

Dear Minister Bethlenfalvy,

March 16, 2023

I am writing to you today as the Executive Director of the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA). TAPA is a leading arts service organization that represents 107 professional theatre, dance and opera companies in the city of Toronto. The membership is all-encompassing and ranges from commercial to not-for-profit theatres, venued to non-venued companies, and national institutions to emerging independent companies. The scope of work on Toronto stages is unparalleled, and is recognized every year at the annual **Dora Mavor Moore Awards**, Canada's largest and oldest professional theatre, dance and opera award show.

On March 17, 2023 we will mark the grim, three-year anniversary of the shutdown of our theatres to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Although our theatres have reopened, we are early on in our recovery. The Ontario Arts Council (OAC) and the organizations it invests in are the unsung heroes of economic activity in the province and it is a known fact that investments made in our sector provide a valuable return on investment, both financially and as vital contributors to vibrant communities.

I am writing to you today from TAPA regarding the status of the OAC in the upcoming budget. I understand the Ontario government is in a tight fiscal situation with challenges confronting you from all sides. From healthcare, to transit, to housing, the demands on the provincial pocketbook are many. It is on this note that I bring your attention to the OAC. TAPA member companies received funding from the OAC totalling just over \$15 million in 2021-22. The outstanding and ground-breaking work that TAPA member companies produce is recognized not only in Toronto, but across the country and on the world stage. The continued, steady support by the OAC is critical in continuing to grow and sustain a thriving arts and culture sector.

The OAC plays a critical role not only in Toronto, but across the province. The OAC's work touches all almost all of Ontario's cultural economy which, in 2019, contributed \$28.7 billion to the provincial GDP (source [Statistics Canada](#)). This includes \$5.5 billion GDP in contributions from arts education, performing arts, festivals, original visual art, crafts, books, and sound recordings—sectors that are heavily supported by the OAC. In 2021-22, the OAC made investments in all 124 Ontario ridings through 2,665 grants to individual artists and 1,050 grants to organizations.

While we believe the OAC could have an even greater economic impact with a fresh injection of new funding, we are cognizant of the financial uncertainty and mounting challenges facing the Ontario government.

The support from the Ontario government for the arts and culture is critical. That is why TAPA is urging stable and predictable funding to the OAC for the next two years.

By maintaining the current level of funding at \$65 million, you can ensure the arts, culture, and tourism sector can work towards financial viability while continuing to recover from the lingering economic aftershocks of the pandemic.

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Thank you for your consideration. On behalf of the TAPA Board of Directors, I would be pleased to discuss our request in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jacoba Knaapen', written in a cursive style.

Jacoba Knaapen
Executive Director, Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts

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