

Frequently asked questions (FAQ) |

2023-24

What is the Creative Spaces Mentoring Network?

The Creative Spaces Mentoring Network (CSMN) is a program that provides leaders in Ontario's arts community with space-related goals, with the unique opportunity of a one-to-one learning experience with a topic expert. Goals can include:

- Asset Management
- Construction/New Build
- Feasibility Study
- Promotions and marketing
- Renovation
- Strategic Planning

The Mentor will provide their knowledge and expertise related to the Mentee's project to further develop the skills needed to manage a capital project and creative space successfully. The 2023-24 program is the eighth iteration of the CSMN.

What are "one-to-one" meetings?

Through the CSMN program, ArtsBuild Ontario (ABO) matches Mentees who are arts and cultural leaders around Ontario with experienced Mentors from the arts or other relevant sectors, forming a mentoring team. The mentoring teams will meet for up to three hours monthly over 12 months to focus on furthering skills and knowledge related to supporting the Mentee's project, as identified by the Mentee in the application process. To respect the safety and wellbeing of Mentors and Mentees, this year's program will feature remote Mentor-Mentee meetings – online or over the phone – and they must be done in a manner that is agreeable to both the Mentor and Mentee. Should Mentor and Mentee wish to meet in person, both participants must follow provincial and regional health and

safety protocol. Additionally, ABO will conduct casual check-ins throughout the year with all participants in the program to track how their experience with the program is going, providing support to ensure meetings are taking place and to answer any questions they may have.

Resources list & webinar packages

To provide further support, ABO will provide a package of free accessible resources that offer learning opportunities in regards to creative space development. This package will include recordings of webinars as well as case studies highlighting unique creative space projects across Ontario.

How does the Creative Spaces Mentoring Network work?

ABO will pair selected Mentees with an appropriate Mentor based on the focus areas for skill development related to a creative space noted in their application. After the initial Kick-Off Webinar, mentoring teams will meet for up to three hours per month, over the course of 12 months. The mentoring team discussions are entirely confidential and will focus on specific challenges and skills identified by the Mentee at the beginning of the partnership. To ensure that the program is successful for all participants, ABO will periodically check-in with participants throughout the year.

Who is eligible to apply as a Mentee, and what materials are required for the application submission?

Leaders and managers of arts and heritage organizations within Ontario currently engaged in any facilities-related issue (either with space they are responsible for, or space they are seeking to acquire) are eligible to apply for the CSMN. To submit an application, please fulfill the following:

1. Fill out the [Application Form](#).
2. Please send a letter of support for the Mentee's participation in the program to Tatiana Doucette, Program Manager, at programs@artsbuildontario.ca.
3. Please send a 1-2 minute video detailing your name, your organization, your arts facilities plans or project, and what you would get out of the program to programs@artsbuildontario.ca. Ensure that the video is attached to the email

containing your letter of support. You can upload your video to Google Drive or Dropbox as well, but please include the link in the e-mail with your letter of support.

Questions you may have

I am the Executive Director of a gallery, but someone else is responsible for our facility. Which of us could apply?

Either is eligible to apply. Priority will be given to other applicants before awarding two mentorships to one organization.

If our organization rents a space from another facility owner, am I still eligible? If our facility is part of a larger municipal facility, am I eligible?

You do not have to own the space, but applicants should be responsible for facility-related issues (or plan to be) to apply.

How do I get a Mentor?

In your application, we ask that you be as clear as possible about the skills that you would like to develop or issues that you would like to address with your Mentor. ABO will be developing a Mentor roster with a wide range of skills. The Mentor role will be voluntary in nature for CSMN 2023-24. Our goal through this program is to match your needs with the most relevant Mentor. Your description of learning priorities – as well as your skill and knowledge needs – will help us pair you with the right Mentor.

You will have an opportunity to meet your Mentor in a casual virtual setting (over Zoom or a phone call) before committing to the partnership, to confirm that they are the best “fit.” ABO will set up these meetings during the matching process.

I plan on creating an organization for my future creative space.

Can I still apply?

Yes, if you are planning to create a non-profit organization and/or arts organization, we encourage all to apply.

Would you select any Mentor that I recommend?

If you have a Mentor in mind, please provide us with the following on your application:

- Name, organization, title and contact information
- If you have contacted this individual to be your Mentor
- How you would benefit from their partnership

We are happy to contact a suggested Mentor made by an applicant. Please keep in mind that the program does have certain requirements for participating Mentors and we cannot guarantee that your recommendation will be the final choice.

What should I do if there are conflicts in my schedule and/or my Mentor's schedule for One-to-One Meetings?

You are free to reschedule meetings as you see fit. Please remember that Mentors are able to schedule meetings for up to three hours in total per month. Should conflicts suddenly arise, be sure to contact your Mentor to reschedule. Be respectful of your Mentor's time, and come to meetings prepared to participate!

What are my expectations as a Mentor?

As a Mentor, you are expected to communicate with your Mentee and provide guidance based on your own skills and experiences, in the hopes of furthering their creative space project. Ensure that the Mentee has clearly communicated their goals for the project with you, and rest assured that ABO will match you with a Mentee whose project aligns well with your professional skills. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to ABO.

What are my expectations as a Mentee?

As a Mentee, you are expected to be honest with your goals to your Mentor, be open to feedback from them, be accountable and commit to self-development, stay accessible and engaged throughout the program, respectfully give feedback to the Mentor for what is and is not working for you, and of course to reach out to ABO if you have any questions or concerns about the program. You must also establish a level of comfortability with your Mentor to determine if it is safe for you to meet in person, following provincial and regional health and safety protocol.

Will there be an in-person component of the program?

All events for the CSMN 2023-24 program will take place in a virtual format.

I'd love to learn about participants' creative space projects!

Where can I learn more?

Mentor and Mentee bios will be shared online on the Creative Spaces Mentoring Network webpage when the program begins. We will also privately share an Excel spreadsheet with 2023-24 Mentors and Mentees which will include any information on the different creative space projects that Mentors and Mentees are comfortable with sharing.

Application requirements

Is there a deadline to apply as a Mentor?

There is no deadline to apply as a Mentor. All are welcome to apply via the [Mentor Application Form](#) at any point of the year, however, if you apply close to or during the program, you will be considered for the following 2023-24 cohort.

Is there a cost to apply as a Mentee?

There is no cost to apply for the Creative Spaces Mentoring Network. However, if selected as a Mentee and matched with a Mentor, you will be required to pay the \$150 + HST application fee.

Why do Mentee applicants need to submit a video?

Your video will help to inform ABO's decision-making by giving us a better sense of who you are! You could also make your written application stand out by drawing attention to particular issues or needs. **You do not need professional equipment to make this video;** a video made on a smart phone or web camera, for example, will do! Mentees can attach their video to their e-mail submission, or choose to upload their videos to Google Drive or Dropbox, and include the link in their application e-mail instead.

What do you consider an appropriate support letter to be?

A support letter should come from a credible figure within your community or organization who can speak to your professional role and state why you would benefit from the Creative Spaces Mentoring Network. If you serve on a Board or Committee who supports your creative space, you can ask someone from your Board or Committee to write a letter of support.

What happens after I am selected as a Mentee?

ABO will work on matching you with a Mentor. Once we have selected a Mentor based on your application, we will set up an informal phone meeting to ensure the Mentor is the right "fit" for you and your needs. Please be assured that your application information is shared only with ABO and anonymously potential Mentors. Teams should be prepared for check-ins at different points in the program. It is mandatory that mentoring teams attend the Kick Off Webinar, Mid-Program Webinar, and Wrap-Up Webinar. ABO will provide participants with other materials and support throughout the year including webinars on creative space projects.

Why do I need to attend the Kick-Off Webinar, Mid-Program Webinar, and Wrap-Up Webinar?

Preparing teams to make the best use of their time together is an important element in the success of mentoring. Teams are encouraged to develop their own working style and dynamic, but research and experience show that the more the Mentee puts into the relationship, the greater the commitment is reciprocated from the Mentor. The Kick-Off Workshop will cover best practices and help clarify shared expectations as well. Furthermore, it will provide you with an opportunity to network with other program participants and Mentors. The Mid-Point Webinar will be a brief check-in with everyone, and offer some helpful tips for mentoring in this middling point of the program. Lastly, the Closing Webinar will be both a reflective piece for how you experienced the program, and it will cover best practices on concluding (or continuing) your mentoring relationship.

Why do I need to sign a letter of agreement with ABO?

Mentoring is largely driven by Mentees. A letter of agreement helps to reinforce expectations and commitments made by both parties.

What happens if the mentoring match is not the best fit?

ABO will provide appropriate support throughout the program to ensure that the match is positive and meaningful for both the Mentor and the Mentee. We expect the Mentees to make ABO aware if the match is not working, in which case we will assist or rematch the Mentee.

Additional questions

If you have any questions about the Creative Spaces Mentoring Network that have not been covered in the above FAQ, please contact Tatiana Doucette, Program Manager, at 519-880-3670 ext. 102, or at programs@artsbuildontario.ca.