

Request for increased CRD Arts Requisition funding for Salt Spring Arts Council

Submitted by Bronwen Duncan, Executive Director, April 14, 2026

2027 budget request for Arts Requisition funds

For the 2027 budget, Salt Spring Arts Council (SSAC) requests an 10% increase in the arts requisition funding over the 2026 amount of \$44,212 that was supplied to SSAC in 2026 (to approximately (\$48,500).

The allotment of The CRD arts requisition funding has enabled to build our diverse program portfolio that contributes to the economic activity and health of our community. This funding provides crucial, flexible programming dollars that allow us to address both organizational and community programming needs. Additionally, we successfully leverage CRD funding to attract further investment for the council's programming activities.

Investing in arts is investing in community

An increase to the Arts Requisition is not simply funding an organization—it is an investment in the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of Salt Spring Island. The Salt Spring Arts Council, established in 1968, plays a central role in sustaining the island's identity as a vibrant, creative community.

Through its work, SSAC directly supports:

- Community wellbeing and social connection
- Youth development and intergenerational engagement
- Seniors' participation and mentorship
- Tourism and local economic activity
- Cultural infrastructure essential to island life

Salt Spring Island has one of the highest concentrations of cultural workers in Canada. A 2025 CRD-requested study by Hill Strategies found that one in nine workers is employed in a cultural occupation, and one in twenty is an artist. It noted that the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area has the second-highest percentage of its labour force employed in cultural occupations of any municipality in Canada (10.7%). This creative sector is both a defining feature of the community and a critical economic driver—one that depends on sustained investment in local arts infrastructure.

Demonstrated impact and community reach

SSAC's programs show consistent, measurable impact across all age groups and sectors of the community. In 2025 alone, **over 24,000 people participated in programs and events, reflecting both the scale of reach and depth of engagement.**

Youth and intergenerational programming

- 840 students participated in Artists in the Class
- 330 students attended exhibition tours
- 90 young artists exhibited their work
- 225 participants attended Family Day events
- 400 participants engaged in Crafting Connections, pairing seniors with youth

Exhibitions, events, and performances

- Over 15,000 visitors attended Artcraft and summer showcases
- 2,450 attended the Spring Art Show and related events
- 3,423 attended concerts, including a free Outdoor Concert Series
- Workshops and additional events supported over 100 participants in artistic development



Beyond participation, SSAC contributes directly to the local economy. In 2025, \$217,913 was distributed to artists through sales, grants, and fees—supporting livelihoods in a rural region with limited income opportunities.

This impact is amplified through collaboration. SSAC regularly partners with local organizations, strengthening the broader arts ecosystem and maximizing community benefit.

Responding to community need

SSAC's strength lies in its responsiveness to community needs—ensuring programming is inclusive, accessible, and reflective of the region it serves.

A key priority is the ongoing support and visibility of Indigenous artists and cultural practices. SSAC has built meaningful, trust-based relationships with regional Indigenous communities, and continues to expand this work through:

- Dedicated exhibition opportunities for Indigenous artists
- Indigenous-led workshops and cultural programming
- Collaboration with Elders and knowledge keepers
- Integration of Indigenous presence across major events and initiatives

More broadly, SSAC is committed to fostering participation across diverse voices, ages, and abilities—ensuring that arts programming reflects and serves the whole community.

Research consistently shows that strong arts sectors contribute to:

- **Economic vitality** through cultural tourism and local spending
- **Civic engagement** and social cohesion
- **Mental health and wellbeing**, reducing isolation and strengthening belonging

Few investments reach as broadly across community life for such a modest cost.

A strategic and high-impact investment

The demand for arts programming on Salt Spring Island is clear, and participation continues to grow. Increased Arts Requisition funding will ensure that SSAC can sustain and expand its impact—supporting artists, strengthening community connections, and maintaining the island's reputation as a leading cultural destination.

We look forward to continuing to receive a healthy arts requisition fund from the CRD.

This will make a direct impact on our ability to ensure Salt Spring Island remains a thriving, creative, and connected community.

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.

Katrina Jacobsen Jensen,
Family Day Event 2025