

February 9, 2022

Province of Ontario; Pre-Budget Consultation Submission 2022

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy
Minister of Finance
c/o Budget Secretariat
Frost Building North, 3rd Floor
95 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario
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ArtsBuild Ontario is the only organization in Ontario dedicated to realizing long-term solutions for building, managing, and financing the sustainable creative spaces needed in Ontario communities. We are a non-profit arts service organization that provides research, training, and resources that support small-medium sized organizations with developing and managing creative spaces.

Creative spaces (like theatres, museums, galleries, etc...) are the places where arts and culture happen. Despite their importance, facilities are the most under-resourced component of arts operations. This strain was magnified throughout the pandemic with the closure and reduced operations of cultural venues across the province. With support from the Province of Ontario, arts organizations can rebuild themselves with new digital, COVID-19-safe, and sustainable infrastructure that will allow for the economic recovery of the sector.

We suggest the following recommendations:

1. Establish a permanent and cultural infrastructure fund of \$15-20 million annually

- We believe that access to a provincial capital fund for cultural infrastructure is necessary for building COVID-19-safe and digitally-forward creative spaces. This investment would support the sustainability and growth of our cultural assets in Ontario.
- Our data indicates that arts organizations in Ontario collectively need \$300 million to complete current and future capital projects.
- We recommend coordinating with the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, which provides matching funds at the Federal level. Many small to medium-sized organizations struggle to apply to this fund as there is no significant provincial level grant adequate to meet their needs.
- We are thankful for the reinstatement of the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Capital Stream – as this is the only provincial fund available for arts organizations

and their capital projects. The maximum amount awarded for this grant is \$150,000; however, our data demonstrates that the investment needed to adequately support creative spaces far exceeds this amount.

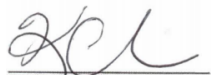
- We recommend that this fund be accessible to small to medium-sized arts organizations, to support short-term space leases (under 5 years).
- Lastly, arts organizations need support for digital infrastructure. Over the course of the pandemic, many developed digital methods for artistic production and presentation. Provincial support can mobilize the arts towards a digital future alongside creative spaces with further investment.

2. Increase the Ontario Arts Council's base budget to \$95 million annually

- Many of the arts organizations and artists we serve are supported by the Ontario Arts Council (OAC). According to the Canadian Artists Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC Ontario), the OAC would require a \$110 million base budget in 2022 in order to remain in line with 1991 investment levels. To support the post-pandemic recovery of the arts sector, further investment in the OAC is needed.

ArtsBuild Ontario is available to discuss these recommendations and collaborate on future support for creative spaces. We are confident that the province understands the necessity of these increased investments to support Ontario's cultural infrastructure and broader arts sector.

Sincerely,



Kristian Clarke
Board President



Alex Glass
Executive Director

