

Canadian Arts Coalition Survey - June 2020

The Canadian Arts Coalition surveyed its members in the first 2 weeks of June. The results provide a snapshot of what the arts sector would like the Coalition to advocate for over the next few months.

Representation

40 service organizations responded to the survey, many noting that their desire to work together “not in silos”. Together they serve and represent over 5,900 arts, culture and heritage organizations and an additional 58,650 individual artists active in the following fields: music, theatre, dance, visual arts, craft, filmmaking, writing and publishing. Organizations responding were based in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI and Newfoundland and represented 170 Canadian cities.

Key Results

Emergency Stage

61% still find themselves at the Emergency stage of the pandemic

Asked at which stage of the current crisis they felt themselves to be right now, 61% stated that they were still in the Emergency stage, defined as needing help for an indefinite period of time. But, of those, only 10% felt they were still in the urgent stage, needing urgent payroll and operational support.

85% of those responding perceived gaps in the ability of the current emergency programs to meet the needs of their members, which means it is challenging to move forward to Re-opening and Recovery. CERB is especially crucial for most as many artists will not have work for many more months - accounting for already lost income in cancellations and postponed royalty payments from production delays, the total time without income from their work is estimated to be as long as 18 months to 2 years. CEWS is also important but problematic as it does not take into account organizational structures common in the sector, such as sole proprietorships, and many organizations do not meet current eligibility requirements. Modifying and extending those programs to better suit those in the arts sector will be important.

69% of those responding also pointed to gaps in the funding being channelled through Canada Council for the Arts and the Department of Canadian Heritage. Of particular concern is the fact that those who are not already funded are often those in the most precarious position, and remain without access to these funds. **74%** of respondents are particularly concerned about the precarity of Indigenous, racialized, deaf, disabled and otherwise marginalized artists and their organizations.

Many respondents commented on the uncertain future for their members for at least the next 12-24 months, as whole sectors try to adapt. Respondents provided insights into the issues facing book publishers, filmmakers, performing artists, composers, playwrights, craftspeople, visual artists, grassroots community organizations. As one summed it up: “We’re all over the map.. trying to invent things on the fly.. we feel like we are in a tornado tunnel.” Another simply said: “Next year is terrifying.”

Re-Opening Stage

36% of respondents stated they were at the Re-Opening stage

While some respondents saw themselves moving to re-open to patrons as early as July, many more saw re-opening as 18-24 months away, while others did not see it happening until after a vaccine is discovered.

To help the sector to re-open, respondents agreed that the CAC should encourage the federal government to do the following, listed here in order of priority:

- **87% - Strengthen support for digital creation to ensure artists are fairly compensated and that their work finds an audience.**

This takes into account the need for the current copyright, licensing and royalty regimes not only to be updated themselves, but also to make a rapid adjustment to digital art. It also recognizes that many organizations require significant investment in basic technology.

- **82% - Work with the sector and provinces and public health agencies to determine the best approach to re-introduce public gatherings in theatres, concert halls, galleries and museums.**

For the performing arts this is particularly critical and worrisome, to ensure the health and safety of their employees and contractors as well as audiences. Other surveys have indicated a reluctance on the part of audiences to return, especially to indoor events, with 73% of those responding to a recent Nanos survey indicating they would not return until after a vaccine is found or for at least the next 5 months.

- **74% - Develop and support a coordinated marketing strategy to amplify the importance of arts and culture in supporting mental health and community connectedness: social cohesion in a time of social distancing.**

Many respondents noted that the way that Canadians have turned to the arts throughout the lockdown has provided an opportunity to move the arts “from frill to pillar”, as one suggested.

- Two thirds of respondents (**66%**) wanted the CAC to encourage the federal government to subsidize attendance at cultural events as a way to “bring people back”.
- Two thirds also believe that the federal government should be encouraged to consult with Indigenous elders.
- **59%** want to see the criteria for future infrastructure funding altered to allow for a broader range of projects.

Recovery Phase

41% of respondents are beginning the Recovery phase, stating they need help addressing long-term changes to sales, patronage and business processes while returning to sustainable operations.

In order for the sector to Recover they think the federal government should do the following, in order of priority:

87% - Provide a basic, guaranteed income for all, especially in light of the current precarity of Indigenous, racialized, the deaf and disabled and other marginalized artists

This aligned with the 87% who also believe that the government should **ensure equitable support** across the regions and for Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized artists.

84% - want the federal government to work with the provinces to **improve municipal funding** **79.5% -** want to see **ongoing collaboration** between federal, provincial and territorial funders

While **77%** want the government to provide **increased support for Canadian Heritage’s essential programs** for arts training, production and presentation which were already underfunded before the pandemic, some respondents also noted the importance of sustaining the Canada Book Fund and Canada Music Fund which are also critical supports programs for the sector. This aligned with the view, held by **69%** of respondents, that the government should **develop sector/discipline specific responses** to this crisis

Introducing tax incentives, tax credits and matches to encourage private sector donations drew the support of **46-56%** of respondents.