

January 31, 2017

PROVINCE OF ONTARIO; PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATION SUBMISSION

The Honourable Charles Sousa
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ArtsBuild Ontario is the only organization in Ontario and Canada dedicated to realizing long-term solutions for building, managing and financing the sustainable arts facilities needed in our communities. As a non-profit charitable organization, ArtsBuild provides tools, training and resources that support the development and sustainable creative spaces such as theatres, galleries, concert halls, and museums.

THE NEED

ArtsBuild Ontario has spent the past several years collecting valuable data from the arts sector on the state of their arts facility, and their needs and plans to ensure their facility is meeting their needs and remains in a state of good repair.

Our proprietary system, Bricks&Mortar, is Ontario's first and only centralized database containing vital and relevant information about the state of Ontario's arts and cultural facilities focusing on their needs and plans. It is a flexible tool that is able to expand and accommodate new information, as required – allowing organizations to update their needs and plans as they arise.

Through this database that contains information of over 400 arts and culture organizations and the needs and plans of their cultural infrastructure, 191 provided us data on how much they would need to complete their current or future capital project. Out of only 191 responses this number equates to more than \$300 million. 51% of respondents felt unsatisfied with their facilities, with 24% indicating they are in fair or poor physical condition.

We believe that the Province of Ontario can actively contribute to vitality of our arts infrastructure in Ontario by doing the following;

1. INVEST IN A REOCCURRING CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

We believe that access to a provincial capital fund for small to mid-sized arts is necessary to sustain our cultural assets provincially as well as nationally.

Ontario Trillium Foundation is currently Ontario's only capital fund. This is a \$150,000 per project fund, with a once a year deadline. Our data demonstrates that the needs of our arts facilities alone far exceed the maximum amount of \$150,000.

We are all aware of the investment made by the Federal Government into Canada Cultural Spaces Fund and infrastructure this past year. Unfortunately, in Ontario small to mid sized organizations will struggle to apply to Canada Cultural Spaces as they are unable to access a significant provincial level matching fund adequate to meet their needs.

2. INCREASE INVESTMENT INTO ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION'S CAPITAL FUND

The Capital Fund administered by the Ontario Trillium Foundation is also open to ALL non-profits, therefore arts organizations are only receiving a small portion of the Capital grant stream, as it is also supporting social, sport and community organizations for the same funds.

Decreasing the Ontario Trillium Foundation by any amount will have a detrimental affect on our arts organizations provincially. We urge the Province of Ontario, to keep the investment of \$125 million to Ontario Trillium Foundation.

3. EXPAND INFRASTRUCTURE ONTARIO LOAN PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

As arts organizations province-wide tackle meaningful and significant capital projects, they are unable to access the Infrastructure Ontario Loan Program. The ability to be able to access this fund, will enable our organizations to leverage federal and private dollars previously unavailable to them.

We are able to discuss this expansion and have previously compiled case studies to support its expansion.

As an arts service organization that is reliant on government support we urge the Province of Ontario to understand the importance of increasing the investment in the Ontario Arts Council.

4. INCREASE INVESTMENT IN ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL

Ontario Arts Council has not received an increase in over 10 years to their budget. Due to inflation, the value of their budget has been reduced significantly. As recipients of both project and operating funding we and the organizations we need to serve are impacted. We urge the Province of Ontario to reinvest in the Ontario Arts Council in a significant way, by increasing their annual budget.

As a provincially mandated organization we see the impact that the lack of capital investment is having on our facilities province wide. Without consistent and significant investment our facilities continue to age. Without the necessary upkeep and investment needed these aging facilities will deteriorate and be lost.

ArtsBuild is available to discuss any of these four points with the Province of Ontario, at your earliest convenience. We are confident that the Province of Ontario understands the urgency and necessity in these increased investments.

Thank you,



Chris Loreto
Board President



Lindsay Golds
Executive Director