



Written Submission for the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance Pre-Budget
Consultations in Advance of Budget 2025

Submitted: August 1, 2025

By: Canadian League of Composers

Recommendation

1. That the Government of Canada permanently allocate at least 1% of its overall spending towards arts, culture, and heritage. To achieve this for the 2025-26 fiscal year, the Government should increase its allocations by \$330 million, via:
 - a. An increase of \$140 million to the Canada Council for the Arts; and
 - b. An increase of \$190 million to the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Introduction

Founded in 1951, the Canadian League of Composers (CLC) is a National Arts Service Organization dedicated to advocating for and empowering Canadian composers and sound artists. We represent over 600 members nationwide, helping them build and navigate sustainable careers, locally, nationally, and internationally, by fostering creativity, resiliency, and improvements to the artistic landscape in Canada. Our members create diverse and exciting new works that not only engage with Canada's heritage, but also look, sound, and feel like Canada in 2025.

Mandate Letter

We believe our recommendation fits specifically into the four priorities articulated by the Prime Minister in his mandate letter to cabinet.

We remind you that the [Liberal Platform](#) committed to increasing support for Canadian artists.

Support Canadian artists and creators by increasing funding to agencies such as the Canada Council for the Arts, Telefilm, the Canada Media Fund, and the National Film Board, recognizing the economic importance of Canada's creative industries and creators.

In an effort to flesh out the Government's own messaging, we humbly submit the following arguments as to why our recommendation ties directly into the goals of this government:

1) Protecting Canadian sovereignty;

A nation's culture underpins its identity, and in doing so, strengthens its sovereignty. Canada is no exception to this. Canadian artists tell Canadian stories - stories that help Canadians better understand themselves, engage more deeply with their communities, and ultimately strengthen their own sense of what it means to be Canadian.

At a time when Canadian sovereignty is under threat it is crucial that we build a Canada in which all Canadians can afford to participate in the arts and culture sector, both as artists and arts workers making a liveable wage, and as attendees that are able to afford the price of a ticket. Theorist Shannon Litzenberger puts this argument well [here](#).

A recent Culture Days 2023 survey of Canadians reinforces this argument:

- Over 80% of the 1,156 respondents:
 - o believe that arts and culture enhance Canada's economy and quality of life, while also making Canada unique;
 - o agree that arts and culture unite Canadians and foster meaningful community engagement;
 - o assert that our sector helps build strong communities and creates new opportunities;
 - o acknowledge that the arts promote cultural and social inclusion;
 - o articulate that arts and culture play a crucial role in educating children and fostering cultural awareness.

According to data from the [May 2024 Arts Response Tracking Survey produced by Business / Arts, the National Arts Centre and Nanos Research](#), nearly two-thirds of Canadians said that attending cultural events has had a positive or somewhat positive impact on their sense of belonging to Canada.

These statistics clearly demonstrate the significant value that Canadians believe arts and culture provide to our cultural sovereignty. An investment in our industry of 1% of annual government expenditures is one that will strengthen Canadians' collective sense of self at a time when our sovereignty is under threat.

2) Spending less on government operations so that Canadians can invest more in the people and businesses that will build the strongest economy in the G7.

While we understand the Government of Canada is seeking to spend less on government projects so that they can invest more in Canada, we note that funding for the arts is one of the most efficient investments the Government can make. For example, in an average year, the Canada Council allots close to 90% of its annual parliamentary appropriation directly to Canadian artists, and Canadian arts organisations. These individuals and organisations do not sit on that money, rather, they inject it directly into the Canadian economy in the form of living expenses, salaries, artist fees, production costs, etc.

More explicitly, investments in the arts provide a tangible and significant return on investment for the Government of Canada. Recent data from [Hill Strategies](#) suggests that in 2022, the cultural sector accounted for 3% of the Canadian GDP, roughly the same as oil and gas extraction. In Q1 2025 alone, arts and culture [contributed](#) over \$16.5 billion to Canada's GDP.

The Canada Council for the Arts has calculated its specific economic impact, concluding that:

- **600% return on investment**
 - o For every new dollar the Council invested in core-funded organisations between 2016-2024, those organisations contributed \$5.75 directly to the economy.
- **\$1.5 billion spent in communities.**
 - o Arts organisations funded by the Council generated \$1.5 billion in economic activities in local communities across Canada.
- **Arts tourists spend 3x more.**
 - o Arts and culture tourists are proven to stay longer and spend more in local economies.

If the Government is serious about growing Canada's economy to the strongest in the G7, a 1% investment in the arts, including \$330 million this fiscal year, is essential.

3) Attracting the best talent in the world to help build our economy;

Theorists like Richard Florida have long argued that creative professionals help drive the service economy. Those who work in law, financial services, medicine, business, technology, and more, are attracted to places with vibrant cultural scenes. They want to work in cities where they can go to exciting concerts, engaging theatre productions, and interesting art galleries. Put another way, the best talent in the world seeks to live in places where they can achieve the fullest version of themselves by engaging in their local community through arts and culture.

The number of workers in the creative sector is not marginal. In the 2021 census, 850,000 Canadians identified themselves as workers in cultural occupations. This number is similar to the workforce of hospitals, and more than double of those who work on farms. The final [communiqué](#) from this year's Canadian Arts Summit asserted that culture represents a workforce larger than agriculture, forestry, and fisheries combined.

Investments in the arts are not a 'nice to have,' they are a 'must have.' They are clearly linked to driving a strong economy and attracting the best talent in the world to come and to stay in Canada.

4) Bringing down costs for Canadians and helping them to get ahead;

The affordability crisis for all Canadians has been well documented, and it has been particularly acute for those working in the arts and culture sector.

A [recent survey](#) commissioned by the Cultural Human Resources Council, and conducted by Hill Strategies Research, suggests that one-half (51%) of responding artists have total personal incomes below \$40,000, with a mere 7% of respondents reaching the \$80,000 or more threshold. Financial stress was deemed to be very common (69%). In both cases, BIPOC artists are more likely to experience financial precarity than white artists (72% of BIPOC artists have incomes below \$40,000, and 85% of BIPOC artists express financial stress). Interestingly, artists point to [limited opportunities for grants](#) as the greatest challenge to their work (68%).

Frighteningly, the last renewal of grants, through the Canada Council's Explore and Create program, [saw an overall success rate of 16.6%](#). When combined with the federal government's requirement for cuts in every department and agency, this precedent has set a chill in the ecosystem, wherein existing grant allocations are already insufficient to maintain stability in the context of growing this nation-building industry.

Explicitly, a 15% cut, as mandated by the Minister of Finance, to the Canada Council for the Arts would result in a \$54 million reduction. Even with administrative or staffing reductions, a cut to the Council of \$50 million will make life less affordable for artists as their grants and those of the organisations which employ them, will shrink. In turn, this will make it harder for artists to tell Canadian stories, strengthen Canadian identity, and promote Canadian sovereignty abroad.

Conversely, what is required, and what was promised in the Liberal platform, is an additional, permanent investment into the Council. This investment represents the most efficient tool available to the Government to aid in affordability for arts workers. **Canada Council CEO, Michelle Chawla, has committed that 100% of all new investment would be allocated to Canadians and Canadian organisations. This investment is quite literally the most efficient tool at the disposal of the Government of Canada.**

Respectfully Submitted,

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