



*building communities together*

## 2026 Business Plan Central Cariboo Arts and Culture (1665)

*Darron Campbell, Manager of Community Services*

***Working in partnership with communities large and small to offer local, sub-regional, and regional services to ensure that the Cariboo Chilcotin is a socially, economically, and environmentally desirable region.***

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### **Department/Function Services**

The Central Cariboo Arts and Culture (CCAC) function was established in 2009 by Bylaw No. 4420. The arts and culture service is designed to support the following activities across the Central Cariboo area:

- (i) arts and cultural services, which may include but will not be limited to fine arts, performing arts, historical and festival events, promotion of local crafts, music, and market goods; and/or
- (ii) arts and culture facility development, improvement, and maintenance.

The service is delivered through a five-year contract (2021-2025) with the Central Cariboo Arts and Culture Society (CCACS), which also operates the Central Cariboo Arts Centre in Williams Lake. The renovated arts centre provides a focal point for arts organizations and offers rental use to various groups. The Society employs an executive director an arts centre administrator to manage the centre and supply support to arts and cultural groups throughout the central Cariboo. Key responsibilities of the Society are the delivery of fee-for-service operational funding agreements and a bi-annual grant program, which provide support for arts and cultural projects and events throughout the service area.

A funding support agreement is in place for the delivery of the Performances in the Park events, which are popular summer concerts held in Boitanio Park in Williams Lake each year.

Contribution agreements established for three-year terms (2023-2025) with nine arts and culture groups include:

Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin  
Station House Art Gallery  
Community Arts Council of WL  
Women's Contact Society Festival

Horsefly Pioneer Museum  
Likely Cedar City Museum  
150 Mile Schoolhouse  
Williams Lake Studio Theatre  
Scout Island Arts in Nature Program

Participants in the service include Electoral Areas D, E, and F and the City of Williams Lake. Requisition is by way of a tax rate applied to the assessed value of land and improvements utilizing hospital district assessment. The requisition limit is the greater of \$200,000 or a rate of \$.0940/\$1,000.

The Directors for Electoral Areas D, E, and F and the City of Williams Lake are responsible for the governance of this service, which is provided through the Central Cariboo/City of Williams Lake Joint Committee with advisory support from volunteers within the arts and culture sector. The Central Cariboo Joint Committee holds an open public meeting once per month.

## **Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies**

### **2026 Goals**

- 1. Goal:** Complete a feasibility study for improvements and expansion of the Arts Centre facilities.  
**Rationale:** A steering committee was established to guide the project in 2025. The study will assess opportunities for community needs, efficiency, improvements, and long-term feasibility to maximize use and income for the arts centre.  
**Strategy:** The CCACS will coordinate the steering committee and work with the Regional District and City of Williams Lake to identify external funding opportunities for the study and the procurement of consulting services as necessary. This goal is partially dependent on external grants for 2026 with matching funding included in the budget.
- 2. Goal:** Install public art at the exterior entrance of the Arts Centre.  
**Rationale:** The entrance space was prepared for the project in 2025 for installation in 2026. The goal is to increase the visibility and awareness of the Arts Centre and the Central Cariboo Arts and Culture Society through a piece of public art.  
**Strategy:** The Society and staff will explore an agreed-upon theme for the work, extend a call for proposals to the community, and establish a budget and timeline for this project.

## 2027 Goals

- Goal:** Undertake community engagement and analysis of the feasibility study results for the Arts Centre.

**Rationale:** The study is planned for completion in 2025 and an arts community engagement process along with analysis of design options is a logical next step.

**Strategy:** The CCACS will coordinate the engagement process with participation from City and Regional District staff.
- Goal:** Conduct an operational review of the Arts Centre.

**Rationale:** CCACS policy directs that a review be undertaken every four years and is useful to determine the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the facility.

**Strategy:** The CCACS will coordinate and the review process and report out to the City and Regional District on the results.

## 2028 Goal

**Goal:** Conduct a review of the arts and culture grants program

**Rationale:** A regular review of the program to ensure it remains efficient and effective has been adopted as a policy of the CCACS.

**Strategy:** The review will be conducted by the CCACS through engagement with stakeholders both internally and externally for the grant program. Results may effect the criteria and process for future grants.

## Overall Financial Impact

The 2026 requisition is increased 3% amounting to \$7,185 for a total current requisition of \$246,676. Matching funding for external grants to undertake an arts centre expansion feasibility study is included for consideration in 2026. A 3% increase is included each year thereafter to account for maintenance of the service agreement commitments contained within the business plan.

The 2025 requisition was increased by 3% from the 2024 requisition.

The three-year Fee for Service contribution agreements with nine arts and culture groups are continued in 2026 with a total of \$89,500 provided through the CCACS function.

## Significant Issues & Trends

### CENTRAL CARIBOO ARTS CENTRE

The Central Cariboo Arts Centre continues to demonstrate its essential role as a creative and social hub in our community. With 3,267 square feet of dedicated arts and culture space, the Arts Centre provides consistent, accessible space for creation, collaboration,

and presentation. It remains one of the few multi-user cultural facilities available locally, serving both arts and non-arts community groups, organizations, and individuals.

In 2024, the Arts Centre recorded 304 bookings, showing a steady upward trend in facility use compared to previous years (6.3% increase from 2023). Mid-year 2025 figures already indicate continued demand, with 263 bookings recorded in the first three quarters, positioning the Centre to, at least, meet last year's total by year-end. This consistent use demonstrates sustained community interest and reinforces the need for expanded or diversified space to accommodate growth.

Short-term annual bookings at Arts Centre in Graham Kelsey Room and Open Studio:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2024	86	57	40	121	304
2025	102	120	41	TBD	TBD

Volunteer engagement remains a cornerstone of the arts and culture community's success at the Arts Centre, with more than 4,881 volunteer hours contributed in 2024. These hours reflect the community's deep investment in arts and culture and represent significant in-kind value that supports programming delivery, event coordination, and creative initiatives. Volunteer activities are vital and varied: from organizing and running classes and workshops to coordinating exhibitions and performances, facilitating community outreach initiatives, managing sales, and fundraising events. This dedication not only ensures the successful delivery of activities and events but also strengthens community engagement, builds local capacity for arts and culture, and fosters meaningful connections among artists, audiences, and community partners.

It is important to note that these volunteer hours capture only the activities of Arts Centre tenants; additional volunteer contributions from other community groups across the region would further increase this total. Together, these collective efforts represent far more than hours logged — they bring life and warmth to the spaces where our community gathers, learns, and creates together, ensuring that arts and culture continue to flourish at the heart of community life.

The Arts Centre currently serves more than 165 individual members across Williams Lake and the Central Cariboo. Demand for space continues to grow, with increasing requests from both existing and new groups, organizations, and individuals. Current tenants have identified a shortage of group space as a barrier to expanding their programming and reaching larger audiences or memberships.

This ongoing demand highlights both the success and limitations of the existing facility. While the Centre remains a stable anchor for local creative activity, its capacity is reaching a threshold that may constrain future program growth. The space's importance extends beyond arts programming—it supports and has the potential to enhance

community health and wellness, foster social connection, and improve quality of life for residents.

Additionally, the Centre could play a role in contributing to regional recruitment and retention by making the area more attractive for individuals and families seeking a vibrant, creative, and connected community. These potential benefits reinforce the broader value of arts and culture infrastructure in sustaining community vitality.

Looking forward, maintaining and expanding accessible creative space will be essential to sustaining current participation levels and meeting emerging needs. Continued monitoring of facility use, user diversity, and unmet demand will help guide strategic planning and ensure the Centre remains responsive to community growth and change.

#### GRANT PROGRAM

Our grant program continues to be a vital mechanism for delivering arts and culture opportunities to a broad range of residents across the Central Cariboo.

In 2024, the Spring and Fall intakes distributed \$22,385 to 12 groups and organizations in support of arts and culture programs, offerings, and purchases. Reporting from these awards indicates that more than 2,292 individuals were served and over 633 participants directly benefited from the funded projects and initiatives. Several of these projects are still ongoing and will continue to support and enrich the lives of residents in the months and years ahead.

The 2025 program is on track to reflect a similar level of engagement and impact, with \$10,373 awarded to six successful projects and purchases — representing 100% of applicants for this intake.

Compared to 2023, the 2024 Grant Program experienced a slight decline in both applications and total funds requested, with three fewer applicants and \$5,557 less requested overall. Participation continues to gradually rebuild following the 2020 peak; however, a full return to pre-COVID levels remains uneven. Funding demand consistently exceeds available resources, with applicant requests regularly surpassing the capacity of the two annual intakes and the \$20,000 program budget.

#### PERFORMANCES IN THE PARK

Performances in the Park continues to be a valued summer event in the Central Cariboo, providing accessible, free, and family-friendly live entertainment in a welcoming outdoor setting. Over an eight-week series, Boitania Park became a gathering place for residents and visitors to experience local, regional, and national talent while supporting community vibrancy in Williams Lake. With free admission and minimal barriers to participation, the series ensures that everyone—regardless of income, age, or background—can experience live music and engage with the community. Each season

features a diverse mix of local, regional, and visiting performers, showcasing the richness of the local creative community while introducing audiences to new artistic perspectives. The casual, outdoor setting fosters multi-generational connection, strengthens social bonds, and builds local pride, creating a consistent weekly opportunity for engagement during the summer months. As one of the few recurring summer events, Performances in the Park serves as a dependable cultural anchor, encouraging participation and enriching community life.

In 2025, the concert series attracted an average weekly attendance of 237 people, demonstrating good community engagement. Nearly half of all performers (44%) were local and regional artists, highlighting the series' role in supporting and showcasing homegrown talent. Additionally, all concerts were delivered in the Park, providing a consistent and accessible outdoor venue for audiences to enjoy live music.

Building on the success of past seasons, future seasons of Performances in the Park will focus on maintaining opportunities for local vendors, attracting new sponsorships, and enhancing the overall community experience for residents and visitors, alike.

### **Measuring Previous Years Performance**

**Goal:** Complete a feasibility study for improvements and expansion of the Arts Centre facilities.

- Not completed. A steering committee is established for the project; however, grant funding as required was not obtained. Goal is carried forward to 2026.

**Goal:** Install public art at the exterior entrance of the Arts Centre.

- Not completed. Delays in space preparation require this to be carried forward to 2026.

**Goal:** Review the Service Delivery Agreement with the Central Cariboo Arts and Culture Society.

- Completed. Five-year renewal agreement to be signed before year-end.

**Goal:** Review an agreement for Performances in the Park.

- Completed. Three-year renewal agreement to be signed before year-end with potential additional partner.

**Goal:** Review the Fee for Service Agreements with various non-profit groups.

- Completed. Renewals at existing terms expected to be signed before year-end.

### **Other Impactful Accomplishments**

- Participated in the Recruitment and Retention Committee with the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce, while also leading the Multi-Purpose Facility Working Group. This included facilitating meetings, conducting research and

outreach, securing a co-chair, and submitting an official recommendation to the Committee for the City of Williams Lake.

- Compiled results from the 2024 Grant Program Review, developed recommendations, and implemented changes to strengthen and update the CCACS Grant Program.
- Completed facility equipment improvements in short-term rental spaces through key upgrades and updates.
- Upgraded Wi-Fi and internet capabilities to improve connectivity throughout the facility for staff, tenants, user groups, and short-term rentals.
- Initiated the development of a CCACS Facility Capital Plan to guide future growth, planning, and recommendations for facility improvements.
- Initiated discussions with key partners to develop unique art projects at the Arts Centre, enhancing visitor experiences through a micro-gallery.
- Attended Creative City Summit in Kingston, ON
- Developed and distributed a community newsletter, creating a new platform for connection, information sharing, and visibility for local arts and culture.
- Developed and introduced a structured social media calendar to strengthen community engagement, ensure consistent branding, and improve workflow efficiency.
- Led the initiative with Performances in the Park organizers to include food vendors at the summer concerts, enhancing the community experience and building partnerships with local businesses.
- Designed and implemented a feedback form to solicit community perspectives on Performances in the Park.
- Planning for the ARTsWORKs Lab Pilot Project, creating the contract, program outline, and timeline for workshops that will help local artists and creatives develop skills and strategies to turn their art into small business opportunities.