



canadian  
dance  
assembly

assemblée  
canadienne  
de la danse

**Written Submission for the Government of Canada's  
Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of Budget 2025**

August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024

Canadian Dance Assembly

## Recommendations

1. That the Government of Canada permanently allocate at least 1% of its overall spending towards arts, culture, and heritage as recommended by the Canadian Arts Coalition. As part of this allocation, we recommend an additional, permanent investment of \$270 million into the arts, culture, and heritage sectors, via:
  - \$140 million to the Canada Council for the Arts
  - \$130 million to the Department of Canadian Heritage

## The Canadian Dance Assembly

The Canadian Dance Assembly 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 over 100 dance organizations and 500 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 2025

#### **Recommendation : \$140 million allocation to Canada Council for the Arts**

We recommend that the Government of Canada allocate \$140 million in permanent funding to the Canada Council for the Arts. We believe that this investment will mitigate the emerging crisis arising from the decisions on core grants in 2025-2026 and sustain the whole ecosystem of the dance sector.

We are therefore in favour of devoting the \$140 million to increasing the funding envelope for the Canada Council, thereby enabling a stronger injection towards existing and new deserving core clients, many of whom are pillars in the dance sector. This increase would also provide meaningful support for touring, which, in many respects, functions as a core revenue stream necessary to sustain essential production activities that keep companies active and cultural workers and artists employed. A stronger investment would also result in bolstered creation and production grants to individual artists. We firmly recommend that Canada Council for the Arts maintain its focus on equity, social justice and access.

#### Importance of Core Funding

Canada Council for the Arts funding is the sole financial support system of Canada's dance ecosystem. For many whose primary federal public funder is the Canada Council for the Arts, core funding allocated in recent years did not include adjustments for inflation, and this upcoming year will bring intense instability as

organisations apply for renewal. Our members, across regions, languages, backgrounds, and genres are clear on this issue. Our sector is experiencing a crisis in real time, and the Government of Canada must step in with urgency to fill the gap. Core funding has lost value by an average of 22% since the last national evaluation in 2017 due to inflation. These grants represent fundamental, core operating funds, which underpin the business plans and growth of dance organizations across Canada.

Arts Organisations who receive core funding are pillars of support and offer employment opportunities for many cultural workers (finance managers, administrators, communication directors, fundraisers, etc). With any given dance productions, there are many artists employed, including choreographers, dancers, dramaturgs, costume designers, musicians, music composers, rehearsal directors, technical directors, light designers, production managers, etc. We are starting to see growth in jobs in the culture sector. In the first quarter of 2024, the number of jobs in the cultural sector in Canada grew by 0.3%: the first quarter of growth in a year and a half. The investment in core funding will support the sustainability of this growth.

### The crucial need to support independent artists and workers with equity and access lens

Cultural workers and dance artists are severely suffering from the national affordability crisis, and as any Canadian citizen, they pay taxes, have housing and food expenses, and provide for their families. Cultural workers and dance artists are hard workers and contribute in many different ways to the art sector, and to the Canadian identity. Unpaid work is a very common practice in the arts due to lack of funding. In a recent survey commissioned by the Cultural Human Resources Council, and conducted by Hill Strategies Research, most cultural workers with an employment position (69%) reported doing extra unpaid work, including 30% who do extra work “very often”. Nearly three-quarters of artists (71%) have more than one job, and many of their second jobs are within the cultural sector. In fact, 51% of responding artists contribute both their artwork and their secondary job efforts to the sector.

The same survey suggests that one-half (51%) of responding artists have total personal incomes below \$40,000, with a mere 7% of respondents reaching the \$80,000 or more threshold. Financial stress was deemed to be very common (69%).

IBPOC artists are more likely to experience financial precarity compared to white artists (72% of BIPOC artists have incomes below \$40,000, and 85% of IBPOC artists express financial stress). Interestingly, artists point to limited opportunities

for grants as the great challenge to their work (68%). Indigenous artists and Black and racialized artists earn a median income of 68 cents and 72 cents, respectively, for every dollar earned by non-Indigenous, non-Black/non-racialized artists. They deserve financial sustainability as any Canadian. It is crucial to support the Canada Council for the Arts to reach its goals on equity aligned with the PCO's Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service.

The last competition of the Explore and Create program grants dauntingly saw an overall success rate of only 16.6%. This statistic, combined with the federal government's requirement for cuts in every department and agency, has cast a pall over the dance ecosystem, wherein existing grant allocations are already insufficient to maintain stability in the context of growing needs and opportunities. Without the continued support of the arts, which this government has stewarded for decades, the arts sector in Canada will continue to erode.

### Artist Mobility and Touring

As mentioned, the increase requested for the Canada Council for the Arts should also be allocated to programmes that support the mobility of artists and the touring of works.

We deeply appreciate the added \$31 million over two years, starting in 2024-25, to the Department of Canadian Heritage for the *Canada Arts Presentation Fund*. For this investment to have its full impact and close the gap, dance organisations and dance artists need their production and touring funds (travel, accommodation, per diem, and work remounting) to honour the presenter's invitations and meet their public. A dance show is commonly premiered for three or four nights in its local city. To have a return on financial and human investment put into its creation-production, the show must be toured and viewed by multiple audiences. All this hard work is to assure that dance productions reach all Canadian communities, from coast to coast, urban and rural, to support people's mental health, and nurture their sense of purpose and safety.

The world is a better place when art reveals itself and reaches out to people. 95% of Canadians believe that the arts and cultural activities in a community make it a better place to live<sup>1</sup>, and that experiencing the arts is a valuable way of bringing

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<sup>1</sup> Including 62% who strongly agree and 33% who somewhat agree. Agreement is strong even among people who do not attend the arts: 39% strongly agree and 44% somewhat agree.

Environics Research, Arts and Heritage Access and Availability survey 2016-2017, 2017.

Perceptions are perhaps just perceptions, but they have real impact on how people relate to the community they live in. For example, Canadians who rate arts, culture and leisure in their community as "excellent" are nearly three times more likely to report a "very strong" sense of belonging to their city or town.

Community Foundations of Canada and CAPACOA, Vital Signs: Arts and Belonging, 2017

together people from different languages and cultural traditions.<sup>2</sup> During the Covid-19 pandemic, when asked what are the top benefits from participating in arts and culture activities, 7 in 10 Canadian culture goers (72,4%) ranked “improve my mental health” among their top three answers<sup>3</sup>.

### **Recommendation : \$130 million allocation to the Department of Canadian Heritage**

We suggest that \$130 million should be allocated to the Department of Canadian Heritage in programs which support dance presenters, dance or multidisciplinary venues, cultural infrastructures, professional training in dance, and anti-racism programs as opportunities for investment.

#### Impacts of recommendations

- o A more stable dance sector with diverse revenue streams
- o Higher and more sustainable employment rates in the dance sector
- o Living wages for all artists including IBPOC artists to survive through the affordability crisis like all Canadians
- o All Canadian communities to have access to high-quality dance shows
- o Community engagement and increased social cohesion
- o Safer and lively diverse communities

### **Additional Policy Consideration**

We also encourage the Government of Canada to follow through on its commitments in the Employment Insurance Program and to its modernization with particular attention paid to the unique dynamics of the Canadian arts and culture landscape for independent artists and workers to have better access to this important program. 51% Most artists are self-employed (Strategies Hill). According to data the 2016 Canadian census, 56% of artists are self-employed, compared to 12% of the overall labour force. This will have significant, long-lasting impact on independents workers and artists creators and the industry.

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<sup>2</sup> Environics Research, [Arts and Heritage Access and Availability survey 2016-2017](#), 2017.

The arts can be a real vector of inclusion for immigrants. Foreign-born Canadians are particularly likely to strongly agree that they are a valuable way of bringing people together (71%, vs 60% among Canadian-born).

<sup>3</sup> Source: Nanos Research, [Arts Response Tracking Study](#), February 2022 edition.

The Canadian Dance Assembly would welcome the opportunity to present at committee and is available to answer questions by contacting us:

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