

# The case for increased investment in Salt Spring Island's

# ARTS and CULTURE

A joint presentation to the  
CRD Local Community Commission

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# The case for increased CRD support

**ArtSpring** and the **Salt Spring Arts Council** request an increase of **10%** to the annual Arts Requisition.

This amount would not simply fund arts organizations but an invest in community:

- Community wellbeing
- Economic vitality
- Tourism
- Youth development
- Seniors' engagement
- The cultural services which are essential to the identity and infrastructure of Salt Spring Island.



ArtSpring

salt spring  
arts council  
EST. 1968

Salt Spring has the second highest percentage\* of its labour force in cultural occupations out of all the electoral areas in Canada.

**ArtSpring** (since 1989) and **Salt Spring Arts Council** (since 1968) helped build this cultural identity

## A diversity of arts offerings bolsters community.

Research indicates:

- **ECONOMIC BENEFIT:** Salt Spring's destination as an arts haven attracts tourists that boost the economic health of the community
- **ENGAGEMENT:** Communities with strong cultural participation experience higher levels of civic engagement and social cohesion.
- **MENTAL HEALTH:** Arts participation reduces social isolation, supports mental health, and increase community belonging.



\*2025 study by Hills Strategies, as requested by the CRD

## Collective impact – together, we remain the backbone of the island's cultural ecosystem

### *ArtSpring*

- Community cultural infrastructure
- Professional presentation of world-renowned performances
- Venue rental for community organizations
- Technical capacity
- Community gathering space
- Island festivals and cultural events
- Educational activities

### *Salt Spring Arts Council*

- Suite of opportunities for community creativity and artist development
- Professional exposure for local artists
- Nurturing of youth potential
- Grassroots engagement
- Community arts initiatives and advocacy
- Exhibitions of local and Indigenous talent



# Collective community impact, in numbers

## In 2025, *ArtSpring*:

- Total audience – 16,541
  - Over 2,000 youth tickets
- Rental clients – 91
  - Local community – 73
  - Off island – 18
- 7 courses and workshops
- Volunteers – 87
- Offered over 300 days of programming
- Angel Ticket Program fully subscribed & sponsored
- Arts on Prescription pilot - 9 clients from Salt Spring United Way
- Year-round local artist exhibitions in lobby

## In 2025, *Salt Spring Arts Council*:

- Distributed \$217,913 to local artists
- Engaged over 24,000 attendees (including over 1500 children/youth)
- Promoted 347 local artists
- Offered 353 days of programming
- Coordinated 90 local volunteers
- Provided 74 days of Mahon Hall rental to other community groups
- Delivered 95% of free or low barrier programs

## Beyond the numbers

*“The performance caused me to think of ways in which we can be kinder to one another. Koyczan exhibited bravery through how open he was about his own experiences. His showing of vulnerability inspired me.”*

— Audience member for **Shane Koyczan, ArtSpring**

*“It is such a gift to have a fun, safe, playful learning space available for our families to honour this holiday. We're so grateful to all who contribute such love and considerate curation.”*

— Attendee at **Family Day Event, Salt Spring Arts Council**

*“Scholarships like this are more than just financial support--they are reminders that someone believes in our potential and is willing to invest in our future. This belief means more than I could ever truly put into words.”*

— Gulf Island Senior Secondary **Scholarship Recipient, Salt Spring Arts Council**

*“It was the first real hip hop show I have been to, and I was not expecting how emotionally moved and motivated I would feel... It was refreshing to see engagement with young people and how ArtSpring could bring generations together.”*

— Audience member for **Snotty Nose Rez Kids, ArtSpring**

Currently, CRD Arts Requisition support is ~\$145K with 70% to ArtSpring and 30% to Salt Spring Arts Council

Increased CRD Arts Requisition support would provide extraordinary return through a modest public investment per resident by:

- Enabling the maintenance of service levels while also meeting the rising costs of insurance, utilities, maintenance, technology upgrades, wage pressures in a difficult market, and competitive artist fees.
- Strengthening each organization's credibility which then attracts additional investment and outside funding through grants, donations, sponsorships and earned revenue.
- Protecting vital public building assets.
  - The ArtSpring building is aging and requires proactive investment and preventive maintenance to avoid larger capital costs in the future.
  - Mahon Hall (Salt Spring Arts Council) is in a poor state of repair due to decades of inadequate investment and therefore is now forced to start a capital campaign.



# Conclusion

There are few investments that could touch as many aspects of our community's life for such a modest cost.

We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the Local Community Commission to ensure Salt Spring remains a thriving, creative, and connected community.

*With many thanks,*

*Bronwen Duncan (Salt Spring Arts Council)*

*Howard Jang (ArtSpring)*

