



canadian
dance
assembly

assemblée
canadienne
de la danse

**Pre-Budget 2024 Submission
To the Standing Committee on Finance**

August 4th, 2023

Canadian Dance Assembly

Recommendations

Canadian Heritage

- \$5 million to the Canadian Arts Training Fund (CATF) to provide equitable support for professional skill training as proposed by the Canadian Art Coalition.
- \$3 million to offer micro-grants to independent performing dancers to respond to their ongoing financial precarity and income instability.
- \$29 million to the Canadian Arts Presentation Fund (CAPF) to meet the adaptation and growth of the live performance sector including dance, as proposed by the Canadian Art Coalition.
- \$16 million to the Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage (BCAH) program to welcome communities to local live events as proposed by the Canadian Art Coalition.
- \$54 million to the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund (CCSF) to reverse the deterioration of Canada's rehearsal, creation and presentation infrastructure, to make them sustainable, safe, accessible, and modernized for artists, arts workers and audiences as proposed by the Canadian Art Coalition.

Canada Council for the Arts

- \$140 million to permanently increase the Canada Council for the Arts' granting budget to \$500 million annually to increase funding equity, transparency and innovation as proposed by the Canadian Art Coalition.

Employment and Social Development Canada

Continue the modernization of Employment Insurance for self-employed and gig workers, with particular attention paid to the unique dynamics of Canadian arts and culture. We recommend that government pays the employer's contribution on dancers' contracts and on income earned from grants. An income-replacement program should be also developed, in the case of short term income relief needed due to injury, inconsistent work throughout the year, emergency leave, etc.

The Canadian Dance Assembly

The CDA exists to facilitate the dynamic exchange of information relevant to Canadian professional dance of all forms and aesthetics. It strives to cultivate a strong national voice for Canadian professional dance and to support the development of resources for this field of artistic expression. It is the members of the Canadian Dance Assembly, through their activities, experience and participation, who provide the dynamism and synergy that make the organization vital in the Canadian arts milieu.

We represent a membership of 600 dance organizations and individuals; alongside our provincial partners, CDA has a global reach to a dance community of approximately 3000 arts workers. The Canadian Dance Assembly is happy to participate in the pre-budget process offered by the Standing Committee on Finance.

Federal pre-budget consultations 2024

Micro-grants

In Canada, the median income for dance artists was \$15,800 in 2016, i.e. 64% below that of the average workforce¹.

The profession of professional dance artists involves a very high degree of invisible, unpaid and uninsurable work. This is a major obstacle to artists' access to a social safety net.

Canadian professional dancers are the lowest-paid professional artists in the country. Yet they proudly represent our nation around the globe and act as inspiring cultural ambassadors, considered to be leaders in the world.

In 2021, the overall labour force rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, but not for self-employed artists, which remained 12% lower in 2021 than in 2019².

Between contracts and shows, physical training is daily and essential to their careers. What's more, to maintain a professional level of performance, dancers must resource themselves to consult health care professionals on a regular basis in order to properly attend to their bodies' needs, which are their main instrument.

The CDA was able to distribute \$4,910,000 in direct assistance to 1,963 independent dancers in less than nine (9) months under the CPAWRF from

¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/14-28-0001/2020001/article/00014-fra.htm>

² 3 Hill Strategies. Artists in the Pandemic: Recent and Long-Term Labour Force Trends. Feb 2022.

Canadian Heritage, prioritizing Access and Equity. The dancers shared how this financial support was not only useful and necessary, but should be renewed and extended given the structural difficulties they face. A one time payment of \$2,500 can really only sustain an artist in need of financial support for a month, as the average price to rent is now around \$2,002 as of April 2023 in Canada³. Consistent and long term support throughout the year is needed.

Income-replacement program

If dance artists had access to an income-replacement scheme such as the one in France, they would be able to secure their career paths more securely and more easily. The intermittent entertainment workers' program is financed by employer contributions and the contributions of artists, who benefit from a presumption of salaried status, and thus enjoy the same social and economic rights as employees in other sectors.

Rehearsal spaces for dance

One of the crucial issues for artistic infrastructures in dance are rehearsal spaces. Dancers can't work in their home. For example, in Ontario, less than 5% of spaces are purpose-built dance rehearsal spaces⁴. Few dance rehearsal spaces are outside of the major city centres, and several dance specific spaces closed down during the pandemic, with no replacement. There is no funding specifically allocated to supporting dance groups with access to rehearsal spaces. Due to a lack of support around the creation and research phase, dancers often pay out of pocket to develop a work that can then be submitted for funding. There are problems of affordability, accessibility and inclusivity. The average hourly fee for spaces in Ontario is \$42 per hour, almost double the average fee the community says it can afford to pay (average of \$22 per hour)⁵. Dance rehearsal spaces are often not financially or physically accessible. The dance sector needs safe rehearsal spaces that can accommodate dancers with diverse needs and culturally diverse practices⁶.

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<https://www.ctvnews.ca/business/rent-across-canada-climbs-to-20-per-cent-above-pandemic-lows-report-1.6429496#:~:text=The%20average%20rental%20property%20cost,%242%2C002%20as%20of%20April%202023.>

⁴ Dance Umbrella Ontario, *Research Study and Needs Assessment on Dance Rehearsal Spaces in Ontario, 2022*

⁵ Idem

⁶ Idem

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