

June 18, 2020

To whom it may concern,

The perspective I want you is one that may or may not be familiar to you: I am a cultural worker and I rely upon a precarious matrix of contract work which has been entirely devastated across the board by the COVID pandemic and our responses to it.

Prior to COVID, the following engagements sustained me: teaching dance at daycares, in schools, and in my own studio; rehearsing and performing for choreographers; creating and presenting my own dances. Currently, and for the foreseeable future, none of these activities is able to run, therefore, I have no income from work.

In addition, I run a small dance studio with some colleagues. Our business is non-essential, therefore closed, nevertheless, we have ongoing expenses. Although we do qualify for CECRA, we do not qualify for CEBA, and our expenses despite the relief CECRA *may* provide will be a considerable burden for a small group of dancers to afford at any time, and particularly in the context of the economic picture I have just described.

At this time, many artists are turning to the Ontario Arts Council for support, yet, even as more artists are turning to the council to replace lost income with new creative projects, the Council is able to offer less money than before, since it is currently reeling from draconian cuts recently imposed by the current government.

My recommendations to you are to consider:

- * restore funding to the Ontario Arts Council and fulfill the previous government's commitment to increase funding
- offer emergency funding for artists and small arts organizations on a case-by-case basis
- allow dance and other arts studios to re-open on a case-by-case basis if they can be safely used by one person at a time or as long as the social distancing can occur and studios follow proper disinfecting and other Public Health protocols.

I am proud of, and grateful for, the innovation and generosity shown by the governments in our country, however, I observe that there are certain niches of the economy that are being overlooked, such as the one of which I write.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share this with you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,



Jessica Runge