



Victoria Event Centre
1415 Broad Street
Victoria, BC V8W 2B2

February 15, 2024

City of Victoria
1 Centennial Sq
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6
Canada

Subject: Supporting Community Space at the Victoria Event Centre

Dear Councillors,

We are writing to you on behalf of the board of directors for the Victoria Multi-Cultural Society (VMS), a non profit society that operates the non-profit arts venue, the Victoria Event Centre (VEC). The VEC is a multi-disciplinary arts venue that has served the Victoria community for over 20 years, proudly presenting live music, burlesque, theatre, storytelling and drag. **By serving as a gathering space for our community and a stage for numerous talented artists in our city, we have cultivated enduring relationships with various community groups, such as the Victoria Pride Society, ISSAMBA African Cultural Centre, La Société francophone de Victoria, Victoria Ska Fest, Atomic Vaudeville, and the Victoria Downtown Residents Association, among others.**

At the time of this letter, we find ourselves at a critical juncture at the Victoria Event Centre. The ongoing financial recuperation post-COVID, escalating operational costs, and the imminent sale of our venue by landlords converge, placing us in **a precarious state that is threatening our ability to remain open**. Over the last two years we have made serious progress in gaining organisational stability by working with consultants to optimise our streams of revenue, building our management team, and securing funding to embark on a strategic planning process.

Despite the strides we've taken to position the organization for success on multiple fronts, the undeniable financial challenges have become apparent. Simultaneously, the challenges posed by our aging infrastructure have further intensified financial strain, as the mounting costs of maintenance weigh heavily on our resources. These escalating operating costs have compelled us to make difficult decisions, including scaling back our hours of operation and increasing our rental rates. These challenges pose a risk to the inclusivity and openness that define our organization, potentially creating barriers that hinder the very essence of our space as a community hub. **We are deeply concerned that the VEC's capacity as a gathering space for the Victoria arts community is at risk, and we are writing this letter to ask for your urgent financial support in the form of an annual operating grant of \$20 000.**

Securing this funding would sustain the VEC's commitment to the community by hosting a diverse array of events and further expanding the accessibility of our space for daytime gatherings at an affordable rate. These funds would support the key operations and labour costs, including staff wages and rent. Beyond maintaining our dedication to affordability and accessibility, this support

would serve as a foundational cornerstone, opening the doors for provincial funding through the BC Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts, and laying the foundation for lasting financial stability, enabling the VEC to cultivate a resilient and adaptable space capable of weathering financial shifts. **The impact of this municipal support will be multiplied by the opportunities that become available to organizations with local operating support.**

The far-reaching impact of this municipal support extends beyond the immediate benefits to the Victoria Event Centre; it holds the potential to significantly enrich the city itself. By providing operating funding at this critical juncture, the community arts space becomes a cornerstone for cultural enrichment, offering a dynamic platform for diverse artistic expressions. This, in turn, **stimulates community engagement**, serving as a communal space where residents gather, connect, and share in the vibrant cultural economy. As the arts space thrives, it **contributes to the city's economic** vitality by attracting visitors to events and supporting local artists, fostering a sustainable creative sector. In essence, the ripple effect of this support extends across cultural, social, and economic dimensions, leaving an enduring and positive imprint on the city's overall well-being. **We are confident that this support will enrich the lives of Victorians and preserve this key cultural space in a time of need.**

We remain available to answer any questions you may have regarding this letter, and thank you for your consideration and ongoing support of the arts

Sincerely,

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President, Victoria Multi-Cultural Society /
Victoria Event Centre

Alex Miller
Director, Victoria Multi-Cultural Society /
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