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de la danse

Written Submission for the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance  
Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2026 Budget

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By: The Canadian Dance Assembly

Contact:

Karla Etienne, Executive Director

[karla@cda-acd.ca](mailto:karla@cda-acd.ca)

## Introduction

Canadian Dance Assembly's aim is to steer national dialogue on dance practices towards equity, access and belonging. Through conferences, workshops, and gatherings, we work together—our members and national dance stakeholders—across the provinces and the territories to build a dynamic network of communities committed to dance in all its forms.

We are a people-powered platform connecting dance communities and sharing knowledge.

### **Recommendation 1: That the Government of Canada allocate a permanent annual increase of \$140 million to the Canada Council for the Arts.**

The 2025 [Liberal Platform](#) stated that if elected, the Government would:

*Support Canadian artists and creators by increasing funding to agencies such as the Canada Council for the Arts...recognizing the economic importance of Canada's creative industries and creators.*

Since then, the global context has continued to evolve. We welcome the Government of Canada's recent contributions to heritage and cultural programs including support for the Cultural Export Strategy announced in the Spring Economic Update, and the [modest investment](#) in the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA) in Budget 2025. We see this as a recognition that arts and culture play a vital role in Canada's story and are central to building a strong, ambitious, and confident nation.

Arts and culture are integral to achieving the government's strategic goals by improving quality of life, and strengthening Canada's cultural sovereignty through robust support for artists and organisations. When the Government invests in arts and culture through the CCA, all Canadians reap the attendant financial, employment, and civic benefits from that investment.

We believe that a new and permanent \$140M for the Council directly aligns with the Government of Canada's Build Canada Strong priorities and agenda:

- Empowering Canadians

As outlined in the Spring Economic Update and in the accompanying [tabling speech](#) this is a moment for people to lead and for our nation to be ambitious. Strong communities are essential to the federal government's goal of building Canada

strong and fulfilling our promise as a country. Arts and culture are central to that national promise, both at home and abroad. This is a moment when civilians need to see and play our parts in *our own stories* on our stages and screens, in our galleries and cultural venues both rural and urban, to help draw us together.

Arts and culture inspire and connect us, *truly* creating Canada strong. The Canada Council for the Arts is a foundational investment in voices from across the country and across artistic disciplines. Non-profit arts organizations, individual artists, and collectives form the backbone of the artistic and cultural community in our country and the CCA is essential to bringing our stories to life, from coast to coast to coast.

Increased funding for the CCA ensures that our sense of identity and communities are enhanced, while also increasing our pride in our international cultural accomplishments.

For example, Canadian choreographer and performer Dana Michel, winner of the Silver Lion at the Venice Biennale, developed major works through publicly supported residency and creation programs, including the National Arts Centre's Visiting Dance Artist initiative created in partnership with the Canada Council for the Arts. The program explicitly states that sustained institutional support enables Canadian choreographers to experiment, take artistic risks, and develop new work capable of reaching broad audiences.

- Employment

Investment in the CCA ensures that artist and cultural workers can continue to serve in their field of expertise. It is an investment in the people who are building Canada's future: artists, creators, and cultural workers in communities across the country. According to Statistics Canada, in 2023 there were 914,000 workers in arts, culture, and heritage occupations, representing 4.4% of all workers, and these workers are present in every riding. A [recent survey](#) shows that 51% of artists earn under \$40,000 annually and that financial stress is widespread (69%). [Limited access to grants](#) is identified as a key barrier (68%).

A strong Canadian economy relies upon people in stable and sustainable employment, and because arts and culture is heavily fueled by research and

development, that employment requires investment in order to bring that development to the national and world stage.

According to CADAC, between 2016-17 and 2020-21 during the doubling of the Canada Council's parliamentary appropriation, the Council invested a total additional \$150M in core-funded arts organizations. Over the same period, these organizations reported a substantial increase in paid work for artists, arts workers and other employees, reflected in \$354M in additional salaries and professional fees.

This represents more than a two-fold return in direct employment expenditures.

The Council has communicated that an additional permanent investment of \$140M will allow it to immediately and efficiently address sector instability through an increase to core grants, strategic investment, and national dissemination all through existing organizations and mechanisms.

Investing in core organizations across the country, this additional, permanent investment of \$140M in funding will translate into immediate, sustained and expanded employment across the arts sector. This employment is distributed nationally, serving rural and urban communities, and leads directly to increased livability and viability of communities, while also contributing to our economy.

The [Artworks report](#) found that:

- Canada's arts and culture sector contributed \$65 billion in direct impacts to Canada's economy in 2024.
- Arts and culture generated an estimated \$17 billion in federal and provincial tax revenues in 2024.
- Protecting Canadian sovereignty

Increased investment in the Canada Council is not just important for artists, it is essential to enable the greatest access to our culture for all people living in the country. The arts and culture sector enables artists to create, share, and access stories that reflect our unique identity at home and abroad in an increasingly uncertain global environment, strengthening Canada's sovereignty.

The most recent national survey conducted by [Culture Days](#) found that over 80% of Canadians believe arts and culture strengthen Canada's economy and quality of life, while also contributing to a distinct national identity.

They believe that the sector fosters social cohesion, strengthens communities, promotes inclusion, and supports education and cultural awareness, particularly among children.

An urgent, increased permanent annual investment in the Canada Council of \$140M represents a direct investment in Canada's cultural sovereignty and an investment in a stronger, more connected and confident country.

**Recommendation 2: That the Government of Canada ensure that, within the Direct Delivery and Community streams of the Build Communities Strong Fund, a minimum level of funding be dedicated to cultural infrastructure, ensuring that rural and urban communities across Canada are served by cultural facilities.**

Artistic and cultural infrastructure is [an integral component](#) of strong, resilient, and inclusive communities across the country. Cultural facilities such as theatres, galleries, performance spaces, and community arts hubs enable public participation in cultural life, and contribute to both social and economic development.

Despite their importance, access to cultural infrastructure remains uneven, particularly in rural, remote, and underserved urban communities. Targeted federal investment is therefore required to address these gaps and ensure equitable access to cultural facilities nationwide.

The [Build Communities Strong Fund](#) (BCSF) presents a timely opportunity to advance this objective, but it must include a clear and dedicated allocation for artistic and cultural infrastructure within its Direct Delivery and Community streams. Without such a minimum allocation, cultural infrastructure risks being overlooked in favour of competing priorities.

This need is further reinforced by the reorientation of the Cultural Spaces Fund (CCSF) administered by Canadian Heritage, which underscores the importance of ensuring that cultural infrastructure remains explicitly supported through other federal funding streams. Taken together, these developments make it essential to secure a predictable and sustained role for culture within the BCSF.

We also note ongoing uncertainty regarding the scope of the reoriented CCSF, particularly in relation to the treatment of specialized equipment. The absence of clear parameters in this regard raises the risk of gaps or unintended overlaps with other infrastructure programs. Given that definitions of “specialized equipment” may vary across departments, it is important to ensure that the specific operational requirements of cultural facilities are clearly defined and adequately supported.

**Recommendation 3: That the Government of Canada accelerate the reform of an Employment Income Modernization framework to better reflect the realities of artistic and cultural work.**

This recommendation originates from the [study conducted by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage](#) on strengthening the status of the artist in Canada, tabled in March 2023, which called for a modernization of the Employment Insurance system to better reflect the realities of artistic and cultural work.

The artistic and cultural sector continues to call for an Employment Income Modernization framework that reflects the realities of its workforce. Self-employed cultural workers, most of whom are artists, contribute to a flexible and highly productive labour model that supports innovation, cultural exports, and employment across multiple disciplines and art industries.

Artists are full participants in Canada’s labour market and contribute significantly to the country’s economic and cultural vitality. The objective of the EI system is “to provide temporary income support to unemployed workers while they look for work or upskill” (Government of Canada, 2022). The program does not fulfill its objective with respect to the population of professional artists, who work primarily as self-employed individuals. According to data from the 2021 Canadian Census, approximately 68% of artists are self-employed, compared to about 15% of the Canadian workforce. Policy development must ensure that artist and cultural workers benefit from rights and protections equivalent to those of the broader workforce, while supporting employment continuity and long-term workforce stability. Therefore the EI system should accommodate artists and cultural workers to pay into and withdraw benefits.

As the professionalization and job creation capacity of the artistic and cultural sector is a central consideration in the Employment Income Modernization framework. The sector is a mature, dynamic, and economically significant pillar of

Canada's labour market, driving innovation, cultural exports, and employment across the country.

**Recommendation 4: That the Government of Canada ensure the principles of authorization, remuneration, and transparency (ART) are in place for artists for the use of their work, whether auditory, literary, visual, or performative in all contexts, including for the training of generative artificial intelligence technologies and for any AI outputs.**

The rapid development of generative artificial intelligence is fundamentally reshaping the creation, use, dissemination and circulation of artistic works. While these technologies offer opportunities for innovation and expanded reach, they also raise urgent questions regarding copyright protection, transparency, and the fair remuneration of creators.

In this context, the recent report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage on the [\*Impacts of Artificial Intelligence on the Creative Industries\*](#) includes the following first recommendation:

*That the Government of Canada protect the property rights and interests of artists through the principles of the Copyright Act, in accordance with the ART principle—authorization, remuneration and transparency.*

The principle of remuneration is central to ensuring that artists are fairly compensated when their works are used, in the training of generative AI technologies and in any outputs. The Canadian government must reject any calls for watering down a copyright system with a Text and Data Mining copyright exception.

Establishing a framework that guarantees fair remuneration for artists is essential to maintaining a balanced and sustainable creative ecosystem. We look forward to seeing the ART principles included in the upcoming National AI Strategy that will soon be released by the Government of Canada. The strategy needs to reinforce Canada's commitment to protecting cultural sovereignty and supporting the long-term viability of its creative communities and industries.

The Canadian Dance Assembly would be pleased to appear before the Committee to provide more information at its Pre-Budget Consultations.

For more information, please contact :

**Karla Etienne**  
**karla@cda-acd.ca**  
**Executive Director**  
**Canadian Dance Assembly**