

Art Gallery of Burlington Receives Significant Increase in Ontario Arts Council Operating Support

\$60,000 Investment Supports AGB's Growing Artistic, Social, Economic and Community Impact

BURLINGTON, ON – September 15, 2026 – The Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB) is pleased to announce that it has been awarded \$60,000 in operating funding from the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) through the Ontario Arts Operating Fund, Visual Arts program – representing a **160.9% increase** in the Gallery's operating grant.

The significant increase comes at an important moment for the AGB as it advances a new strategic direction focused on delivering meaningful artistic and community impact today while building the capacity for its future.

The investment is particularly meaningful in the context of how OAC evaluates operating organizations. Its assessment framework considers four interconnected dimensions: Artistic, Economic, Social, and Operational. Together, the criteria recognize that the value of an arts organization extends beyond what it presents to include the artists it supports, the audiences it reaches, the skills and employment it creates, the partnerships it builds, its contribution to tourism and economic activity, access to artistic space and equipment, and the strength and resilience of the organization itself ([Ontario Arts Council](#)).

That broad understanding of public value closely reflects the role the AGB is increasingly playing. The AGB is more than a presenting Gallery; it is a living cultural ecosystem where exhibitions, collections, learning, making, artistic research, public dialogue and community connection intersect. Rooted in Burlington and nationally significant in its leadership in contemporary Canadian ceramics, the Gallery creates a uniquely integrated platform where artists, audiences and ideas come together – and where people of all ages can learn, see, think, and make.

That value is increasingly visible in the scale and depth of community participation. By mid-August, the AGB had already welcomed more than 31,000 recorded visitors in 2026 – nearly matching total recorded attendance for all of 2025. Beyond Gallery visits, more than 2,600 people had participated in 134 learning and public programs, from camps and Family Open Studios to workshops, tours and artist-led activities. Together, these numbers reflect an institution that is not only being visited, but increasingly being used, experienced, and shaped by its community.

At the same time, the Gallery is strengthening its role as a place where artists do more than present finished work through exhibitions, residencies, mentorship, studios, research, and public participation. Artists are creating, experimenting, teaching and developing new connections between artistic practice, the Gallery, and the communities it serves. AGB's collection of contemporary Canadian ceramics further provides a living resource for research, mentorship and new artistic production.

"This investment means a great deal to the AGB because it reflects a broader understanding of what public arts organizations make possible," said Emma Sankey, Executive Director of the Art Gallery of Burlington. **"Our impact is found in the artists whose practices we help advance, the children and adults who discover what they can make, the communities that find connection here, and the ideas, skills, and economic activity that radiate outward from cultural participation."**

"We are deeply grateful to the artists and arts professionals who served as peer assessors and gave their time, expertise and care to this process, and to the Ontario Arts Council for its leadership and continued investment in Ontario's arts sector. OAC plays an essential role in creating the conditions for artists and arts organizations across this province to take risks, develop new work, build capacity, and reach communities. **Public investment in the arts is ultimately an investment in the creativity, connection, and vitality of the places we call home.**"

For the AGB, the increased operating support provides important stability as the Gallery moves into its next chapter — continuing to strengthen artistic practice and public participation while building the partnerships, organizational capacity, and resilience required for the future.

“We see this increase not simply as support for what we are doing today, but as an investment in what is possible,” added Sankey. “Our ambition is to be deeply rooted in Burlington while contributing meaningfully to the cultural life of Ontario and Canada — creating a place where artists can thrive, people can participate, and creativity becomes a catalyst for stronger, more connected communities.”

About the Art Gallery of Burlington

For more than 50 years, the **Art Gallery of Burlington** has been a place where artists, audiences and ideas converge. A public art gallery with a distinctive commitment to contemporary art and craft, the AGB brings together exhibitions, a nationally important collection of contemporary Canadian ceramics, studios, learning, artist development and public programming in one dynamic cultural ecosystem.

Through opportunities to **learn, see, think and make**, the AGB connects people with art, ideas and one another. It supports artists and makers at different stages of their practices, creates accessible opportunities for participation, and contributes to the creativity, belonging, and vitality of Burlington and the broader communities it serves.

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