



April 2, 2020

DELIVERED BY EMAIL

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada

Steven Guilbeault, MP
Minister of Canadian Heritage

Hon. Bill Morneau, MP
Minister of Finance

Susan Crocker, C.M.
Chair

Gaëtane Verna
President

Nova Bhattacharya
Past-President

Claire Hopkinson, M.S.M.
Director & CEO

Board of Directors

Andrew Walker, Secretary
Michael Herrera, CPA, CA,
Treasurer
Shelley Carroll, Councillor
Gary Crawford, Councillor
Kelvin Browne
Neera Chopra
David Dacks
Cara Eastcott
Charles Falzon
Dina Graser
Amanda Hancox
Richard Lee
Ayo Leilani
Rob MacKinnon
Soheil Parsa
Richard Paquet
Jason Ryle
Anthony Sargent, CBE
Ana Serrano
Jesse Wentz
Alissa York, MFA
Maayan Ziv

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau, Minister Guilbeault, and Minister Morneau:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Toronto Arts Council, we are writing to thank you for the important and timely actions of the federal government which are giving many artists and arts organizations reason for optimism in this very difficult time. I also want to propose additional solutions for urgent concerns not yet addressed, and to extend the Toronto arts sector's commitment to work with you in the coming months as we all plan for Canada's recovery.

As the municipal funder responsible for the country's largest community of artists, each year Toronto Arts Council provides \$23 million funding to approximately 1,000 artists and arts organizations. With total annual revenues of just under \$600 million, Toronto's non-profit arts sector represents approximately 30% of the Canadian total of almost \$2 billion¹. From our vantage point we are privileged to see emerging practices and to witness challenges faced by the sector at street level.

Mobilizing fast, effective and directed support in a time of crisis is the role of government; and fortunately for us all, today's federal government is rising to the challenge. Particularly important for the arts:

- Ensuring that the Emergency Response Benefit is available to those who do not qualify for EI (including the vast majority of the country's artists)
- Allowing organizations' to retain staff who are receiving the CERB
- Ensuring the non-profit and charitable organizations are eligible to apply for the wage subsidy

We know these announcements have contributed directly to decisions to keep staff on at many arts organizations and for this our community is extremely grateful.

¹ Figures taken from CADAC, Canadian Arts Data/ Données sur les arts au Canada, 2018-2019,

Despite these very positive steps however, measures to date do not address the scope of the challenges facing the non-profit arts sector:

- Average salary costs for arts organizations constitute less than one-third of the total budgets as almost all artist, production and creation teams are not salaried positions
- Facility based arts organizations have significant costs to operate and maintain facilities (\$80 million in Toronto, \$250 million nationally) that will not be generating earned revenues for months in 2020, if at all

Without additional immediate action the non-profit arts sector will suffer major losses in the coming months. Many organizations, including those vital to both our economy and our community, will close, events will be cancelled and individual artists and arts workers will abandon their careers. Perhaps most distressingly, especially for those in major centres, many of the gains in equity and inclusion realized in the past decade will be lost.

To address these looming challenges, we propose the following measures:

- Establish an emergency stabilization fund of at least \$500 million to be distributed to Canadian arts organizations most adversely affected by lost income due to the COVID-19 crisis.
- Ensure easy access to no-interest loans to support arts organizations' ongoing operations
- Loosen restrictions on established endowment funds to allow immediate withdrawals
- Incent increased private sector donations and sponsorships with enhanced charitable donation tax credits until the end of 2021
- Ensure the eligibility of arts organizations to participate in all upcoming economic recovery initiatives including infrastructure programs

The introduction of these measures will save many of our companies from collapse in the short term and ensure that they will be in a position to work collaboratively on next steps and solutions.

In times of crisis we know that the arts bring hope to the public. Today it is our artists who are creating free online performances for Canadians and offering virtual creative experiences; others are using the power of art to put forward important public health messages. For just some of these offerings, we encourage you to visit our [arts activations](#) page.

Once the country begins to emerge from its state of emergency we will all look to the arts to develop and implement innovative solutions and strategies for recovery. Toronto's artists and organizations look forward to working with you as together we develop plans for the coming months and years. We know artists will be key to bringing people together, advancing new ideas, developing new

business, and re-engaging the public. They will be key to Toronto's and the country's recovery.

Thank you again for both your personal support and that of your government. We are confident that together we can look forward to a strong path to recovery.

Yours truly,



Susan Crocker
Chair



Gaetane Verna
President



Claire Hopkinson
CEO

CC:

Gary Anandasangaree, MP

Yvan Baker, MP

Hon. Carolyn Bennett, MP

Hon. Bill Blair, MP

Shaun Chen, MP

Julie Dabrusin, MP

Han Dong, MP

Hon. Kirsty Duncan, MP

Julie Dzerowicz, MP

Ali Ehsassi, MP

Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, MP

Hon. Chrystia Freeland, MP

Ahmed Hussen, MP

Michael Levitt, MP

James Maloney, MP

Hon. John Mckay, MP

Rob Oliphant, MP

Yasmin Ratansi, MP

Adam Vaughan, MP

Arif Virani, MP

Salma Zahid, MP