

Name

Ms Jessie Garon

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To the Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs,

I am an artist whose income is dependant on a precarious mix of contract work as a dancer, choreographer, movement director, and arts educator. All of these areas have been completely devastated by the pandemic due to the closure of live performance and social distancing in general. As a result I have no income right now and likely will not have any for many months.

I am also a member of an organization called IGAC that provides cheaper studio space through a cooperative model where we that use the studio also operate it. I continue to pay monthly rent for the space even though I am not able to use it (because it is not listed as essential) and while I have no income it is difficult to afford this cost. This puts IGAC in danger of having to close. It provides an important service by making studio space in this city affordable for many artists both members and non-members. We have applied for CECRA but even if we receive it the studio will be a major financial burden for myself and the other members. This is because IGAC normally depends on other artists renting the space to help pay the rent.

We do not qualify for CEBA like most small arts organization for many reasons. There are many art organizations that are struggling right now and may not survive.

My recommendations are:

- Restore funding to the Ontario Arts Council
- Create funding for small arts and culture organizations especially those that serve the arts community at large on a case to case basis
- Include arts and culture (especially arts studios) in the reopening plan. Currently it is unclear to artists what they are able to do and many can easily socially distance because they use the studio alone. We feel extremely forgotten right now.

I am grateful for the efficiency and generosity with which the government has dealt with this difficult situation. However the arts sector has specific needs and if they are forgotten during this pandemic we will lose the light, joy and perspective that they bring to everyones lives.

Thank you,

Jessie Garon