

Arts Council Wood Buffalo



2025 Annual Report



A willow basket weaving workshop led by Elder Mary Mackenzie in partnership with Ihkapaskwa Collective outdoors at Arts Council Wood Buffalo in August 2025.

Photo by Renee Hefferan.

Arts Council Wood Buffalo champions a vision of our region where the arts are not an addition, but an essential part of a vibrant, sustainable community—one where people choose to live, work, and thrive.

As a non-profit society and registered charity, ACWB works at the intersection of creativity, community well-being, and regional growth, advancing the role of the arts as a key contributor to quality of life.

By supporting local artists, investing in meaningful collaborations, and delivering dynamic programs and resources, ACWB helps shape a region where culture drives connection, belonging, and opportunity. In doing so, ACWB strengthens a diverse and resilient arts ecosystem that enhances not only the cultural landscape, but the long-term vitality and livability of Wood Buffalo.

Message from the Mayor

On behalf of Council and everyone at the Municipality, I extend my congratulations to Arts Council Wood Buffalo (ACWB) on an INCredible year in 2025.

Thank you to the Board of Directors for its continued leadership, along with Executive Director Liana Wheeldon and the ACWB team for its dedication, momentum, and vision in advancing arts and culture across the region.

This year's Annual Report theme, Kinetic, reflects a period of meaningful movement and progress for ACWB and for the community as a whole. The arts are a driving force that energizes our economy, strengthens social connection, and brings people together in powerful ways.

“It's clear that ACWB's work continues to have a lasting impact on the region's quality of life.”

Council's decision to purchase the Suncor Arts INCubator property, and commit to completing the project, while installing ACWB as the operators of this transformative facility is a significant milestone. This step marks a new chapter in an already strong and collaborative partnership between the Municipality and ACWB. Together, we are investing in a shared vision that will deliver long-term cultural, social, and economic benefits for the entire community.

We were honoured to formally recognize September as Month of the Artist in 2025, celebrating the vital role artists play in shaping Wood Buffalo's identity, economy, and sense of place. This proclamation reflected our shared commitment to recognizing and valuing the contributions of artists across all disciplines.

As we look ahead to the next four years and beyond, we are confident that our continued partnership will remain a key part of building a vibrant, welcoming, and resilient community. The Suncor Arts INCubator Project will be a cornerstone of our downtown and a catalyst for creativity, innovation, and opportunity as it moves from vision to reality.

It's clear that ACWB's work continues to have a lasting impact on the region's quality of life. Through its programs, partnerships, and leadership, ACWB supports a strong and sustainable arts sector that contributes to the well-being and prosperity of our community.

Congratulations to ACWB on an outstanding year. We look forward to continued collaboration and to the momentum ahead for arts and culture in Wood Buffalo.

MAYOR SANDY BOWMAN

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Message from the Board of Directors

Our vision at Arts Council is a creatively empowered Wood Buffalo. To make this vision a reality, it takes a collective energy – not only from Arts Council’s Board of Directors and Staff, but from everyone in the region who loves to create, appreciate, and support the arts. With this kind of energy, together we can build a thriving community through the arts.

2025 saw significant community support for the arts. Arts Council entered a partnership with the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo to bring the first standalone arts centre in the region to life, unanimously supported by Mayor and Council. This collaboration is built upon a strong, longstanding partnership between ACWB and our municipal government, and will see the transformation process of this new creative campus brought to completion.

Another major milestone for the arts in our region was the announcement of Suncor as the Building Presenting Partner of what is now called the Suncor Arts INCubator Project. Suncor has a longstanding history of supporting the arts, and this partnership reflects the bright future for creativity in Wood Buffalo.

Also in 2025, we celebrated the tenth presentation of the Wood Buffalo Excellence in Arts Awards (Buffys), highlighting the local arts ecosystem and raising the profile of the arts. We were thrilled to welcome Wood Buffalo Media Group as the Presenting Partner of this milestone midnight. This program and flagship event has grown in impact each year and we look forward to

celebrating the next ten years of excellence with you. As the collective energy continues to build, Arts Council’s Board of Directors is focused on organizational transformation, financial sustainability, and cross-sector connection. Having achieved the objectives of our 2023-26 Strategic Plan, ACWB Board will develop the 2027-30 goals launching us into the next period of innovation.

“With this kind of energy, together we can build a thriving community through the arts”

Arts Council Wood Buffalo looks forward to completing and operating the Suncor Arts INCubator Project with our partners, while continuing to grow as an organization, build connections, expand access to the arts, and realize our dynamic vision of a creatively empowered Wood Buffalo.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you to Arts Council Wood Buffalo Staff, members, artists, arts champions, partners, donors, volunteers, and sponsors. Your continued support and belief in the power of the arts is what has transformed potential energy into kinetic energy for everyone in FMWB.

WILL COLLINS

Board Chair

Message from the Executive Director

At Arts Council Wood Buffalo, our work is grounded in motion: ideas taking shape, relationships deepening, and creative practice pushing our community forward. Each year reveals new ways the arts activate connection, strengthen our economy, and contribute to a shared sense of belonging across Wood Buffalo.

“Our work is grounded in motion: ideas taking shape, relationships deepening, and creative practice pushing our community forward.”

In 2025, this sense of momentum was especially present. Together with artists, partners, and supporters, we advanced initiatives that build capacity and create opportunity, while remaining responsive to the evolving needs of our arts community.

A defining milestone this year was the unanimous decision by Mayor and Council for the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo to purchase the Suncor Arts INCubator property, commit to completing the project, and install Arts Council Wood Buffalo as the operators of this transformative facility. This decision represents both a major step forward for Arts INC and an important evolution of our long-standing partnership with the Municipality.

Equally significant was welcoming Suncor as the Building Presenting Partner for the Suncor Arts INCubator Project. Suncor’s leadership and investment demonstrate a shared belief in the power of the arts to drive community vitality, economic diversification, and creative opportunity. Their support plays a critical role in bringing this long-held vision to life and ensuring Arts INC can serve artists and the broader community for generations to come.

The theme of this year’s Annual Report, Kinetic, speaks to action, collaboration, and forward motion. It reflects the energy behind our programs, partnerships, and advocacy, and our ongoing commitment to building a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable arts ecosystem. This work would not be possible without the continued support of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, our sponsors, grantors, and donors—thank you for investing in creativity and community.

To our Board of Directors, Members, artists, volunteers, and partners: thank you for your trust, collaboration, and belief in this work. Your support fuels our momentum and inspires us to keep moving forward together.

LIANA WHELDON
Executive Director



The arts are the heartbeat of Wood Buffalo, bringing joy to everyday life and shaping a vibrant, sustainable community people are proud to call home.

2025 was a year of significant milestones for Arts Council Wood Buffalo.

Our mission is rooted in the belief that arts and culture are integral to a **vibrant, sustainable community** and a **remarkable quality of life**. Through programs, events, and services, ACWB supports cross-sector, community-driven creative experiences across Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo.

We started the year strong, with **eleven artist calls** opening in January to support creatives in our region. These opportunities enable artists across disciplines to grow and create within their practices here in Wood Buffalo. Through initiatives such as these, ACWB fosters the **professional development** and **economic growth** of the local arts community.

Early in 2025, ACWB also welcomed visiting representatives from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, sharing firsthand insights into the unique opportunities and needs of our region. ACWB continues to **strengthen connections** with organizations across Alberta, contributing to Wood Buffalo's place within the **provincial arts ecosystem**.

As the seasons shifted into spring, we continued our work to support and develop local artists. Through our **Artist in Residence** program, local artist Sukhmandeep Singh received mentorship from our staff team and led community workshops in Fort McMurray and Fort Chipewyan, expanding his network and building his profile within the region. His residency culminated in the creation of his first permanent mural, transforming a formerly blank wall within What's in Store into a nature-inspired artwork.

Meanwhile, Arts Council staff facilitated sessions, both online and in person, to support local artists as they navigate funding applications, awards, and key financial and tax considerations. These offerings are part of ACWB's **ongoing commitment to building the foundation for artistic growth**—supporting artists to learn, develop their skills, and cultivate the confidence and capacity needed to sustain and advance their practice over time.



“My time as the Artist in Residence was one of the most meaningful experiences in my journey as an artist. As someone who came to Canada with a deep passion for art and a hope to build meaningful connections through creativity, this opportunity had a profound impact on both my personal and professional growth.”

SUKHMANDEEP SINGH
2025 Artist in Residence



101

unique workshops
and events offered
across the region
in 2025



In **May**, Arts Council Wood Buffalo welcomed Alex Sarian, President and CEO of the Werklund Centre in Calgary (formerly Arts Commons), for a two-part series of events in Fort McMurray.

First, Alex joined a panel discussion with local arts and culture leaders at our Annual General Meeting. Also on the panel were Karla Buffalo, CEO of Athabasca Tribal Council; Eugene Carnegie, Director of Keyano Theatre; Ana Maria Mendez, Facilities & Development Manager of McMurray Métis Cultural Centre; and Liana Wheeldon, Executive Director of Arts Council Wood Buffalo. The discussion explored **how arts and culture can continue to evolve while maintaining relevance and impact within communities**, offering ACWB Members the opportunity to engage directly with these leaders and ask questions.

The following day, Alex delivered the keynote address at ACWB's **Redefining Relevance Luncheon**, sharing insights on the **arts as a catalyst for economic development**. In his role at the Werklund Centre, Alex is overseeing Canada's largest cultural infrastructure project—a \$680 million transformation of a downtown creative campus that is expected to revitalise downtown Calgary and reshape the city's future. He drew connections between the Werklund Centre Transformation and the Suncor Arts INCubator Project, underscoring **the role of the arts in city-building and long-term community growth**. The luncheon brought together leaders from local government, Indigenous groups, and industry professionals across sectors for a meaningful conversation about the intersection of arts and economic development.

Also in May, Arts Council hosted a full day of workshops for older adults in partnership with St. Aidan's Society. Since 2020, our Seniors & the Arts Program has created ongoing opportunities for seniors and Elders to engage with the arts, fostering connection and supporting wellbeing. In 2025, Seniors & the Arts Day brought together over fifty seniors and Elders for a free day of hands-on learning at Keyano Theatre & Arts Centre, with three local artists leading workshops throughout the day.

Across the year, **165 seniors and Elders participated in arts and culture through this program**, strengthening opportunities for connection, creativity, and continued learning through the arts.



\$115,595

invested in local creatives
through ACWB's signature
programs in 2025



Summer brought warmer weather, and with it, increased opportunities for community gathering.

In June, Arts Council was thrilled to once again be invited to participate in Mikisew Cree First Nation Treaty Days in Fort Chipewyan. Through the work of our **Rural Arts Support Program Coordinator**, Donna Aubichon, ACWB facilitates ongoing programming in Fort Chipewyan. Through ribbon skirt workshops held throughout the year, Donna supported participants in creating their own ribbon skirts, deepening understanding of their cultural significance, particularly in relation to Treaty Days.

The completed skirts were presented during Treaty Days, where participants, including young girls, Two-Spirit individuals, Elders, and women, shared personal reflections on the experience of creating and wearing them. These reflections spoke to **identity, pride, and mental wellness**, illustrating how cultural practices can support both individual and collective healing, while strengthening connections to culture, community, and belonging.

Also in June, we welcomed our **Suncor Indigenous Artist in Residence**, Alyssa Miller. As part of her residency, she spent time in Fort McMurray, Fort Chipewyan, and Fort McKay. During this time, she also led a porcupine quill medallion workshop at Bouchier.

Later in the summer, we hosted our second annual **Summer Makers Market**, a highly successful event offering ACWB members a low-barrier opportunity to sell their work at a highly visible outdoor community gathering. This year's market took place at kiyām Community Park and featured 15 artist vendors selling their work in the sunshine.

In partnership with the Regional Recreation Corporation, Arts Council Wood Buffalo launched **Collective Threads**, a community art exhibition at the Kirschner Family Community Art Gallery inside MacDonald Island Park. The exhibition was a success, with **38 artists represented and over 60 artworks featured**, spanning drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, and traditional Indigenous arts and crafts. No artist was turned away, ensuring an inclusive opportunity for participation for people of all ages, skill levels, and backgrounds. For many of the exhibiting artists, this was their first-ever opportunity to have their work featured in a gallery. The exhibition ran from August 10 – September 12, 2025.





7,178

people served through
programs, events, and
services in 2025

September was **Month of the Artist** in Wood Buffalo, as proclaimed by Mayor Sandy Bowman. This milestone recognized the vital role artists play in contributing to the wellbeing, vibrancy, and sustainability of Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo. Our Month of the Artist Celebration at the Kirschner Family Community Art Gallery brought together community members, leaders, and artists to mark Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo's inaugural Month of the Artist. The well-attended evening was an opportunity for joy, connection, and celebration of the arts in our community.

Also in September, **Words & Birds Wood Buffalo** invited artists to create visual and written works inspired by native bird species of the region. The resulting work was exceptional, showcasing the breadth and depth of talent across our community. A celebration event was held at Acden, where the work was exhibited and sold in support of ACWB.

Not only was September Month of the Artist, it was also **Alberta Culture Days**, a month-long celebration of arts and culture marked by free community

events throughout September. Arts Council is proud to steward funds from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and the Government of Alberta to support local groups and individuals in hosting Alberta Culture Days programming. This year, Alberta Culture Days featured **23 free, community-driven events** across the region.

September also brought with it a major milestone for our community, with **RMWB Mayor and Council unanimously approving of the purchase of the Suncor Arts INCubator Project and a \$17M investment to bring the project to life**. This landmark decision by our municipal leaders reflects how vital the project is to our community, directly supporting the RMWB's Culture Master Plan, Cultural Infrastructure Needs Assessment, Municipal Development Plan, and Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan. Arts Council Wood Buffalo will work closely with the RMWB on the project and, once complete, will operate the facility as a social enterprise, ensuring the long-term sustainability of arts and culture in the region.

October was marked by an incredible milestone with the tenth edition of the **Wood Buffalo Excellence in Arts Awards**, presented by Wood Buffalo Media Group. Ten Years of Midnight was the biggest and most elegant celebration to date, as we honoured the region's most outstanding artists and cultural contributors.

This year's award recipients:

- » **The Arts Administration Award**, *presented by the Rozsa Foundation*: McMurray Métis
 - » **The Arts Education Award**, *presented by CEDA*: Shannon Whitbread
 - » **The Craft Award**: Nicole Wismann
 - » **The Creative Collaboration Award**, *presented by Play 103.7 & 100.5 Cruz FM*: Northern Lights Christmas Album
 - » **The Dance Award**: Fort McMurray Aurora Ukrainian Dance Club
 - » **The Indigenous Artist Award**, *presented by McMurray Métis*: Stacey Grant
 - » **The Ken Flaherty Music Award**: Katie Williams
 - » **The Literary Arts Award**: Juleus Ghunta
 - » **The Media Arts Award**, *presented by Country 93.3 & Rock 97.9*: Matt Salem
 - » **The Performing Arts Award**: Alan Roberts
 - » **The Rising Star Award**: Arianna Dakin
 - » **The Visual Arts Award**: Alexandra Kavanagh
- » **The Arts Champion Award**: Jessie Stecyk, Tavern on Main
 - » **The Youth Leader in the Arts Award**, *presented by Muessle Flett Law LLP*: Ashton Morehouse
 - » **The Lifetime Achievement Award**: Fort McMurray Potters Guild

The evening also included the on-stage announcement of **Suncor as the Building Presenting Partner of the Suncor Arts INCubator Project**, a significant step toward bringing this community creative hub to life. Arts Council is deeply grateful for Suncor's longstanding support and for this continued partnership



346

artists directly hired by
Arts Council Wood Buffalo
in 2025



Arts Council Wood Buffalo brings people together through creativity, cultivating joy, strengthening connections, and nurturing a sense of belonging within our community.



The year came to a close with Arts Councils' **third-annual Winter Makers Market**, which took place at Keyano Theatre. Each year, the Winter Makers Market gives member artists the opportunity to connect with the community, create meaningful sales during the holiday season, and showcase **handmade arts** and **fine craft** in a welcoming, festive atmosphere that celebrates creativity.

The market encourages residents to shop local while supporting the production of original work by regional artists, all within a vibrant environment that highlights the value of arts in everyday life. **Over \$10,000 in sales** was generated for artist entrepreneurs through this year's event, based on vendor reporting.

Visitors enjoyed complimentary hot chocolate, a watercolour card workshop, and a lively seasonal setting designed to make space for creativity to shine. The Winter Makers Market continues to receive overwhelmingly positive feedback from both shoppers and vendors, reinforcing its role as a **much-loved annual tradition** in the community.

Across 2025, Arts Council Wood Buffalo delivered a wide range of programs, events, and initiatives that reflect the depth and diversity of the local creative sector.

While this report highlights key milestones, it represents only a portion of the work that takes place year-round—including ongoing weekly programming such as Bead & Heal, continued engagement in Anzac, projects with local schools, and numerous partnerships that extend our reach across the region.

This work is further strengthened through initiatives like the Imperial Oil Procurement Project, which resulted in an additional **\$40,816 invested directly into the local creative economy** through the purchase of artwork from regional artists. Together, these efforts demonstrate ACWB's ongoing commitment to **supporting artists, strengthening community connections, and contributing to a vibrant and sustainable creative economy** in Wood Buffalo.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on continuing this mission—building opportunities for artists, deepening community engagement, and advancing the role of the arts in shaping a thriving region.

Acknowledgements

It is through the generous support of the public sector, foundations, corporations, and individual donors that Arts Council Wood Buffalo empowers creativity.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the supporters who make it possible for Arts Council Wood Buffalo to contribute to the sustainability and vibrancy of Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo.

Public Sector Support

Government of Canada
Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Corporate Partners & Sponsors

Acden
Bouchier
Canadian Natural
Canadian Tire
CEDA
CNOOC
Cocktails by Boots
Imperial Oil
McMurray Metis
Mikisew Cree First Nation
Muessle Flett Law LLP
Play 103.7 & 100.5 Cruz FM
RBC
Rogers
Rozsa Foundation
Suncor
The Agency
The Dancery
The Flaherty Family
Thrifty Dutchess
Wood Buffalo Media Group

Arts Council is also grateful for the support of our community partners:

Acden
Anzac Family Community Support Society
Athabasca Delta Community School
Athabasca Tribal Council
Bill Woodward School
Canada Revenue Agency
Careers: The Next Generation
Empowered Filmmaker
Fort Chipewyan Community High School
Fort McKay First Nation
Fort McMurray 468 First Nation
Fort McMurray Airport Authority
Fort McMurray Catholic School Division
Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce
Fort McMurray Public School Division
Ihkapaskwa Collective
Keyano College
Keyano Theatre
McMurray Metis
Mikisew Cree First Nation
Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo
Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association
Northland School Division
Public Art Wood Buffalo (RMWB)
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
Regional Recreation Corporation
SCALE / Le SAULT Network
St. Aidan's Society
Theatre; Just Because
What's in Store
Wood Buffalo Pride
Wood Buffalo Regional Library
Wood Buffalo Wellness Society
YMCA of Northern Alberta – Wood Buffalo



Financial Update

In 2025, the Suncor Arts INCubator Project ownership was transferred to the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo for the RMWB to directly undertake the completion of the property redevelopment. As a result, the related balances of capital assets, unamortized deferred contributions related to capital assets, and net assets invested in capital assets were derecognized from the organization's financial statements. Upon completion of the property redevelopment, Arts Council Wood Buffalo and the RMWB will continue their partnership in operating this creative campus for the region.

MNP has affirmed Arts Council Wood Buffalo's sound financial practices and confirmed its fiscal health. The 2025 Independent Auditor's Report and 2025 Financial Statements are as follows.

To the Members of Arts Council Wood Buffalo:

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Arts Council Wood Buffalo (the "Organization"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2025, and the statements of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Organization as at December 31, 2025, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other Information

Management is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the Annual Report.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. We obtained the Annual Report prior to the date of this auditor's report. If, based on the work we have performed on this other information, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Organization's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Fort McMurray, Alberta

April 27, 2026

MNP LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants

MNP

Arts Council Wood Buffalo Statement of Financial Position

As at December 31, 2025

	2025	2024
Assets		
Current		
Cash (Note 3)	992,879	321,568
Accounts receivable (Note 6)	3,478	36,341
Goods and services tax recoverable	21,497	28,902
Prepaid expenses and deposits (Note 6)	6,970	82,384
	1,024,824	469,195
Restricted cash for capital purchases (Note 3)	109,330	650,317
Capital assets (Note 4)	22,970	5,080,036
	1,157,124	6,199,548
Liabilities		
Current		
Accounts payable and accruals (Note 4)	56,884	256,814
Deferred contributions (Note 5)	219,786	44,395
Unspent contributions related to capital assets (Note 4), (Note 6)	109,330	731,703
	386,000	1,032,912
Unamortized deferred contributions related to capital assets (Note 4), (Note 6)	18,423	3,849,287
	404,423	4,882,199
Commitments (Note 7)		
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	116,854	14,600
Invested in capital assets (Note 4)	4,547	1,230,749
Internally restricted	631,300	72,000
	752,701	1,317,349
	1,157,124	6,199,548

Approved on behalf of the Board of Directors

signed by "Will Collins"

Director

signed by "Luie Raczynski"

Director

Arts Council Wood Buffalo Statement of Operations

For the year ended December 31, 2025

	2025	2024
Revenue <i>(Note 5)</i>		
Grants and sponsorships <i>(Note 8)</i>	968,075	793,350
Fundraising and donations	446,916	48,932
Fees for services, event sales and partnerships	217,921	48,015
Interest income	24,052	17,596
Amortization of deferred contributions <i>(Note 6)</i>	6,140	6,140
Membership fees	2,957	2,975
	1,666,061	917,008
Direct costs		
Artist fee	109,212	110,418
Reception	5,521	1,129
Scholarships and awards	3,500	3,250
Special projects	640	37
	118,873	114,834
Expenses		
Salaries and benefits	610,339	579,059
Rent	53,276	32,985
Subcontracts	50,882	61,952
Professional fees	35,606	30,555
Meetings and conventions	28,070	20,788
Employee benefits	20,702	20,460
Office	13,310	12,187
Advertising	10,109	15,220
Travel	9,428	9,673
Amortization	9,145	8,629
Business taxes and licenses	8,638	11,061
Utilities	8,223	4,455
Professional development	8,046	9,300
Telephone	7,941	6,859
Insurance	6,420	10,413
Bank charges and interest	3,216	3,210
Membership fees	2,607	2,645
Gifts <i>(Note 10)</i>	108	5,304
	886,066	844,755
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	661,122	(42,581)

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

Arts Council Wood Buffalo
Statement of Changes in Net Assets

For the year ended December 31, 2025

	<i>Unrestricted</i>	<i>Invested in capital assets</i>	<i>Internally restricted</i>	2025	2024
Net assets beginning of year	14,600	1,230,749	72,000	1,317,349	1,359,930
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	664,127	(3,005)	-	661,122	(42,581)
Grant funds restricted for capital asset purchases <i>(Note 6)</i>	886,111	(886,111)	-	-	-
Investments in capital assets	(888,684)	888,684	-	-	-
Transfer to internally restricted	(559,300)	-	559,300	-	-
Disposition of invested in capital assets balance on transfer <i>(Note 4)</i>	-	(1,225,770)	-	(1,225,770)	-
Net assets, end of year	116,854	4,547	631,300	752,701	1,317,349

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

Arts Council Wood Buffalo Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended December 31, 2025

	2025	2024
Cash provided by (used for) the following activities		
Operating		
Cash received from contributions	1,466,834	877,320
Cash paid for program service expenses	(280,869)	(412,992)
Cash paid for salaries and benefits	(631,041)	(599,519)
	554,924	(135,191)
Financing		
Cash contributions received for capital assets <i>(Note 6)</i>	464,084	510,704
Investing		
Purchase of capital assets <i>(Note 4)</i>	(888,684)	(922,815)
Decrease in restricted cash for capital purchases	540,987	815,953
	(347,697)	(106,862)
Increase in cash resources	671,311	268,651
Cash resources, beginning of year	321,568	52,917
Cash resources, end of year	992,879	321,568

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

1. Incorporation and nature of the organization

Arts Council Wood Buffalo (the "Organization") is a not-for-profit organization incorporated provincially under the Companies Act of Alberta. As a registered charity the Organization is exempt from the payment of income tax under section 149(1) of the Income Tax Act.

The Organization operates to build a thriving community through the arts. The Organization was established to raise the profile of the arts in the region and to provide support to all facets of the arts community.

2. Significant accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit set out in Part III of the CPA Handbook - Accounting Standards for Not-For-Profit Organizations, as issued by the Accounting Standards Board in Canada using the following significant accounting policies:

Restricted net assets

The Organization follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions and in addition to its general operating surplus from program delivery and administrative activities, the following net asset reserves are maintained: invested in capital assets and internally restricted funds.

Net assets invested in capital assets reports the Organization's assets, liabilities, revenue and expenses related to Arts Council Wood Buffalo's capital assets.

Internally restricted net assets were established by the Organization's Board of Directors to restrict resources to cover operations in the event of unforeseen shortfalls.

Revenue recognition

The Organization follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured. Endowment contributions are recognized as direct increases in net assets.

Restricted investment income is recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Contributions restricted for the purchase of capital assets are deferred and recognized as the related asset is amortized. Contributions for capital assets which are not amortized are recognized as a direct increase in net assets.

Unrestricted investment income is recognized as revenue when earned.

Fees for services and event sales, membership fees, and other income are recognized when the related services are provided.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash includes balances with banks.

Externally restricted cash and cash equivalents are restricted for specific purposes and are not available for general operations.

Capital assets

Purchased capital assets are recorded at cost. Contributed capital assets are recorded at fair value at the date of contribution plus all costs directly attributable to the acquisition.

Amortization is provided using the straight-line method at rates intended to amortize the cost of assets over their estimated useful lives.

	Method	Years
Building	straight-line	25 years
Computer equipment	straight-line	5 years
Furniture and fixtures	straight-line	5 years
Website	straight-line	5 years

2. **Significant accounting policies** *(Continued from previous page)*

Long-lived assets

Long-lived assets consist of capital assets. Long-lived assets held for use are measured and amortized as described in the applicable accounting policies.

The Organization writes down long-lived assets held for use when conditions indicate that the asset no longer contributes to the Organization's ability to provide goods and services. The assets are also written-down when the value of future economic benefits or service potential associated with the asset is less than its net carrying amount. When the Organization determines that a long-lived asset is impaired, its carrying amount is written down to the asset's fair value.

Contributed materials

Contributions of materials and services are recognized both as contributions and expenses in the statement of operations and changes in net assets when a fair value can be reasonably estimated and when the materials and services are used in the normal course of the Organization's operations and would otherwise have been purchased. No such contributions have been recorded in these financial statements.

Leases

A lease that transfers substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership is classified as a capital lease. At the inception of a capital lease, an asset and a payment obligation are recorded at an amount equal to the lesser of the present value of the minimum lease payments and the property's fair market value. Assets under capital leases are amortized over their estimated useful lives. All other leases are accounted for as operating leases and rental payments are expensed as incurred.

Measurement uncertainty (use of estimates)

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period.

Accounts receivable are stated after evaluation as to their collectability and an appropriate allowance for doubtful accounts is provided where considered necessary. Amortization is based on the estimated useful lives of capital assets.

These estimates and assumptions are reviewed periodically and, as adjustments become necessary they are reported in excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses in the periods in which they become known.

Financial instruments

The Organization recognizes financial instruments when the Organization becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument.

Arm's length financial instruments

Financial instruments originated/acquired or issued/assumed in an arm's length transaction ("arm's length financial instruments") are initially recorded at their fair value.

At initial recognition, the Organization may irrevocably elect to subsequently measure any arm's length financial instrument at fair value. The Organization has not made such an election during the year.

The Organization subsequently measures investments in equity instruments quoted in an active market and all derivative instrument at fair value. All other financial assets and liabilities are subsequently measured at amortized cost.

Transaction costs and financing fees directly attributable to the origination, acquisition, issuance or assumption of financial instruments subsequently measured at fair value are immediately recognized in excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses. Conversely, transaction costs and financing fees are added to the carrying amount for those financial instruments subsequently measured at cost or amortized cost.

Arts Council Wood Buffalo
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended December 31, 2025

2. Significant accounting policies *(Continued from previous page)*

Financial instruments *(Continued from previous page)*

Financial asset impairment

The Organization assesses impairment of all its financial assets measured at cost or amortized cost. The Organization reduces the carrying amount of any impaired financial assets to the highest of: the present value of cash flows expected to be generated by holding the assets; the amount that could be realized by selling the assets at the statement of financial position date; and the amount expected to be realized by exercising any rights to collateral held against those assets.

Any impairment, which is not considered temporary, is included in current year excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses. The Organization reverses impairment losses on financial assets when there is a decrease in impairment and the decrease can be objectively related to an event occurring after the impairment loss was recognized. The amount of the reversal is recognized in excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses in the year the reversal occurs.

3. Cash and restricted cash for capital purposes

Included in cash and restricted cash for capital purposes are guaranteed investment certificates (GICs) of \$350,000 bearing interest at 2.75%, \$200,000 bearing interest at 2.45%, \$150,000 bearing interest at 2.05%, \$10,000 bearing interest at 2.45%, and \$5,345 bearing interest at 2.0% (2024 - \$5,228 bearing interest at 2.25%, and \$900,000 bearing interest at 4.1%).

4. Capital assets

	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Accumulated amortization</i>	<i>2025 Net book value</i>	<i>2024 Net book value</i>
Land	-	-	-	1,225,770
Building	-	-	-	3,824,724
Computer equipment	12,224	8,236	3,988	3,860
Furniture and fixtures	2,795	2,236	559	1,118
Website	30,704	12,281	18,423	24,564
	45,723	22,753	22,970	5,080,036

The building had no amortization recorded during the current or prior year as it was under redevelopment. Included in accounts payable is \$nil (2024 - \$208,404) related to capital assets, which is therefore excluded from purchases of capital assets in the statement of cash flows.

During the year, capital assets related to the Arts INC project were transferred to the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo ("RMWB") for nominal consideration of \$2 for the RMWB to directly undertake the completion of the property redevelopment. As a result, the related balances of capital assets, unamortized deferred contributions related to capital assets, and net assets invested in capital assets were derecognized from the Organization's financial statements.

Upon completion of the Arts INC property redevelopment, the facility will be leased back to the Organization. As at the date of these financial statements, the redevelopment has not been completed and no lease agreement has been executed.

The disposition resulted in increases (decreases) to the following financial statement line items:

Financial statement line item:

Land	(1,225,770)
Net assets invested in capital assets	(1,225,770)
Building	(4,502,432)
Unamortized deferred contributions related to capital assets	(4,502,432)
Unspent contributions related to capital assets (see below)	(408,749)
Revenue	408,749

Arts Council Wood Buffalo Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2025

4. Capital assets *(Continued from previous page)*

Upon disposition of the Arts INC capital assets, the Organization reassessed the recognition of contributions related to the project. Certain contributions restricted to the project previously applied to capital costs were also eligible for operating costs of the project, while other contributions were exclusively restricted to capital expenditures. As a result of the reassessment, contributions restricted to solely for capital were designated as funding capital additions, while contributions with flexibility for operational use were redesignated and recognized as operating revenue.

5. Deferred contributions

	<i>Beginning of the year</i>	<i>Funding received (repayable) during the year</i>	<i>Recognized as revenue</i>	<i>End of the year</i>
Alberta Culture Days - Government of Alberta	-	4,500	(4,500)	-
Alberta Culture Days - RMWB	-	30,000	(30,000)	-
Alberta Foundation for the Arts - Operating	-	70,000	(70,000)	-
Alberta Foundation for the Arts - Rural arts support	-	30,000	(16,435)	13,565
Artist in Residency	20,000	20,000	(20,000)	20,000
Arts Awards	-	22,000	(22,000)	-
Arts Awards Grant - RMWB	-	20,000	(20,000)	-
Arts INC - PrairiesCan	-	113,000	(113,000)	-
Arts INC sponsorships	-	50,000	(50,000)	-
Prepaid memberships	4,555	2,957	(2,957)	4,555
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo - operations	-	620,000	(620,000)	-
Rural arts support - other	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Rural arts support - RMWB	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Seniors and the arts project	-	20,000	(20,000)	-
Suncor Energy Inc.	19,840	15,000	(19,840)	15,000
Suncor Energy Inc. - naming rights	-	250,000	(83,334)	166,666
Other - fundraising, donations, interest and fees	-	149,106	(149,106)	-
Unspent contributions related to capital assets (redesignated for Operations) <i>(Note 4)</i>	-	408,749	(408,749)	-
	44,395	1,835,312	(1,659,921)	219,786

Amounts included in project summary above comprise all funding sources including grants, fundraising and donations, fees and interest income.

Deferred contributions related to funding received from Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo included above is as follows:

	<i>Beginning of the year</i>	<i>Funding received (repayable) during the year</i>	<i>Recognized as revenue</i>	<i>End of the year</i>
Administration and payroll costs	-	620,000	(620,000)	-
Alberta Culture Days	-	30,000	(30,000)	-
Arts Awards	-	20,000	(20,000)	-
Rural arts support	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
	-	675,000	(675,000)	-

Arts Council Wood Buffalo
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended December 31, 2025

6. Deferred contributions related to capital assets

The Organization has received various grants to support the Arts Incubator Project. Deferred capital contributions consist of the unamortized amount of contributions received for the purchase of capital assets. Recognition of these amounts as revenue is deferred to periods when the related capital assets are amortized. Changes in deferred capital contributions are as follows:

	2025	2024
Balance, beginning of year	4,580,990	4,190,478
Amount received during the year	464,084	470,406
Interest earned on funds received	-	40,298
Amounts included in current year (prior year) accounts receivable	-	(114,052)
Amortization of deferred contributions	(6,140)	(6,140)
Unamortized deferred capital contributions disposed (Note 4)	(4,502,432)	-
Unspent capital contributions (redesignated for operations) (Note 4) (Note 5)	(408,749)	-
	127,753	4,580,990
Less: unspent capital contributions	109,330	731,703
	18,423	3,849,287

Unspent capital contributions are comprised of restricted cash for capital purchases of \$109,330 (2024 - \$650,317) and deposits included in prepaid expenses and deposits of \$nil (2024 - \$81,386).

7. Commitments

The Organization has entered into a lease agreement for office space with minimum monthly payments of \$2,400 per month until March 2026.

8. Grant and sponsorship revenue

	2025	2024
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (Note 5)	675,000	665,000
PrairiesCan (Note 5)	113,000	-
Alberta Foundation for the Arts	86,435	60,000
Business and Industry Grants	39,840	35,160
Miscellaneous sponsorships	29,300	2,989
Employment and Social Development Canada - Seniors and the Arts (Note 5)	20,000	8,690
Government of Alberta - Alberta Culture (Note 5)	4,500	-
Community Foundations of Canada	-	21,511
	968,075	793,350

9. Economic dependence

The Organization is economically dependant on grants received from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo for its continued existence and ability to carry out its operations. The grant received from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo accounts for 41% (2024 - 73%) of the revenue generated by the Organization.

Arts Council Wood Buffalo Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2025

10. Endowment funds

During the year, the Organization donated \$nil (2024 - \$5,000) into an endowment fund with Wood Buffalo Community Foundation (the "Foundation") for which Arts Council Wood Buffalo is the sole beneficiary. During 2025, the fund earned net investment income of \$1,568 (2024 - \$1,783) and granted \$675 (2024 - \$420) to the Organization, resulting in a net fund balance of \$17,778 (2024 - \$16,885).

11. Financial instruments

The Organization, as part of its operations, carries a number of financial instruments. It is management's opinion that the Organization is not exposed to significant interest, currency, credit, liquidity or other price risks arising from these financial instruments except as otherwise disclosed.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk is the risk that the value of a financial instrument might be adversely affected by a change in the interest rates. Changes in market interest rates may have an effect on the cash flows associated with some financial assets and liabilities, known as cash flow risk, and on the fair value of other financial assets or liabilities, known as price risk.

The Organization is exposed to interest rate price risk through its investment in Guaranteed Income Certificates (GIC's), which bear interest at fixed rates.

Board of Directors

as of December 31, 2025

Dawn Booth

Director

Mitchel Bowers

Secretary

Ashley Brockway

Director

Will Collins

Chair

Clay Fadden

Director

Celia MacDonald

Director

Jeffory Magson

Director

Nabil Malik

Director

Anna Pottie

Director

Luie Raczynski

Director

Theresa Wells

Vice Chair

Staff

as of December 31, 2025

Donna Aubichon

Rural Arts Support Program Coordinator

Emma Carter

Engagement Manager

Diane Din Ebongue

Partnerships Manager

Jenna Fewer

Programs Manager

Michelle Foran

Rural Arts Support Program Coordinator

Byron Gard

Programs Coordinator

Jamal-e-Fatima Rafat

Programs Consultant

Liana Wheeldon

Executive Director



Through inclusive approaches, partnerships, and shared leadership, Arts Council Wood Buffalo creates space for people to gather, create, and grow together.



Photos by Renee Hefferan.



Arts Council Wood Buffalo

OUR MISSION

Building a thriving community through the arts

OUR VISION

A creatively empowered Wood Buffalo

Arts Council Wood Buffalo recognizes that we live, work, and create on the ancestral territories of the Dene, nêhiyawak, and Métis Peoples. We are all treaty people together in our collective home within the boundaries of Treaty 8. We would also like to recognize the Traditional Knowledge Holders and Elders who are still with us today, and those who have gone before us. It is in their honour and as an act of reconciliation that we offer this acknowledgement.

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