



Originally Submitted: May 4, 2020

Revised: July 3, 2020 for consideration by the Provincial Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

The Honourable Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
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The Honourable Amarjot Sandhu, Chair
Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
Legislative Office
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The Honourable Jeremy Roberts, Vice-Chair
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Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
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Re: Submission to Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

Dear Minister and Members of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs,

On behalf of the Boards of Directors and Staff of the six Local Arts Service Organizations of Toronto, we first would like to thank you for your 10 Point Immediate Action Plan and the opportunities to connect via your regular teletownhalls to hear from us and others in the arts on the devastating effects COVID-19 has had on artists, arts workers and cultural organizations across the province. We also thank you for your work and the investments you continue to make to Celebrate Ontario, the Ontario Arts Council, Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and the retooling of the Ontario Music Fund, among others, to get funds immediately into the hands of emerging artists. Your Ministry's support of arts and culture in the province and the recognition that art will be an important part of the recovery plan is heartening.

We are writing to you today to offer our support for your action plan, for the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, and to determine how we may be of assistance ensuring that Ontario's artists and organizations get the support we need as part of the \$500 million dollar pledge from the Federal Government, as well as any other action plans and/or committees which we can support on as part of the COVID-19 recovery and rebuild efforts. As such, we are requesting a meeting with you to help guide the planning of the Province's measures to respond to the crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic facing artists and arts organizations at the local community level.

The LASOs support many directives and goals put forth by the Province of Ontario, ensuring that the arts remain accessible, attainable and affordable for everyone - children, seniors, newcomers and the everyday people who have been finding solace and entertainment in the arts during these difficult times. We offer supports, resources and arts and cultural programming for residents and artists alike - many from inter-cultural and socio-economically diverse



communities, including women, newcomers / refugees, Black, Muslim, South Asian, Asian, Indigenous, LGBTQ2S+, Deaf and Disabled / Neurodiverse, and low-income communities among others. Together we contribute to the sustained livelihoods of hundreds of artists from our catchments and Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs).

Please see our joint impact flyer for 2018-2019 (attached).

Significantly, on June 25th, 2020, Toronto's Local Arts Service Organizations (LASOs), in partnership with ArtStarts, Jumblies Theatre, Vibe Arts and Sketch, and supported by Neighbourhood Arts Network, delivered the inaugural *Community Arts Canopy Town Hall* which provided a forum for over 113 arts organizations and grassroots collectives / groups to better understand how COVID-19 has impacted their work, what resources are required, and how we all can collaborate to rebuild the community arts sector. In addition, we were able to capture over 70 responses to a survey we circulated to community arts organizations across the GTA as well. We are happy to share this information with you, in order to help inform the recovery and rebuild efforts across the GTA and within the Province of Ontario.

As the Province, the City of Toronto and the Federal government begin the re-opening phases and recovery of the economy and of public life, we would like to highlight the crucial role Community Arts organizations such as the LASOs play in enhancing local economies, creating employment opportunities for local artists and cultural workers, and bringing community arts practices to underserved communities. Community Arts directly benefit those in our communities who are the most vulnerable and underserved - people who have been hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic.

While large-scale events will likely not be possible in the early phases of the Province's roadmap to reopening, smaller Community Arts events in neighbourhoods across the City and outside the downtown core will be important catalysts in phases 3 and 4 to help residents rebuild their social lives, share their experiences and tell their stories. The LASOs are uniquely positioned to meet this challenge as we are already working with and are directly entrenched in key neighbourhoods outside the core.

The Canada Council for the Arts (CCA) is one of the recipients of the \$500M allocated by the Federal government, the LASOs and other Community Arts groups are often ineligible to access funding through CCA, with the exception of the odd and infrequent program grant. Traditionally, Community Arts has not been listed as an eligible area of practice by the CCA and often, community arts are overlooked by many funding bodies, yet it is one of the most affordable and effective tools for community engagement and social cohesion. Investments in Community Arts, not only for the LASOs, but across the province need to be included in any future recovery plan.

We want to highlight the crucial role Community Arts organizations play in enhancing local economies and building the arts and cultural sector across the province. Community Arts directly benefit those in our communities deemed most vulnerable and underserved - people we know have been hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we navigate together through these unprecedented times, we thank you for being a champion for the arts in Ontario. Shana Hillman from East End Arts will contact your office shortly to arrange a meeting. We look forward to working in collaboration with Provincial MPPs in Toronto, artists, arts groups, community members, social sector organizations and local businesses to provide meaningful arts programming and services citywide across the GTA and to ensure that the arts remain accessible, attainable and affordable for ALL Ontarians. And, we are eager to be of service to your office as we all work to rebuild the sector together and to support the reopening process guided by the Province's roadmap.

Sincerely,

Arts Etobicoke	Wendy Rading, Executive Director	Karl Sprogis, Co-Chair
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	<i>wendy@artsetobicoke.com</i>	
East End Arts	<i>Shana Hillman, Executive Director</i> <i>shana@eastendarts.ca</i>	<i>Robin Sokoloski, Chair</i>
Lakeshore Arts	<i>Susan Nagy, Executive Director</i> <i>susan@lakeshorearts.ca</i>	<i>Marijana Cuvalo, President</i>
North York Arts	<i>Lila Karim, Executive Director</i> <i>lila@northyorkarts.org</i>	<i>Joe Borowiec, Chair</i>
Scarborough Arts	<i>Derek Spooner, Executive Director</i> <i>derek@scarborougharts.com</i>	<i>Julie Witt, Chair</i>
UrbanArts	<i>Marlene McKintosh, Executive Director</i> <i>marlene@urbanartstoronto.org</i>	<i>Laurie-Shawn Borzovoy, Chair</i>

Cc:

Doug Ford, Premier and MPP, Etobicoke-North

Faisal Hassan, MPP, York South-Weston
 Jill Andrew MPP, Toronto-St. Paul's
 Robin Martin, MPP, Eglinton-Lawrence
 Marit Stiles, MPP, Davenport
 Rima Berns-McGown, MPP, Beaches-East York
 Peter Tabuns, MPP, Toronto Danforth
 Stan Cho, MPP, Willowdale
 Michael Coteau, MPP, Don Valley East
 Doly Begum, MPP, Scarborough Southwest
 Christina Maria Mitas, MPP, Scarborough Centre
 Aris Babikian, Scarborough-Agincourt
 Raymond Sung Joon Cho, MPP, Scarborough North
 Mitzie Hunter, MPP, Scarborough-Guildwood
 Vijay Thanigasalam, MPP, Scarborough-Rouge Park
 Kinga Surma MPP, Etobicoke Centre
 Christine Hogarth MPP, Etobicoke-Lakeshore



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John Vanthof, MPP, Timiskaming - Cochrane

BRINGING THE ARTS TO YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

WHO WE ARE

The Local Arts Service Organizations (LASOs) Program supports the City of Toronto's Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy in underserved geographic areas as well as the Economic Development and Culture Divisional Strategy of inclusion and equity in areas outside the downtown core. With the City's investment, we leverage partnerships and other funding sources to provide inclusive and affordable opportunities for local residents, artists, and arts organizations. As anchor community arts organizations in Toronto, we promote the arts at the local level, making culture a part of the daily fabric of community life.

WHO WE SERVE

Our free arts programs offer something for all ages, skill levels, abilities, and interests. We engage children, youth, families, seniors, members, volunteers and artists of all disciplines. We support under-served communities through arts programming, activities and events in 20 wards across the City of Toronto.

OUR ANNUAL IMPACT 2018 - 2019

300,708

ATTENDED LASO
PROGRAMS & EVENTS

13,250

CHILDREN & YOUTH
PARTICIPANTS

1,125

ARTISTS
EMPLOYED

376

DONORS

430

COMMUNITY
PARTNERS

519

PROGRAMS
& EVENTS



CONTRIBUTIONS WE MAKE TO OUR COMMUNITIES

ARTS EDUCATION IN TORONTO'S NEIGHBOURHOODS

Engaging community members to explore their creative talents and develop new skills, providing opportunities to meet and connect, supporting emerging and established artists, and promoting volunteerism.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Providing spaces of belonging to all Torontonians through local arts, cultural, economic development, and advocacy activities.

SERVICES & RESOURCES

Providing direct services such as networking opportunities, workshops, free resources, meeting spaces, promotion and communication to residents as well as professional development opportunities for artists.

BRINGING TOGETHER ARTS & BUSINESS

Partnering with local businesses to support arts initiatives and festivals, and contributing to local cultural tourism.

CREATING CONNECTIONS

Forging new partnerships and collaborating with diverse stakeholders (e.g., schools, social service agencies, and libraries) using the arts as a means to build and strengthen community.

WHERE TO FIND US



Search for Local Art Service Organizations at www.toronto.ca



SummerArts camp at Artscape Weston Common.
Photo by: UrbanArts.



Mural Jam on Finch Ave. W.
Photo by: Sharon Mendonca.



#EastEndLove Exhibition. Photo by: Anika Rahman.



Sunday Serenades at Mel Lastman Square.
Photo by: Goun Lee.



Youth Poetry Slam at Lakeshore Arts Storefront.
Photo by: Henry Chan.