



**ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL**  
**CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO**

an Ontario government agency  
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

October 24, 2018

*Sent via email*

Simon Brault  
Director & CEO  
Canada Council for the Arts  
150 Elgin St, PO Box 1047  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5V8

Dear Simon:

We are writing to follow up your September 27, 2018 meeting with members of the Toronto arts community at the Betty Oliphant Theatre, as well as your emailed message, also September 27, 2018, to the Chairs and CEOs of all Canadian Public Arts Funders (CPAF).

To recap previous communications, the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA) sent you a letter on September 11 about a disparity that TAPA perceived between Canada Council for the Arts (CCA) funding to performing arts organizations in Toronto, compared to Montreal.

On September 20, you convened a teleconference of funders who had been copied on TAPA's letter. The teleconference included four representatives of CCA, two representatives of the Toronto Arts Council (TAC), two representatives of the City of Toronto Arts and Culture Services (ACS), and four representatives of Ontario Arts Council (OAC).

OAC stated in the call that we concurred with TAPA's concerns and said that a similar inequity had existed for many years between the proportionate amount of CCA funding that goes to Ontario, compared with Quebec. We reminded you that OAC has discussed this matter with CCA many times over the years, and that Peter Caldwell and Carolyn Vesely had personally discussed this with you at a May 11, 2016 meeting in Toronto, convened to discuss CCA's digital strategy. At that time, you told us CCA was well aware of this issue, recognized it as a problem, and that the disparity would be addressed when CCA began to disburse its new, significantly increased funding.

In a September 25, 2018 letter to you, OAC further raised the issue of inequity between CCA's funding of Ontario artists and arts organizations and those in Quebec. This letter was copied to the President and Executive Director of TAPA who, we've been told, chose to share the letter with their 188 member organizations. You sent us a short emailed response, which we understand you asked TAPA to also share with its membership.

Your September 27 message to CPAF referred to the September 20 teleconference, and stated that OAC had “inaccurately” shared the contents of a “private conversation”.

At no time during the teleconference of September 20 was the conversation deemed to be “private”. OAC’s position was that TAPA should have been included on the call. And nothing in our September 25 letter to you was “inaccurate.”

On September 27, CCA convened a town hall-style meeting at the Betty Oliphant Theatre. At this meeting, a critical set of information was presented on one slide, a photograph of which is attached as **Appendix 1** (no handouts of the slides were made available). Most community attendees interpreted the large bar chart on this slide as showing that 22% of CCA’s total funding goes to Ontario and 17% goes to Quebec. As you know, this is not accurate.

In fact, these percentages relate only to the 256 Ontario-based arts organizations that receive CCA core funding, compared to the 315 Quebec-based organizations that receive CCA core funding. And the chart shows only the collective public sector revenues for these organizations, and the proportion of which is provided by CCA.

A clearer and more relevant representation of the distribution of CCA funding across Canada is shown on the attached **Appendix 2**, entitled “Percentage of Canadian Artists per Province, Compared to Canada Council for the Arts 2016-17 Funding and Peer Assessors”. All of this information is taken directly from the “Overview of Canada Council Funding and Canadian Statistics” for 2016-17, the most recent year available, on the CCA website.

According to the Statistics Canada numbers cited on Canada Council’s website, the Ontario arts community (43% of Canada’s artists) is literally twice the size of Quebec’s (21% of Canada’s artists). As we know, these StatsCan numbers may not be perfect, but they are by far the best external benchmark that Canadian arts funders have to determine the relative proportion of artistic activity that occurs within each jurisdiction.

As is clear from this chart, some serious inequities exist across Canada, between the percentage of artists who live in each province, the percentage of CCA funding that goes to those provinces, and the percentage of peer assessors that CCA appoints from those provinces. (Prince Edward Island and the territories could not be included on this chart because CCA’s website does not provide census data for these jurisdictions, due to concerns about reliability).

No one is suggesting Canada Council funding should be distributed in strict proportion to the number of artists who live in each province or territory. But, as the national funder supported by Canadian taxpayers in every part of Canada, we believe that CCA’s decision-making should result in funding to each province and territory that somewhat reflects the amount of arts activity in each jurisdiction.

In 2016-17, CCA funding to five of the nine provinces (Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland) was relatively proportionate to the percentage of Canada’s artists who live there – with a slightly higher than proportionate share of CCA funding to each, and also a slightly higher than proportionate share of CCA peer assessors from each.

But there are four significant anomalies. British Columbia has 18% of Canada's artists, but received only 14.9% of CCA funding that year (with 17.1% of CCA peer assessors from BC). Alberta has 8% of Canada's artists, but received only 5.8% of CCA funding (with 5.5% of CCA peer assessors from Alberta).

The situation is most problematic in Ontario. Ontario has 43% of Canada's artists, but received only 32.4% of Canada Council funding in 2016-17. CCA also appointed only 25.8% of its peer assessors from Ontario that year.

By comparison, Quebec has only 21% of Canada's artists, but received 31.8% of Canada Council funding in 2016-17. And CCA appointed 32.3% of its peer assessors from Quebec that year.

The disproportionately high percentage of CCA peer assessors from Quebec cannot be explained by the fact that Canada Council has a large number of panels that are either conducted in French or are bilingual; if Francophone peer assessors were required, there are many Francophone artists in other provinces, particularly Ontario, Manitoba and New Brunswick.

It's true that there is a wide disparity of arts support by municipal and provincial/territorial governments across Canada. For example, the City of Montreal's per capita spending on the arts is more than double the City of Toronto's. And the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec's 2017-18 budget was \$114 million (\$13.62 per capita), compared to OAC's \$70 million (\$4.93 per capita).

However, regardless of the particular circumstances within each jurisdiction across Canada, including the level of support each provincial, territorial and municipal government is able to provide, the artists and arts organizations of each jurisdiction should be entitled to receive a fair share of federal government support through the Canada Council for the Arts. This has not been the case for a very long time, especially for Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta, and it is long past time for this to be addressed.

One reason often cited by CCA for the funding disparity between Quebec and Ontario is that CCA receives more applications from Quebec than from Ontario. This may well have been the case at one point, but no longer; we noted in our September 25 letter that there were 10% more applications from Ontario in 2016-17, yet 12% more grants awarded to Quebec. Of course there should be twice as many applications from Ontario than Quebec, given the relative size of the arts communities in each province, and we hope that will be the case in future.

We believe that the relatively low number of applications from Ontario artists and arts organizations is both a cause and an effect of CCA's long-term underfunding of Ontario's artists and arts organizations. Many artists and organizations stopped applying for Canada Council funding long ago, after putting a great deal of effort into their applications but never being funded. They feel the deck is stacked against them.

As noted above, CCA provides core funding to 256 organizations in Ontario. OAC provides ongoing operating funding to 557 organizations. So more than half of the fully professional, not-for-profit arts organizations funded by OAC currently receive no funding at all from CCA.

We believe that the Canada Council for the Arts has a responsibility to reach out to encourage greater numbers of applications from any jurisdiction – such as Ontario – where the application numbers are demonstrably lower than they should be compared to the size of that jurisdiction’s arts community.

In your September 25 message to OAC, you said, “As a national funder, the Canada Council is committed to a fair, rigorous and transparent approach across all jurisdictions”. We are reassured by this, and would like to be clear that, as a provincial funder, Ontario Arts Council is committed to exactly the same things.

We were also encouraged to read, in your September 27, 2018 letter to provincial and territorial arts councils across Canada, of your hope “that we can all have some positive and fruitful conversations in the weeks to come. We are all colleagues in the arts funding milieu and, while we may have different perspectives and roles, our fundamental objectives are shared.”

We share that sentiment also, and invite that conversation.

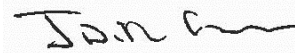
Sincerely,



Peter Caldwell  
Director & CEO



Rita Davies  
Chair



Judith Gelber  
Vice-Chair

- cc. Pierre Lassonde, Chair, Canada Council for the Arts
- Canadian Public Arts Funders Chairs and CEOs
- Carolyn Warren, Director General Arts Granting, Canada Council for the Arts
- Michelle Chawla, Director General Strategy & Public Affairs, Canada Council for the Arts
- Régine Cadet, President, Board of Directors, Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts
- Jacoba Knaapen, Executive Director, Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts
- Claire Hopkinson, Director and CEO, Toronto Arts Council
- Patrick Tobin, Director, Arts and Culture Services, City of Toronto
- Rosslyn Jacobs Edwards, Chair, PASO Alliance