

INCREASED INVESTMENT IN ONTARIO'S CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

ARTSBUILD ONTARIO'S RESPONSE TO CULTURE STRATEGY DRAFT**1. Do the Vision for culture in Ontario and the Principles to guide government support for culture reflect what is important to you? Why or why not?**

ArtsBuild is in full agreement with the response submitted by **PASO** and what has been identified collectively. More specifically, as an arts service organization dedicated to supporting the facility needs of our sector we believe that the Province of Ontario, through this culture strategy, should ensure that the capital needs of our sector are met and that the Province of Ontario invests in the capital needs of the arts sector.

ArtsBuild is concerned that these principles do not include any references to the importance that the physical structure plays in the health and vitality of arts and culture in the province.

Investment for all sized facilities is necessary to maintain the health of our arts organizations. When the needs of their physical structure are unmet or left to degrade, the results can be catastrophic for an organization, resulting in programming resources being put towards unforeseen repairs and upkeep. This has often resulted in unsafe conditions for staff, artists and collections.

Due to the removal of the Capital Fund at Ontario Trillium Foundation there is **NO** provincial level funding that supports cultural infrastructure. This leaves hundreds of organizations unable to fund maintenance, repairs, new builds and renovations their facilities - to better support their art.

We believe that the Government of Ontario can play a role in providing much needed support in the area of arts infrastructure through the investment in a capital grant. This will open up more doors to better support their infrastructure, given the limited avenues that are currently available. An investment in capital through a grant for the purposes of repairs, replacements and renovations will allow our organizations to move forward with necessary projects that support their art. We would strongly recommend that it is not a matching grant, but a full contribution, similar to the former capital grant available through the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Due to the time sensitive nature of some projects, as well as the size of the organizations, requiring matching funds that include hold backs, could impede an organizations ability to complete the project and even apply for funds. A matching grant will also take resources that are likely in place for programming and artists.

2. Do you think that the three overarching goals will help to grow and strengthen the culture sector in Ontario? Why or why not?

We believe the absence of any mention of capital investment in these goals will hinder the ability of our arts sector to be effective.

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While we are happy to see a mention of “cross-ministerial collaboration to inform a long-term plan for infrastructure” in Goal 2, the need is immediate, and we need money to be made available now to organizations across Ontario.

In the absence of a full-contribution fund that Ontario Trillium Foundation has removed due to the provincial cuts, Ontario based organizations have only their own fundraising efforts to rely on to raise funds or to matching funds to apply for Canada Cultural Spaces Fund. Ontario is one of the few provinces without a provincial capital fund. **A long term plan is necessary, but money is needed now.**

The investment in community hubs is welcome, but not realistic without an ongoing fund that can be applied to for upgrades, renovations and maintenance that are needed for any physical structure.

3. Do you have any feedback on the proposed initiatives in the document?

ArtsBuild Ontario believes that the province is not acknowledging the role it needs to play in its cultural infrastructure. Not just for large institutions but cultural facilities of all sizes. Without provincial level support organizations are expending resources they likely do not have to meet the needs of their facility, as they do not have a reliable consistent fund to turn to for necessary repairs and renovations - to support their facility and their community.

We were excited to hear about the increased investment in culture infrastructure funds to Canada Cultural Spaces Fund (CCSF) BUT without matching funds to access at a provincial level or through a provincial agency such as Ontario Trillium Foundation, many organizations will be unable to apply for CCSF.

We believe that an introduction of a capital grant from the Government of Ontario will allow our organizations, facilities and artists thrive and better support the goals and vision that are articulated in this Culture Strategy.