  **PREVIEW: Program Guidelines**

**and Application Form**

DIGITAL STRATEGY FUND

Public Access to the Arts and Citizen Engagement:   
Multi-phase initiatives

**About the Digital Strategy Fund**

The [**Digital Strategy Fund**](http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/strategic-funds/digital-strategy-fund) aims to support Canadian artists, groups and arts organizations in understanding the digital world, engaging with it, and responding to the cultural and social changes it produces. The Fund supports both small-scale activities with short timelines and longer-term complex initiatives.

The Fund includes 3 components:

The [**Digital Literacy and Intelligence**](http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/strategic-funds/digital-strategy-fund/digital-literacy-and-intelligence) component supports the arts sector in building digital knowledge, skills and capacity.

The [**Public Access to the Arts and Citizen Engagement**](http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/strategic-funds/digital-strategy-fund/public-access-to-the-arts-and-citizen-engagement) component funds Canadian artists, groups and arts organizations to improve the public’s access, engagement and participation in the arts through digital means.

The [**Transformation of Organizational Models**](http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/strategic-funds/digital-strategy-fund/transformation-of-organizational-models) component helps arts organizations adapt to the digital environment by transforming the way they work.

The **Public Access to the Arts and Citizen Engagement**component supports innovative digital initiatives that:

* enhance the artistic experience of diverse publics
* encourage the participation and engagement of citizens with the arts
* increase discoverability and access to the works of Canadian artists, both at home and abroad.

This component supports the development of new initiatives, as well as the optimization of existing initiatives.   
You may be eligible for [Application Assistance](http://canadacouncil.ca/commitments/equity/application-assistance) to pay someone to help you with the application process if you are experiencing difficulty and self-identify as:

* an artist who is Deaf, hard of hearing, has a disability or is living with a mental illness
* a First Nations, Inuit or Métis artist facing language, geographic and/or cultural barriers.

[**Project**](http://canadacouncil.ca/glossary/project?_ga=2.93909661.167744849.1497961466-331955508.1497961466)Multi-phase initiatives for which the objectives, timelines and expected results are clearly identified, and that require an iterative approach.

**Deadline and Notification of results** – consult the [**Deadlines and Notifications of results page**](https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/deadlines)

**Grant amount**– $250,001 – $500,000

**Application Limits**

Applications to the Fund do not count towards the maximum number of applications that can be submitted to the Canada Council each year (from 1 March – 28/29 February).

A grant from the Fund does not count towards the number of project grants needed to be eligible for a Canada Council core or composite grant.

Applicants may submit more than one application for distinct initiatives with different activities.

**I want to apply — what else do I need to know?**

If you have not already done so, you must register in the [**portal**](https://apply.canadacouncil.ca/) at least 30 days before you want to apply.

**APPLICANTS — who can apply**

The Fund supports collaborative initiatives that stretch beyond your own organization or group and demonstrate benefits to the broader arts sector or artistic community. Initiatives must therefore be proposed by, or for, more than one organization, collective or group of artists.

The lead applicant holds the reporting and fiduciary responsibility to Council. Partners are involved in the initiative’s leadership and direction, as well as participate in its governance. Providers are third-parties contracted by the lead applicant or partner to deliver specific aspects of the initiative's work plan.

The lead applicant must be eligible to apply to the Fund, as determined by their validated profile created in the portal. However, initiative partners or service providers do not need a validated profile in order to participate in the initiative.

All partners and service providers must be independent of each other and not be affiliated with other team members.

Types of potential lead applicants to this component:

* professional artists;
* arts professionals (excluding consultants and third-party service providers);
* artistic groups;
* Canadian arts organizations.

**INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**Ineligible lead applicants to this component:

* consultants and third-party service providers;
* non-Canadian arts organizations;

**ACTIVITIES – what you can apply for**

**Support for digital initiatives that:**

* enhance the artistic experience of diverse publics;
* encourage the participation and engagement of citizens with the arts;
* increase discoverability and access to the works of Canadian artists, both at home and abroad.

This component supports both small-scale activities with short timelines and longer-term complex initiatives. Activities must benefit more than a single artist, group or organization. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to, initiatives that:

* **Develop and explore** innovative solutions to challenges related to digital discoverability and access to the arts, and other strategies to foster digital citizen engagement with the arts. Examples: consulting and developing solutions with citizens, testing new ideas as a minimal viable product, piloting projects amongst communities, user-centric design, etc.
* **Implement** new initiatives to improve digital discoverability and access to the arts, and other strategies to transform the citizen experience with the arts. Examples: Metadata initiatives, open and linked data, freeware development, digital engagement platforms or tools, etc.
* **Reinforce, optimize, or scale up**existing digital initiatives through preparatory activities and development to ensure their long-term viability.

Activities addressing digital challenges, issues and opportunities related to artistic practice are eligible if the focus is not on the creation and production of artistic work.

This component encourages participatory methodologies, iterative development, and solutions that are inherently open, shareable, transferable and interoperable.

This component supports the development of new initiatives, as well as the optimization of existing ones. It supports scaling up existing initiatives to ensure their long-term viability and could include, for example, integrating new users, migrating towards open source, ensuring their sustainability and offering greater access. Existing initiatives must demonstrate the following: it meets user needs; its results and impact are clear; and its partners are well-established and engaged. Existing initiatives are subject to additional assessment criteria.

**You cannot apply for** activities that occur before the deadline date, those that receive funding from another Canada Council program or those on the [general list of ineligible activities](http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/guide/apply-to-programs/general-list-of-ineligible-activities).

When determining your project start date, individuals should be aware that according to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), expenses incurred in the year immediately before a grant is received are only deductible from the grant if they are incurred after the artist has received notification that the grant will be paid. For more information about income taxes and your grant, please refer to our [website](https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/guide/if-you-receive-a-grant/income-taxes).

**INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

**You cannot submit applications for** the followingactivities, including but not limited to:

* activities that have already received Canada Council support;
* hiring permanent staff;
* recurring or ongoing activities, such as social media management or day-to-day operations;
* initiatives where the final goal is to digitize documents, collections or archives;
* updating current computer or technological equipment and hardware infrastructure;
* creating or updating personal, corporate or institutional websites;
* purchasing or renting off-the-shelf technological tools or solutions (e.g. ticketing systems, customer relationship management software);
* initiatives to research, create or produce digital artwork or creations;
* activities conducted for the development of artistic skills;
* activities conducted for the benefit of a single organization, an artist, group or collective.

**EXPENSES — what is eligible**

* **For new initiatives:** 85% of eligible costs up to $500,000
* **For existing initiatives:** 50% of eligible costs up to $500,000

**ELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

All expenses **directly related to carrying out the proposed initiative** are eligible, including (but not limited to):

* honoraria and fees paid to artists, experts, trainers, facilitators, project managers, developers and consultants directly involved in carrying out the initiative;
* travel, accommodation and per diem costs;
* licensing fees;
* equipment rental costs;
* data acquisition costs;
* public accessibility costs (e.g. sign language interpretation, captioning, audio description, etc.);
* costs of sharing results and transferring acquired knowledge to the community;
* other costs directly related to carrying out the initiative (must be justified).

The following expenses are also eligible, but subject to certain limits:

* administrative costs up to 15% of the total grant requested;
* equipment purchase costs up to 15% of the total grant requested;
* fees and costs related to content creation, artistic creation and media production up to 15% of the total grant requested.

If you propose to purchase equipment, you must specify a provision for the disposal of equipment after the initiative ends.

**INELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

Expenses that **are not directly related to carrying out the proposed initiative** are not eligible, including, but not limited to:

* ongoing operating expenses;
* deficit reduction costs;
* expenses for developing and maintaining personal, corporate or institutional websites;
* expenses for off-the-shelf digital solutions, such as ticketing systems, customer relationship management software, etc.;
* expenses incurred prior to the application deadline date;
* expenses related to renovating or constructing a building;
* expenses for which funding has already been granted by the Canada Council or another funder.

**ASSESSMENT — how decisions are made**

Your application will be assessed based on the weighted criteria below by a committee of experts in the arts, digital, business or other sectors as well as individuals who have undertaken digital transformation initiatives.

**Impact 50%**

* The initiative aims for concrete results and significant expected benefits;
* The initiative benefits more than one artist or organization artists and, ideally, an entire community or arts sector;
* The initiative is based on consultation or close collaboration among many players and partners from different milieux and sectors, and draws on appropriate expertise;
* The initiative is developed based on openness and sustainability;
* Knowledge and results are shared with the community in relevant and appropriate ways.

Additional criterion when optimizing existing initiatives

* The additional funding will be used to scale up the initiative.

**Relevance 30%**

* The initiative radically improves – or even establishes a new approach that potentially transforms – public access to, experience of and engagement with the arts or literature;
* The proposed activities and the technological directions and choices are relevant, suitable and consistent with the initiative’s objectives;
* The contributing partners are well matched and pertinent.

Additional criterion when optimizing existing initiatives

* The existing initiative meets user needs, its results and impact are clearly demonstrated, and its current partners are committed and engaged.

**Feasibility 20%**

* The lead applicant, the applicant’s partners and the implementation team members have the experience and expertise needed to successfully carry out the initiative;
* The budget and work plan are realistic and the proposed resources and deliverables are clear, optimal and adequate;
* The governance set up to carry out the initiative is effective, with aligned and complementary partners and collaborators;
* The milestones for determining the continuation or termination of the various phases of the initiative’s implementation are clear and realistic.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

* The multiphase approach in for initiatives for which the objectives and intentions are clearly established and require an iterative approach as well as several phases of work;
* These initiatives are inherently riskier. They offer grant recipients enough time, space, flexibility and adaptability to experiment and adjust;
* These applications will include an overall vision for the initiative and outline each phase of implementation;
* The budget and work plan must be separated into distinct phases;
* Applicants must include clear and realistic milestones and set success indicators for proceeding to the next phase of the initiative;
* Applicants may decide to end an initiative before all the phases have been completed.

**Required Information And Support Material - what you need to apply**

Required – When applying, you must provide the following:

* budget, including notes;
* list of key team members (budget appendix);
* detailed work plan, including timeline and major milestones.

Optional – You may also submit as support material:

* letters of engagement from partners;
* user analytics or survey results;
* executive summaries of studies;
* technical specifications, mock-ups or URLs in a Word document or PDF.

If your application is successful, your response will be included in Council’s public announcement of results.

**GRANT PAYMENT AND FINAL REPORTS**

If your application is successful, the first step in receiving your grant payment is to complete the Grant Acceptance Form.

The grant will be issued in several payments:

* 100% of the grant amount for the first phase will be paid out at the start of the phase.

For subsequent phases:

* 100% of the grant amount for subsequent phases will be paid out at the start of each phase, once the following deliverables have been received and approved:
  + the preceding phase’s final report;
  + proof of sharing results with and transferring knowledge to the community, if applicable;
  + the initiative’s revised work plan, if applicable;
  + the revised budget, if applicable;
  + other documents as required by the Council.

A final report, including proof of communicating results with and transferring knowledge to the community, is due within 3 months of the end of the initiative.

Click [**here**](http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/guide/if-you-receive-a-grant)for more information on the responsibilities of grant recipients.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

You are encouraged to speak with a [**Canada Council Program Officer**](mailto:digitalstrategyfund@canadacouncil.ca) at least two weeks prior to the deadline before submitting an application to this Fund for the first time.

PREVIEW: Application Form

This is not an official application form. You must use the portal to apply.

mandatory question = required

**For grant applications from $250,001 – $500,000.**

**GRANT DESCRIPTION**

1. **Give your application a name.** (approximately 10 words)mandatory question

The name you provide is for your reference and will identify this grant application in your dashboard.

1. **For groups and organizations, provide the name of the contact person responsible for this application.**
2. **Provide a one-sentence summary of your proposed initiative.**réponse obligatoire (approximately 25 words)

If possible, use the format INITIATIVE and DATES. For example, “To complete initiative XXX from day/month to day/month.”  
This summary will be used in the Canada Council’s official reporting.

1. **Proposed initiative start date**mandatory question

This date must be after the deadline date.

1. **Proposed initiative end date**
2. **Brief description of the proposed initiative** mandatory question (approximately 100 words)

If your application is successful, your response will be included in Council’s public announcement of results.

1. **Context and background** réponse obligatoire (approximately 250 words)  
   Briefly describe the digital experience you (the lead applicant) and/or partner(s) have to successfully undertake this initiative. Include information such as your mandate, team size, capacity, as applicable. Describe the context in which you work and how this context informed your decision to undertake the proposed initiative.
2. **Defining the problem and developing the digital solution réponse obligatoire**(approximately 350 words)

* What digital issue, challenge, or opportunity does this initiative aim to address?
* Are there existing digital solutions or models that address these issues, challenges, or opportunities?
* How does the initiative improve or build upon existing solutions, or establish new approaches to digital discoverability, digital access to the arts, or citizen digital experience?
* If applicable, provide a description of the initiative's technological directions

If your application is successful, your response will be included in Council's public announcement of results.

1. **Relevance** réponse obligatoire(approximately 250 words)  
   How have you determined that these digital issues, challenges or opportunities are relevant to citizens?
2. **For existing initiatives** (approximately 250 words)  
   For initiatives designed to reinforce, enhance or to scale up an existing digital initiative, please answer the following questions:

* Who are your current users?
* What is successful? Describe the success of your current initiative that justifies reinforcing, enhancing or scaling up the initiative.
* How does the existing initiative benefit citizens, as well as the arts sector and the broader community?.

1. **Who benefits?** réponse obligatoire (approximately 250 words)  
   Who will benefit from the initiative? (Citizens? The arts sector? The broader community?)
2. **Implementation team** réponse obligatoire (approximately 350 words)Who will be involved in carrying out this initiative? Describe in detail for phase 1 and, in brief, those team members already known briefly for subsequent phases. members already known

Include in your response:

* lead applicant and initiative partners;
* service providers, consultants and other external expertise;
* project manager or person responsible for the proposed initiative.

Provide a description of each team member:

* expected contribution to the initiative;
* main fields of expertise or specialization;
* relevant experience.

1. **Leadership and governance** réponse obligatoire (approximately 250 words)  
   Describe the governance structure in place to ensure effective decision-making and reporting mechanisms among initiative partners. If you propose to purchase equipment, you must specify a provision for the disposal of equipment after the initiative ends.
2. **Openness and sustainability**réponse obligatoire(approximately 250 words)  
   Describe how the initiative is based on principles of openness and sustainability.
3. **Outline of proposed activities** réponse obligatoire (approximately 350 words)  
   Provide an outline of your proposed activities.
4. **If applicable, how will you ensure safe working conditions for those involved in this project?** (approximately 100 words)
5. **If your proposed activity touches upon Indigenous traditional knowledge, linguistic or cultural intellectual property, please describe your relationship to this content and how appropriate protocols are/will be observed or addressed.** (approximately 100 words)
6. **Detailed work plan** réponse obligatoireUpload your detailed work plan, including major milestones. This could take the form of a timeline, a calendar, a chart or a table.
7. **Indicators of success for phase 1**réponse obligatoire(approximately 250 words)List the objectives, milestones and indicators of success that the first phase must demonstrate before proceeding to the next phase.
8. **Results and expected impact**réponse obligatoire(approximately 250 words)What are the expected results and deliverables of the proposed initiative?   
   What are the expected impacts and benefits of the proposed initiative for citizens as well as the arts sector and the broader community?
9. **Sharing**réponse obligatoire(approximately 250 words)Describe your plan to share the acquired knowledge and achieved results during the initiative. If your application is successful, your response will be included in Council’s public announcement of results.
10. **Additional information about your initiative** (approximately 250 words)If there is anything that has not been asked that is essential to understanding your initiative, provide it here. Do not use this space to provide additional information related to earlier questions.
11. **If you have applied to a different component for overlapping activities or expenses, please indicate the component and submission date.** (approximately 10 words)

**BUDGET AND APPENDICES**

1. **Complete the Budget and Appendices document** réponse obligatoire
2. **Amount requested per phase** réponse obligatoire
3. **Full amount requested**réponse obligatoire$250,001 to $500,000

This amount must match the total requested amount in your completed budget. Do not include expenses that are not eligible in this component.

If your application is successful, you might not be awarded the full amount requested.

**REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

1. **(Optional) Please upload applicable support documents for your application:**

* letters of engagement from partners;
* user analytics or survey results;
* executive summary of studies;
* technical specifications, mock-ups or URLs in a Word document or PDF

*Note:**The maximum for all combined documents is 5 pages.*