

Vancouver Writers Festival (VWF) is inviting expressions of interest to join the Board of Directors!

Deadline for Expressions of Interest: February 29, 2024.

VWF connects people to exceptional books, ideas and dialogue through year-round programming that ignites a passion for words and the world around us. We envision a world in which the transformative power of books and ideas is the foundation of an empathetic, inspired and just society.

Our board of directors is a governance and policy-focused board whose work is framed by our [constitution](#), [by-laws](#), a suite of policies, the organization's [commitment to inclusivity](#), and a recognition that systemic imbalances exist and persist in the environments we create and work within. We recognize the ongoing work of members of our community, who work in the face of great barriers to right those imbalances, and we are committed to working together and in solidarity toward the goal of a more equitable and just environment for our authors, audiences, volunteers, staff, and communities. In pursuit of these goals, we commit to utilizing our resources, identifying our internal biases, and applying our varied privileges and skills with purpose. In this process, we commit to remaining open and accountable for our mistakes.

We are grateful to the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations for their shared knowledge and guidance on these lands, as we attempt to move forward in a good way, fostering a world in which the transformative power of books and ideas is the foundation of an empathetic, inspired and just society on these unceded territories.

You can learn more about the organization at the end of this document and at our website [here](#).

Call Out: VWF Board Members

We are doing our annual call out for volunteer members to join our VWF board of directors starting May 2024. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) at which you would be nominated is scheduled for **May 7, 2024**.

We want our board to be representative of our vision, mission, and commitments.

We recognize that groups that are more diverse – in all the representations of diversity – make better decisions and are more accountable for upholding a variety of perspectives.

Board director duties

The VWF has full-time management. The Board oversees VWF's management by providing leadership guidance to management staff, by setting the VWF's strategic direction, and by making the decisions described below.

As a member of our volunteer board of directors, you will:

- Participate in decision-making in areas including (but not limited to) fiscal management evaluation, policy setting, governance and risk management, and strategic planning.

- Participate in board meetings to exercise strategic oversight over the performance of VWF, participate in visioning and strategic planning exercises, approve the work plan and budget, and monitor related financial and operational performance;
- Help steer VWF's strategic direction, integrating our commitments to inclusivity, equity, and justice with organizational sustainability in a non-profit context;
- Help guide the co-leadership team of the Executive Director and Artistic Director in advancing VWF's purposes and their work in leading the organization and the staff team
- Participate in the evaluation of the co-leadership's performance, management, and organizational activities;
- Contribute your strengths, knowledge and expertise to the board and organizational governance, strategic direction, and emerging issues and opportunities; and
- Champion VWF and advocate for the work we do and what we want to achieve.

Further details of the board's roles and responsibilities are outlined in a VWF policy. You can [request a copy of the policy](#) by emailing info@writersfest.bc.ca if it will help you decide if you are interested in joining the board.

Commitment

The VWF board currently meets in the evening (Pacific Standard Time) on the 3rd Tuesday of the month (this is subject to change) with no meeting in March, August and October (due to Festival week). Meetings are currently held in-person at the VWF office on Granville Island with a remote option for anyone who needs it.

Time commitment is an average of 10–12 hours/month.

Board directors are appointed for three-year terms, with the option to renew terms and serve a maximum of 9 consecutive years.

Each board member is also expected to serve on a committee. The current board committees are:

- Governance, Equity, and Nominating
- Finance
- Fund Development
- Human Resources

Required Qualifications

In addition to being 18 years of age or older, potential board members must meet the following criteria to demonstrate values alignment with our organization:

- Commitment to VWF's [mission and vision](#).
- Agreement with our guiding principles: accessibility, inspiration, excellence, collaboration, integrity, and creativity.
- Personal commitment to being accountable, listening, lifelong learning, self-reflection, and a willingness to apologize if needed.
- Familiarity with [VWF's programming](#).

- Skills in one or more of the following areas: finance, governance, legal, fundraising, strategic planning, non-profit management, and government relations.

Current Board Recruitment Priorities

No board of directors can, at any given time, include people with *all* the skills and people whose identities intersect every aspect of diversity but after doing an identity, skills, and competency inventory of our current board composition we have identified five specific priorities areas for this call out.

You do not need to meet all of these to be considered.

1. **We encourage people who have been historically, and continue to be, excluded from decision-making spaces to apply.** For example, none of the existing board members identify as Indigenous, Transgender or Non-Binary, or as a Person with a Disability. In recognition of the importance and value of representation as well as the richness that a more diverse group brings to an organization, we are seeking new board members whose identities may intersect in these areas.
 - In particular, the organization has been hosting an Accessibility Roundtable to adapt our offerings to be more accessible and inclusive. If you bring knowledge and/or lived experience in this area, we see this as ongoing work and seek to bring this accountability and perspective to the Board level.
2. We are also currently seeking board members who are **familiar with the current realities and contexts of sectors that are closely aligned with our work.** This includes, but is not limited to, publishing, libraries, performing arts, bookselling, teaching English/Creative Writing, etc.
3. We also know that lived experience is just one aspect of striving for justice. **We are seeking folks who have knowledge of, and training in, anti-oppression, decolonization, disability justice, equity in organizational operations, unconscious bias, and/or Indigenous ways of thinking.**
4. We are currently seeking board members who have knowledge and or experience in one or more of the following areas: **finance and accounting, governance, legal, and fundraising.**
5. While not immediately urgent, as with any not-for-profit organization, **having folks who are interested in roles such as Chair, Secretary, Committee Chair, etc. is critical for the functioning of a board.** If you think you might be a future Officer of the Board, wonderful! Likewise, individuals who are themselves able to contribute financially or encourage others to contribute can be incredibly important for the sustainability of the organization. *You are not required to make a donation although we do encourage all board members to give an amount that is meaningful to you; this could be \$20/year or \$20,000/year!*

The VWF is a not-for-profit organization and is an established member of this sector. It is beneficial, but not required, if potential board members have experience working or volunteering in or with not-for-profit organizations, charities, funding agencies, or government arts and culture departments.

Interested?

If you are a person that we are seeking based on the above information and are interested in joining the board, please prepare the following for [submission via our intake form](#).



- *Name
- Pronouns
- *Email
- *Phone number
- *A 500-word (maximum) expression of interest. Tell us about you, how you align with our values), how your background and experiences could contribute to the board, and what excited you about VWF's work.
- Optional: You can also provide us with a recent resume, but it is not required

The period for expressions of interest closes on February 29, 2024. This is to give us time to communicate with you prior to the AGM, determine who the Board will be recommending as nominees, and include information about the nominees in the AGM package of materials for VWF members.

What happens next?

Once we receive your expression of interest, it will be reviewed by the Governance, Equity, and Nominating (GEN) Committee. We may be in touch to clarify information about your submission. As allowed by our by-laws, not all people who express interest will be put forward as recommended nominees to the membership at the **AGM on May 7, 2024**. If you are not put forward as a nominee, we encourage you to respond to future call outs. We will be balancing the following considerations: total number of nominees, alignment with areas of need identified in this call out and complementing the existing composition of the board.

Regardless, we truly appreciate your interest in supporting VWF and encourage you to be a volunteer for our annual festival in October!

Want to know a little more about VWF?

The Vancouver Writers Fest (VWF) is a unique, year-round platform for literary engagement, storytelling, dialogue and cultural expression. VWF's flagship Festival is an internationally respected week-long event treasured by authors and audiences alike. With over 24,000 attending events that span generations, perspectives, and presentation style, the VWF features diverse writers both established and emerging, and intentionally selected moderators to ensure robust conversation that helps introduce our audiences to new voices and viewpoints from around the world, while also celebrating renowned and acclaimed authors and books.

Beyond Festival Week, VWF programs a free, bi-weekly series, *Incite*, in partnership with the Vancouver Public Library that runs January-June; presents internationally celebrated authors, in conversation at Special Events; programs fall and spring seasons of Writers-In-The-Classroom, working with teachers to match authors and curricular needs; facilitates the *My Roots* writing workshop for new immigrants, leveraging the power of storytelling to build connection and promote literacy and inclusion; hosts a seasonal Book Club, featuring highly acclaimed new books and authors.