited to the actual costs of carrying out their projects.

Small and medium sized organizations that receive multiyear funding may be eligible for increases of approximately 5% per year, and some organizations which have not been able to access multiyear funding may be invited to apply.

Currently WAC has no discretion over how museums funding is distributed; museums grants have been flatlined at the reduced levels directed by the City since 2020. WAC will pursue an agreement with the City which allows it to create an effective program with modest increases for existing clients as well as increased access by other museums that contribute to the safeguarding of our shared history as Winnipeggers.

## **Public Art:**

Costs related to public art are NOT reflected in this budget. As noted elsewhere in this plan, 15% fees in project management agreements will provide the resources to administer public art through 2026, but WAC will require additional resources in 2027.

# Winnipeg Arts Council

## 2026 Corporate Plan

### Staff

**Executive Director**  
**Operations Manager**  
**Public Art Manager**  
**Administrative & Communications Coordinator**  
**Grants Consultant**

Dominic Lloyd  
Tanya Christensen  
tamara rae biebrich  
Ruhi Proshun  
Sam McLean

### Board of Directors

**Chair:** Donna Fletcher  
**Vice Chair:** Ian August  
**Secretary-Treasurer:** Julie Penner  
**Past Chair:** Andrew McLaren  
**Arts Community Directors:** Seema Goel, Niki Little, Brian Pincott, Lisa Stinner-Kun, Erica Wilson  
**Council Directors:** Honoure Black, Laurel Howard, Liz Wreford  
**Chair Emerita:** Vonnie Von Helmolt  
**City Council Representative:** Councillor Markus Chambers  
**City Administration Representative (non-voting):** Marsha Christiuk

### History

The Winnipeg Arts Council was incorporated on April 24, 2002. Prior to this the organization was known as the Winnipeg Arts Advisory Council. This council provided advice on cultural policy development to Winnipeg City Council between 1984 and 2002. In 1996 the City authorized the advisory council to assist in reviewing City of Winnipeg Cultural Policies and in April 1997, the City of Winnipeg Cultural Policy Review Panel recommended that the advisory council be restructured to become a non-profit, autonomous body at arm's length to the City of Winnipeg, and that the name be changed to the Winnipeg Arts Council Inc.

### Governance and Management

The Winnipeg Arts Council is governed by a minimum of 11 and a maximum of 15 board directors. The Directors are nominated from groups including citizens at large through the City appointments process, the arts community and City representatives. Each director must serve the purposes of the Winnipeg Arts Council and not their nominating group. Directors' terms are two years and a total of three terms may be served. The Winnipeg Arts Council engages an Executive Director to manage the business of the Council and the Executive Director is currently supported by a staff of four.

