

April 2023



canadian  
dance  
assembly

assemblée  
canadienne  
de la danse

## Canadian Performing Arts Workers Resilience Fund (CPAWRF) - Final Report

by Kate Beresford

The Canadian Dance Assembly (CDA) was awarded \$3.88 million dollars in April 2022 as part of the Canadian Performing Arts Workers Resilience Fund (CPAWRF), administered by Heritage Canada. The CPAWRF provided funds to 4 different organizations across Canada with connections to different areas of the performing arts community (see below), as a way to provide some financial relief following the challenges of making a living during the COVID19 pandemic:

- Canadian Dance Assembly (CDA) - Performing dance artists
- The Actors Fund of Canada (AFC) - Theatre sector and technical disciplines
- Unison Fund - Music sector
- Fondations des Artistes (FdA) - All sectors and disciplines within Québec

Each successful applicant was eligible for a one time payment of up to \$2500, and CDA decided in consultation with the Advisory Committee<sup>1</sup> that all payments would be \$2500 without exception. While CDA was initially awarded \$3.88 million in funding, in December 2022 we received a supplement of \$180,000, and a second supplement in February 2023 of \$1 million dollars. This allowed us to increase our initial target of supporting 1510 dancers, to 1964 dancers.

CDA's main goals for this project were developed in consultation with the Advisory Committee and focused on equity and accessibility. It was decided to prioritize those who were hardest hit by the pandemic, and those who are chronically marginalized : IBPOC, racialized people, 2SLGBTQIA+, deaf people, people with disabilities, official minority language speakers, people living in rural and underserved areas, and to do so with an intersectional approach to best serve dancers deserving equity and access. It was also a priority to show trust and honour to the dance community, and try to eliminate feelings of

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<sup>1</sup> Zorya Arrow, Heath Berkholz, Amy Hampton, Leelee Oluwatoyosi Eko Davis, Calla Lachance, Liliona Quarmyne, Bobbi Westman, Ziyian Kwan, Charles Smith, Jessica Wadsworth

shame that often come with requesting financial aid. CDA aimed to do this by being transparent, and removing as many barriers as possible to access the funds. Finally, as one of CDA's core values is care for the dance community as well as ourselves, we also let these values guide our processes and decision making.

### **Application Process Results**

Below are a number of tables that show the overall Resilience Fund statistics, broken down by gender, region, equity deserving communities, and intersectionality.

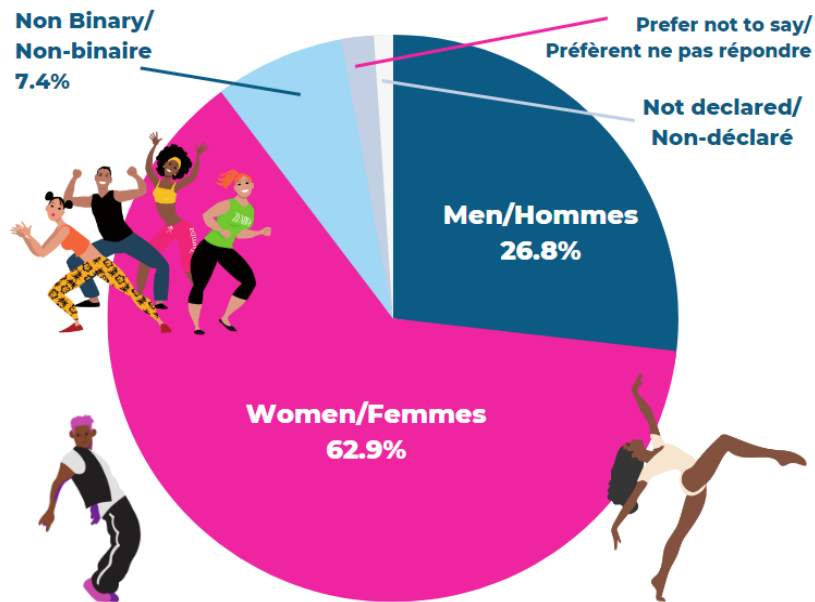
CDA did not request information about what kind of dance applicants perform, which in hindsight is a question we would have included on the application form.

#### **Overall application results**

<b># of applications received # d'applications reçues</b>	<b>2311</b>
<b># of applications approved # d'applications approuvées</b>	<b>1964</b>
<b>Amount given by person Montant alloué par personne</b>	<b>\$2500</b>
<b>Total amount distributed Montant total distribué</b>	<b>\$4,910,000</b>

CDA received the bulk of applications to the Resilience Fund early on in the project, with a slight upswing in the last quarter. We attribute this upswing to the \$1 million supplement received from Heritage Canada in February 2023, and the final promotional push by CDA and its partners to let dancers know this was their last chance to apply.

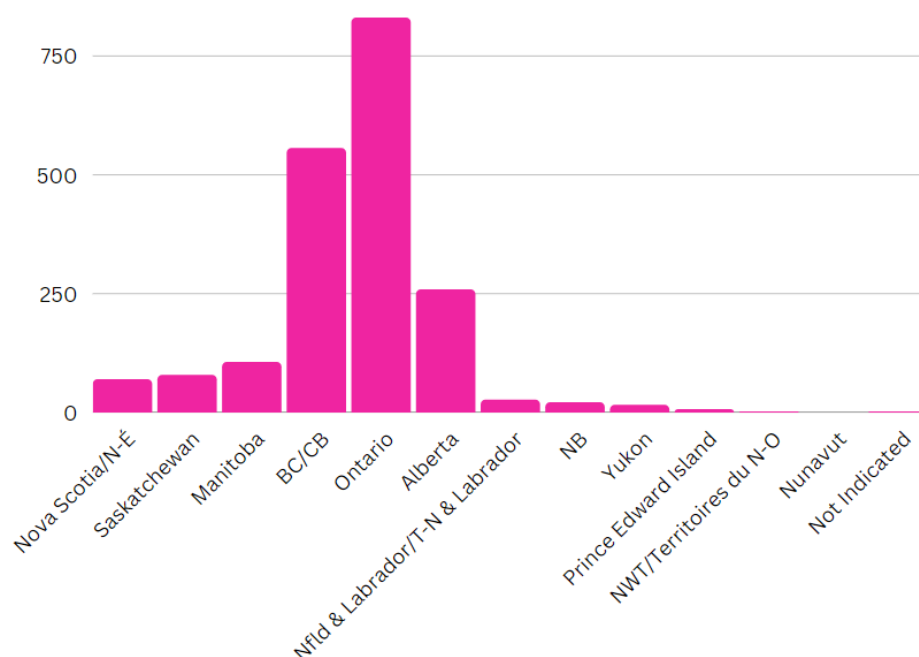
## Application Results by Gender



Overall, the majority of applicants were women (62.9%), followed by men (26.8%), then Non-Binary people (7.4%). 1.8% of applicants preferred not to identify their gender, and the gender of 1.1% applicants was not included in any of these groups. Some of the manual entries include Trans Woman, bi-gender, multigender, gender fluid, and gender queer.

The rate of applications by gender remained steady throughout the whole application period.

## Application Results by Province and Territories



\*Quebec dancers were served by La Fondation des artistes du Québec.

### Application Results by Equity Deserving Communities

Applicants from Equity Deserving Communities (Self-Identified)	Total
Indigenous	198
Racialized	278
Minority Language Speaker	94
2SLGBTQIA+	616
Deaf	16
People with Disabilities	228
Afrodescendant - Black	293
Asian	344
South East Asian	148
Middle Eastern/North African	50
Latin American Descent	106
Living in Rural or Underserved Area	110
Not Listed	105

\*Note the Indigenous category includes statistics we collected from Métis, Inuit, and First Nations applicants.

Not Listed manual entries include Plus Size/Fat Performer, Neurodivergent, Living with chronic pain, PTSD, ADHD, Mental Health Disorders, Survivor of Domestic Violence, Muslim, Legally Blind, and Multiracial, amongst others.

CDA also attempted to prioritize applicants from less identified equity deserving groups using our equity scale, which will be discussed further in the Review Process section.

### Intersectional Application Results

Number of Equity Deserving Communities applicants belong to Nombre de communautés méritantes d'équité déclarées par les candidat.es	# of applicants no. d'applicant.e.s
0	451 (23%)
1	837 (42.6%)
2	410 (20.9%)
3	160 (8.1%)
4	77 (3.9%)
5	21 (1.1%)
6	7 (0.4%)
7	1 (0.1%)

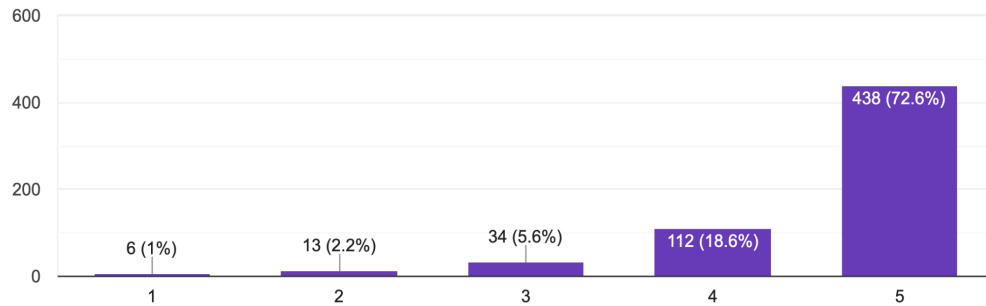
Of our successful 1,964 applicants, only 451 (23%) do not identify as belonging to any equity deserving communities. The largest number of applicants identify as belonging to one equity deserving community (42.6%), with the numbers getting lower as more groups are identified. There were 7 applicants (0.4%) who identified as belonging to 6 equity deserving communities, and 1 applicant who identified as belonging to 7 (0.1%).

### Survey Results

As a method of measuring CDA's success in achieving our goals, we circulated a Dancer Feedback Survey to all applicants to the Resilience Fund. Below are the results to the questions we asked relating to the application process.

### Was the general information easy to find ?

603 responses



\*1 = Not at all, 5 = Very

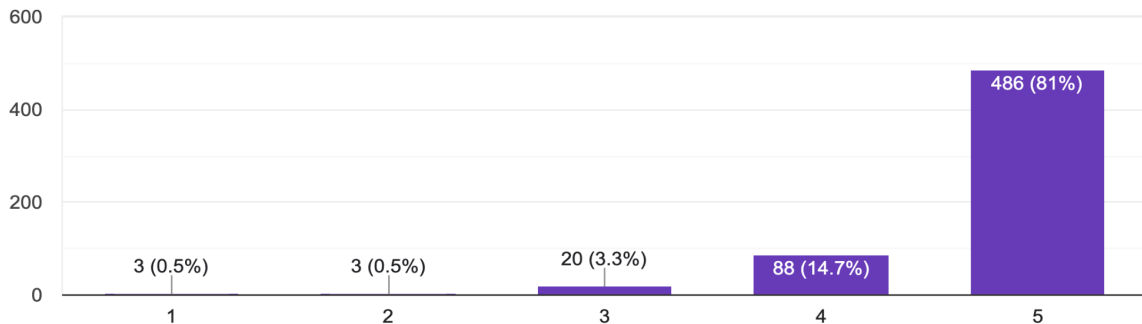
These answers show that the large majority of respondents (72.6%) felt the general information was easy to find. Additional comments from respondents (below) lead us to believe that word of mouth was the most common way people learned about the Resilience Fund, and some felt more promotion would have been useful.

- *Lots of sharing from friends on social media helped*
- *I actually found out about it through a friend who subscribes to your information.*
- *Yes! it was widely shared in a number of social media accounts that I follow and websites that I visit regularly and so it reached me in a way that felt natural and organic.*
- *I wish I would've know about it through something other than word of mouth. It was INCREDIBLY helpful and I would've been very upset if I had missed this opportunity which could've easily happened if I didn't have that one conversation from another artist that applied.*
- *It was all laid out very clearly and simply.*
- *I was sent the link to check it out so I can't say whether it was difficult or easy to find*
- *Several search engines queries were required to find the right page with the right link.*
- *I wouldn't say it was easy to find, but it's more like a "if you know then you know" kind of thing.*
- *Amazing promotion that helped reach a lot of artists*
- *Found on social media and then saw it again through friends! Was so helpful that I would love to have seen it even more accessible as I know tons more people would benefit.*
- *I did not hear about this program until the last min, but when I did, the information was very clear and helpful!*
- *I looked earlier in 2023 and your site mentioned that the fund was no longer available. Thankfully, an email was sent -very appreciative of that email otherwise I wouldn't have applied.*
- *I had a question and I was directed very easily.*

- *There weren't enough advertisements to allow the public knowledge the scholarship existed.*

#### Was the application form accessible ?

600 responses



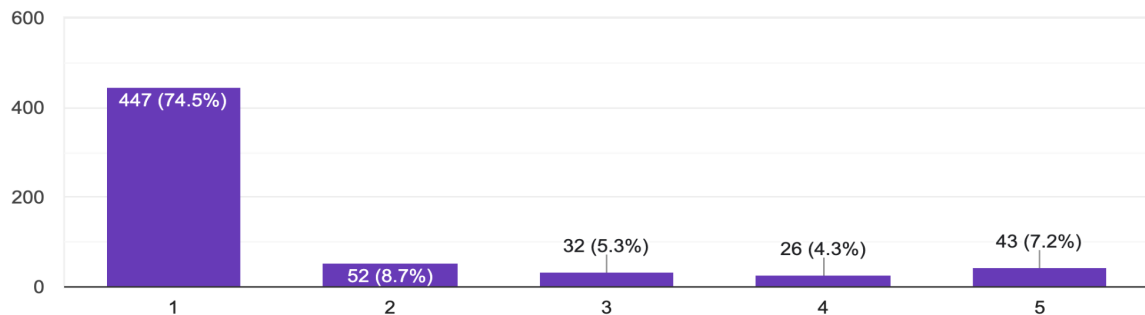
\*1 = Not at all, 5 = Very

These answers show that the large majority of respondents (81%) felt the application form was very accessible. Additional comments from respondents (below) lead us to believe that overall CDA was successful in creating an accessible application form.

- *Yes, I am neurodivergent and often have trouble with forms, I was able to fill this one out without requesting any support, I understood it and felt confident in my application*
- *It was one of the easiest to navigate and intuitive application forms I have filled out!*
- *I don't have very complicated accessibility needs*
- *Really really appreciated how short and straightforward it was.*
- *I found it difficult due to my neurodivergencies but the contact information to get help applying was very easy to find and navigate and made the process so much easier and less stressful*
- *As an Indigenous Artist I appreciated the option of oral application process.*
- *Love the different options of submitting an application!*
- *I think we needed more space to provide pictures and videos and all to support the application. I remember having some pictures ready to upload but not being able to do so.*
- *I didn't require accessibility accommodations to applying so I can't speak to this. The form was clearly laid out, however, and easy to understand.*
- *Very accessible -seemingly too easy compared to hoops you had to jump through for other covid-related funding*

### Did you experience any barriers to applying ?

600 responses



\*1 = None at all, 5 = Many

These answers show that the majority of respondents (74.5%) felt they did not experience barriers to applying. Multiple respondents identified the closures of the application portal as a barrier, and a few mentioned being hesitant to apply because of various social and personal factors. One respondent mentioned that the need to include an artist's resume was a barrier for some Indigenous applicants, as they did not understand the need for one. This highlights to CDA that while we have taken many steps towards removing barriers to this funding, overall it is still a colonial exercise.

- *This was the quickest, easiest fund I've ever received and was so appreciated. I am still shocked and grateful for this important support that came at a great time for me.*
- *I had to complete application with computer and not phone.*
- *barrier affecting the application is to know the support program and where to find it.*
- *The fund was closed for a period of time but other than that it was good.*
- *No not really, I always have a certain amount of doubt and insecurity, and I did make the error of applying twice, but overall the experience was MUCH smoother than most of the forms, applications etc I try to do. For example, I have never had a successful grant in Canada, because the application process is too difficult for me.*
- *Support material format was unclear*
- *The only barrier was the brief hold on applications but beyond that it was fine!*
- *The initial process was too laborious for me, however, as previously mentioned, I found the contact to help me very quickly and easily and the process instantly became so much more accessible to me once I had that.*
- *Personally, I did not. I did share with community of dancers. This was tough for a handful of the Indigenous Applicants who had never created an Artist Resume and what that looked like or understood why having one is important so they ended up not submitting altogether.*
- *As I mentioned above, I waited a very long time because, given that over the past number of years I have identified primarily as a choreographer (although I have also*

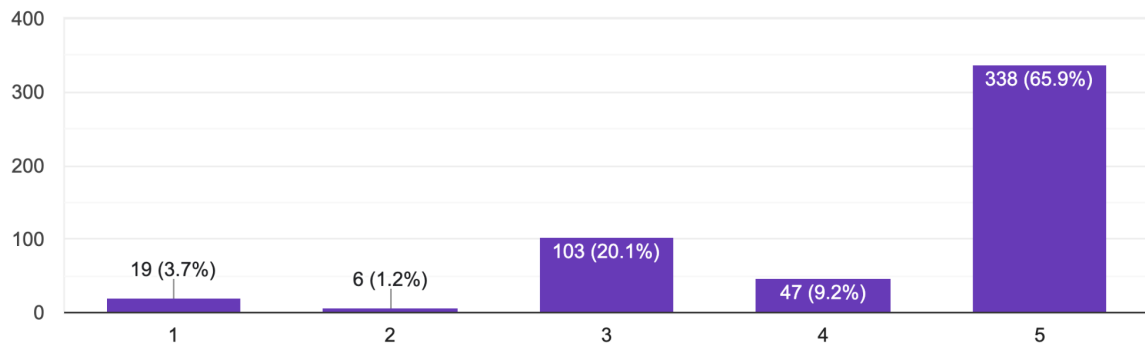


*danced), I was told multiple times I had to go to AFC. But their application was so complicated and involved, so I took a chance and came back to CDA and made my application. I was very relieved to discover that a) I totally qualified as a dancer, and b) the application was very fast and easy. THANK YOU for making something work for the artists.*

- *other than the socially imposed barrier of not feeling deserving of receiving assistance because I'm an artist and should "do it for the love of it"...*

Were appropriate accommodations made if you needed support or experienced a barrier to applying ?

513 responses



\*1 = Not at all, 5 = Very Supportive

These responses show that the majority of respondents (65.9%) felt appropriate accommodations were made if they experienced a barrier when applying for the Resilience Fund. 20 % of respondents answered with a 3 on the scale, and after reviewing the additional comments, we see many wrote “N/A”, or “Does Not Apply”, as they did not require additional support. The amount of responses received for this question (513) is also lower than most other questions, which could be attributed to the fact that some respondents did not feel this question applied to them.

- *I can't comment as I didn't require assistance*
- *Not relevant*
- *No accommodations were required*
- *I didn't need any support*
- *I'm not sure about that because I didn't need support, but when I made my error, people were quick to respond and help me feel ok about my error.*
- *Did not seek accommodations, but what support was initially offered was appreciated.*
- *Any emails I made for questions were always answered and supported*
- *I didn't experience any barriers. I would have if it was time consuming or asked for more additional documents, but it was great as it was.*
- *I cannot thank you enough for the extra help*

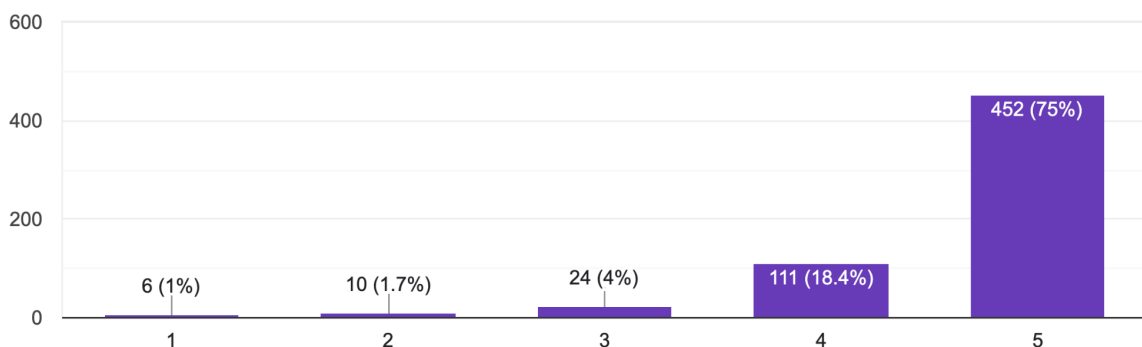
- *Very supportive and I am ever grateful the individual or group of individuals that stood up for this ongoing barrier and making a change in the system. Specifically in the Arts*
- *As a neurodivergent person, the application process was confusing, extremely anxiety inducing.*
- *I emailed with additional questions and received prompt and helpful responses*
- *One phone call was able to fix the situation*
- *my time sensitivity needs were met swiftly and with consideration*
- *Very kind, prompt and helpful email correspondence*
- *Yes, the process was quick, relieving, and non-invasive.*

## **Review Process Results**

This section includes the results to questions we asked in our Dancer Feedback Survey relating to the review process.

**Was the eligibility criteria understandable?**

603 responses



\*1 = Not at all, 5 = Very

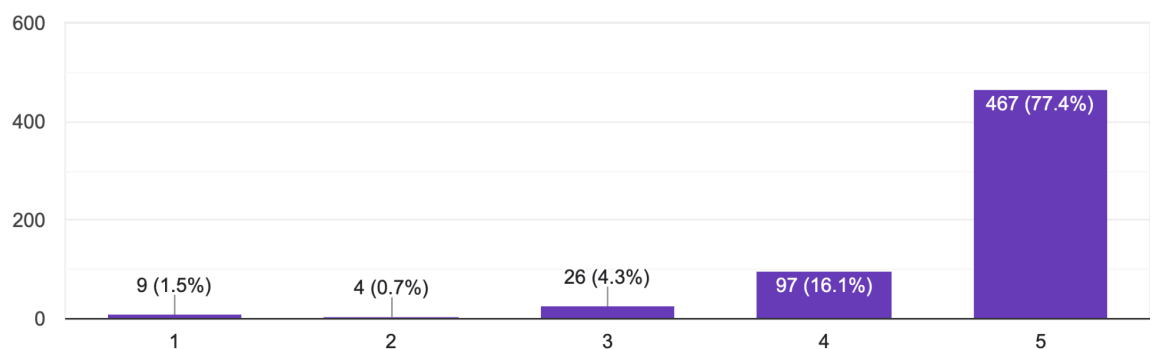
The results to this question show 75% of respondents felt the eligibility criteria was understandable. Some of the additional comments show there was confusion around the choreographer vs performer distinction, which we were aware of and managed to the best of our ability. Also, dance teachers were sometimes confused about why they were not eligible for this support.

- *Yes, I read and understood the eligibility criteria.*
- *This eligibility criteria gave the impression that I must be a dancer who has at least 2 years of professional experience as a performer, and recommended I apply to the AFC as it caters more to choreographers, however when I did so, I was once again rejected and told that as a dancer, I should apply to the Resilience Fund, which just sent me back around in a loop.*

- *From the "get-go", it was clearly stated that the fund was reserved to dancers closely related to performers active in the arts industry.*
- *In my experience, as I identify as a dancer/ dance artist in Toronto, it is mostly impossible to solely work as a performing dancer, you are also a teacher, a facilitator, a producer and administrator, a maker and choreographer, all or some of these things... and yet at the core to any of the those things, you are dancer and dance artist... I was sad to hear some colleagues were rejected because their status was more represented as a teacher or a choreographer...Holding self value as a dancer is hard and questioned all the time, and it is further hard when organization that rep the profession are evaluating it. Self doubt and imposter syndrome is there... Many dance artists I know are so dedicated to their work, and hold other jobs and roles for survival and contribute and uphold the role it self as the doers, and inside.*
- *I recall it being a bit specific to the "performer" role of a dancer. Dancers generally need to do several roles to stay adequately employed (choreographer, dancer, teacher, mentor, etc), so that was a little confusing.*
- *Just a little confusion to dancing during the pandemic, but was cleared up in an email*
- *I originally thought I would not be eligible given there was an emphasis for dance artists who identify primarily as choreographers should apply to the AFC, which was a ridiculously complicated application and a barrier for me to access. So I chose to come back to CDA to apply, as I am also a dancer. I think in the first place all dance artists should have been applying to CDA, regardless of whether they are primarily working as dancers, choreographers, or rehearsal directors at the given moment. We have a relationship with CDA, we are dance artists, we know where we belong. It made no sense to send choreographers elsewhere.*
- *I appreciated the openness of the criteria! As a former student visa holder, it's so difficult to access resources under this status, so to see that this wasn't a restriction was so welcome!*
- *So many of us fulfill so many roles as dance artists. To say that performing is your first priority/main gig, is hard for many of us who may WANT that but in reality we do so much to support our work as performers. I found it tricky to identify with the eligibility criteria, even though ultimately I was eligible after asking for clarification.*
- *Yes, the eligibility was clearly stated and felt very inclusive.*
- *i didn't feel i was in enough financial trouble and didn't want to take away from others that needed it more. I'm very grateful for the fund and it will definitely help me out.*
- *This funds are only for performers but, being a teacher behind a performer doesn't count.*

### Did the eligibility criteria seem fair ?

603 responses



\*1 = Not at all, 5 = Very

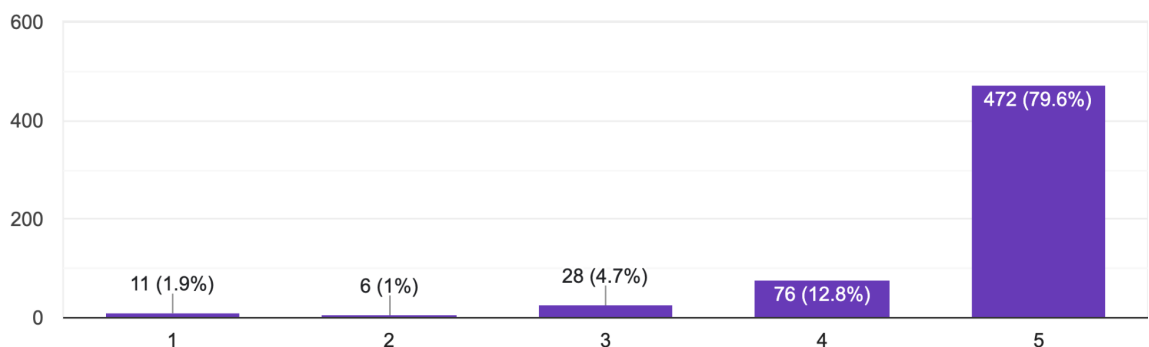
77% of applicants who responded to this question felt the eligibility criteria was fair. Some additional comments mention groups missing from the list of equity deserving communities, but there was a space on the application form to enter any equity groups not listed, which CDA included in our overall statistics. There were also a few comments from respondents who disagreed with prioritizing equity deserving communities for the fund.

- *It did seem fair, however I think there were other groups that were hit hard during the pandemic that could have been included in the priority list. I.e. single parents, single people (only one income)*
- *I wondered about the absence of any mention of older artists, as a priority group*
- *I felt that it was and I was pleased when there was another announcement made later focusing on artists who were based in more remote locations like Northern Canada and Eastern Canada.*
- *It was nice to see all backgrounds being represented, but also seemed to be biased towards those of certain communities. The fund was supposed to help dancers affected by covid restrictions. However, it was then fairly biased towards specific dancers of certain backgrounds being more eligible than a dancer who still may have been severely affected but not fitting into one of the categories*
- *Some of the work dancers do is blurry in terms of roles but I believe the flexibility in the application criteria was enough to account for that.*
- *I initially didn't receive the funding because I am not a Canadian Citizen but I can legally work in Canada. But after the matter was brought to the organizations attention they went above and beyond to rectify the situation and eliminate the barrier not just for me but for so many other dancers in my position*

- *I feel that if you are a professional dancer producing work, the eligibility criteria was fair. It was refreshing to be trusted that your work had merit.*
- *It seemed strange that the language made it clear that there was a preference towards minorities, meaning people were incentivized to try to fit into minority groups. For example, identifying as LGBTQ was suddenly of financial benefit. Seems strange to put a price tag on someone's sexual activity (or lack thereof).*
- *I struggle with this question. It was clear that a policy-driven government agenda was behind the eligibility and assessment criteria (in terms of prioritizing equity seeking groups). While I happen to align with many of the values embedded into that decision, I also know that a lot of people who needed support were left out because they didn't feel the assessment criteria were in their favour (many of them didn't even apply for instance when applications were being encouraged from provinces other than Ontario)... and yet there seems to be money leftover/unallocated as the application is still open. Do I think that is somehow fair in the grand scale of history? Yes. Does it feel right in the moment? Not really.*

Was a response to your application received in a reasonable amount of time?

593 responses



\*1 = Not at all, 5 = Very

The answers to this question show that 79.6% of respondents felt they received responses to their applications within a reasonable amount of time. CDA aimed to have all applications reviewed and a decision sent to the applicants within 21 days of receiving the application. This was more of a challenge in the early days when the volume of applications was very high, but became more attainable as time passed and the rate of applications slowed down. There was a longer than we would have liked delay returning decisions on applications in December and January, as we waited on information from Heritage Canada about a possible funding supplement.

We kept in mind our goal to remain transparent, and communicate with the applicants to keep them informed about the situation and revised timelines.

- *I was not sure I would receive the funding as I did not fit into the priority groups, but I was very pleased that I did and the money really helped. It came much faster than I expected.*
- *I can't remember 100% but I think that it all happened in about the time they said it would originally which feels very good, usually things take longer than people say they will. So this was nice because I got the result and money was deposited and people responded to my email all in about the times I expected.*
- *Honestly it was so fast! Thank you*
- *It was exceedingly efficient! I was pleasantly surprised to receive my funds much sooner than expected as well.*
- *I hear back in 7 days from sending in my application.*
- *Yes, I was surprised and very happy when they made me aware of a missing area of critical information. So I re-sent my application to include the information I left out. It's difficult working entirely depending on myself so the ability to receive feedback is critical for me sometimes as an artist and performer; as I am not entirely familiar with the lexicon and intricate culture of various organizations.*
- *It was delayed but I didn't mind waiting and I was provided an update.*
- *Could have been a little faster; although I understand the holidays were a factor*
- *Applied beginning of December just received the funds.*
- *Even when it took a little longer to get the funds, staff kept me updated about it and the money did come when they promised it would.*
- *I appreciated receiving notification of the delay or any unexpected wait times and felt very informed in the time line process.*

### **Payment Process Results**

In total, CDA issued 1,964 payments of \$,2500 each, totalling \$4,910,000.00. Only two applicants required accommodations for disability reasons, and for each of them we broke the payments down into 5 monthly payments of \$500.

We did not ask specific questions on the Dancer Feedback Survey about the payment process, but some comments about it did show up in responses to other questions. The main themes that emerged were questions about the disability support we offered, and issues with the Jotform.

- *There was a sentence on the application form around persons who receive ongoing disability support that I found to be ambiguous/opaque*

- *My information for the deposit didn't go through so I ended up calling and giving my banking information over the phone.*
- *Complications submitting form due to same home address as sibling*
- *My payment form did not go through the first time, and then I was unable to resubmit the form. Luckily I received help after contacting the CDA via email and all went through very promptly.*
- *completed the banking information on my phone instead of a laptop, but easily was able to email and get everything figured out!*
- *Difficulty accessing direct deposit page*
- *I wasn't sure how to supply the void cheque and I was responded immediately by the staff.*

## Conclusion

CDA successfully distributed \$4,910,000.00 to 1,964 dancers across Canada within 9 months. The processes we built allowed us to not only receive and review applications, and then distribute funding in a short time frame, but they also allowed us to also prioritize dancers belonging to equity deserving communities. We focused on removing the barriers people often face when applying for funding, and while we managed to make the form and overall application process as accessible as possible, we were still working within a colonial government structure.

We did face some challenges, as expected with any project of this size, and overall we are happy with how we managed them. We approached each situation individually, and assessed the best course of action based on the specific circumstances that surrounded them (ex. Choreographer vs. performer, fraudulent applications, etc.).

Overall the majority of the feedback we received was positive, and dancers were extremely thankful for this support after the challenges they faced with COVID19. One recurring theme we noticed in our correspondence with dancers and in our Dancer Feedback Survey, was that more support is needed. While this fund provided some temporary relief, many dancers let us know how difficult it is to make a living as an independent artist.

- *We should have more funds like these for independent artists*
- *If you guys could do another funding for dancers it would be really helpful.*
- *This would be an amazing resource available at least once a year, regardless of COVID. For artists who are financially independent but who don't necessarily have access to intergenerational wealth, insurance policies or benefits in the event of emergency situations like housing crisis/displacement, medical emergencies (self/dependent/pet), death/bereavement/grief, unemployment periods or employment loss and I'm sure a myriad of other reasons. Within performance that is considered "concert", we just get paid less and receive less benefits than others who are also considered "experts" within a field. This feels like it could be an important and valuable resource to help fill that gap.*
- *I really appreciated the funds and I hope the support for performers is ongoing, as our work is still being impacted by Covid*



- *Please provide this funding again in the fall/winter. The recovery from the last couple years is going to take a bit more to make ends meet especially with all the inflation.*

Our goals of removing barriers, being transparent, and showing care for our community are difficult to measure quantitatively, but here are some final words from dancers who received the Resilience Fund.

- *This means the world to me and my journey to become housed. Feeling SO grateful to the organisation for bidding on our behalf to get this support to help so many of us who are struggling.*
- *I thank-you from the bottom of my heart for providing and facilitating this assistance for dancers! I'm so grateful to receive this funding. Thank-you for making the application process low-barrier and accessible to dancers in remote areas.*
- *Thank you for giving me the opportunity to further my support in the traditional form of myself and my family in making it easier to be able to apply the funding in many way, shape, and forms of applying to our indigenous way of life.*
- *I was deeply grateful and relieved to receive this support. I'm so appreciative of all those that came together to make this possible, it's no small feat, thank you. It also brought up (again) the unjust treatment of arts work overall and while my gratitude is not in question, I'm frustrated that we would need this kind of support in the first place.*
- *I can't thank you enough for this!! The application was fast, easy and accessible and the funds were greatly appreciated. I am officially working again in the professional arts after a 2 year pandemic hiatus and the funds helped make that transition possible!!*
- *Just that I am EXTREMELY grateful for the support and feel really really lucky and cared for, recognized and appreciated and this doesn't happen often for me, so thank you!*
- *Miigwech for the financial support!*
- *Thank you for going up and beyond for artists in situations like myself. I love what I do and I wish barriers wouldn't be in so much places for artists, for immigrants who can legally work in Canada. Hopefully these barriers can change Art and Art opportunities is not meant to be limited to the world.*
- *Thank you so much for making this the easiest application I have ever submitted. I felt seen and supported. With deep gratitude. It was so nice to receive the support.*
- *I can not be more grateful for the teams work on this -- it was essential support and the process was deeply respectful and kind -- absolutely flawless application and overall management of this very vital and "real" support.*
- *Thank you for offering access to this fund with efficiency, generosity and community-based ambition!*
- *It's been a very appreciated support, I come from Mexico and I had never had a support like this and knowing that it supported so many artists is really touching and inspiring about the support dancers can have in this country. Thank you for all the hard work behind this funding!*
- *"I wish I could take you out for Show and Tell!" I wish that all people, and all processes, in this world would be as caring, kind, and compassionate, and as*



*well-organized and timely, as you and this are and have been ... Thank you, thank you, thank you all, so very much : - ))*

### **CDA's team**

Karla Etienne, Executive Director

Kate Beresford, Project Coordinator

Wendy Lu, Administrative agent

Valerie Bah, Madison Robinson (DUO), Communication Managers

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