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2022 Ontario Pre-Budget Consultations

Submitted to:

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

Delivered by email

Submitted by:

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To the members of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs:

Canadian Artists' Representation/Le front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC) Ontario is the association of visual and media artists. We represent over 7000 artists in Ontario, including approximately 800 members. We believe that artists, like professionals in other fields, should be paid fairly for their work at all stages of their careers. We educate the visual arts community about artists' legal and economic rights, we provide a range of services tailored to the unique needs of artists, and we actively contribute to the development of cultural infrastructure for the benefit of artists and all Ontarians who engage in the arts. As such, we welcome this opportunity to share the following recommendations for arts and culture investments as part of Ontario's 2022 budget:

1. Increase the Ontario Arts Council's (OAC) base budget to \$95 million annually.

- The OAC's budget is falling behind inflation trends, and far behind Ontario's population growth. It should be noted that, when inflation and population growth are taken into account, the OAC would require a \$110m base budget in 2022 in order to remain in line with 1991 investment levels.
- We also urge the Government of Ontario to uphold and affirm the OAC's arms-length operations and utilize its well-established processes and longstanding presence in the arts community to determine--at its discretion--the dissemination of new funds.

2. Establish a permanent \$10 million fund to support Indigenous artists, cultural leaders, organizations, groups and collectives.

- The one-time \$4m Indigenous Arts Fund announced in 2021 was a good start, but a dedicated fund to support Indigenous artists, cultural leaders, groups, and collectives requires additional investment, and must be made permanent.
- This fund should be designed and managed by Indigenous artists and cultural leaders, and be administrated through the Ontario Arts Council.

3. Maximize the value of any additional arts investments by:

- Ensuring that funding commitments are allocated and delivered in a timely manner. Protracted timelines to deliver funding not only deprives the sector of urgently needed support, but reduces prospective beneficiaries' ability to forecast, plan, and leverage provincial funds to secure support from other levels of government and from the private sector;
- Consulting with sector stakeholders on the direction and delivery of any new arts and culture investments that are in addition to increases to the OAC's

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base budget, or that are not intended to be managed by the Ontario Arts Council at its own discretion;

- Ensuring that funding commitments outlined in Budget 2021 are made as soon as possible. We note that, at the time of this submission, \$5m of \$10m committed to the arts in Budget 2021 remains unspent.

4. Amplify the majority of Ontarians' voices by working toward a Federal Basic Income Guarantee. This includes:

- Advocating and working with the Federal Government on the development and implementation of a Basic Income Guarantee;
- Shifting existing provincial income support systems toward Basic Income principles that require less conditionality and provide recipients with more autonomy;
- Implement an Ontario Basic Income demonstration program targeting low-income artists, gig-workers, and other precariously employed Ontarians for inclusion.

Sufficient investments to reduce poverty and stabilize precarious workers will result in significantly greater economic contribution and participation, and increased innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship while reducing social services spending. Working toward a Federal-Provincial Basic Income partnership will accelerate these trends and will be a necessary strategy to reduce Ontario's deficit, and rebuild the economy, as we recover from the COVID-19 crisis.

CARFAC Ontario remains available to support, and to collaborate with, the Government of Ontario in strategically visioning, designing, and implementing new arts and culture investments that we know Ontarians will be eager to see in the 2022 Budget.

Sincerely,

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