

# Frequently asked questions (FAQ) |

## 2026

### **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.

### **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. Mentors and Mentees are welcome to meet online, over the phone, or in person, if convenient to both participants. 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, provide support to ensure meetings are taking place and to answer any questions they may have.

## **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 6 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 a space or are seeking to acquire a space) are eligible to apply for CSMN.

## **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 am I matched with 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. 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. We ask that the application focus on your needs for the year you will be participating in the program.

## **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.

## **What are my expectations as a Mentor?**

As a Mentor, you are expected to 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. ABO will do our best to 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.

## **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 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 \$175 + HST application fee.

## **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 with 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, Mid-Point and Wrap Up webinars?**

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 Webinar 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.

## **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.