

What We Heard

Professional Arts Organizations Program
Program Review Process 2015-2016

Community Consultation Meetings



Saskatchewan Arts Board

1355 Broad Street
Regina, SK S4R 7V1
306.787.4056 or 800.667.7526

www.saskartsboard.ca

MISSION

The Saskatchewan Arts Board recognizes, encourages, and supports the arts to enrich community well-being, creativity, diversity, and prosperity.

VISION

A creative society where the arts, artistic expression, and innovation play a dynamic role and are accessible to everyone in Saskatchewan.

VALUES

- *Accessibility* – We are committed to providing accessible and user-friendly service to our clients.
- *Diversity* – We are committed to building an organization that reflects the ever-increasing diversity of the people of Saskatchewan and which embraces a broad scope of creativity and artistic expression through the arts.
- *Accountability* – Our policies and processes are transparent and reflect a commitment to effective stewardship for the public trust we hold.
- *Collaboration* – We recognize greater outcomes will be achieved through collaboration, partnerships, and the engagement of clients, staff, and stakeholders.
- *Excellence* – Our commitment to focusing on our clients and going above and beyond to support excellence in the arts.
- *Adaptability* – Our ability to think differently, innovate, and continuously evolve in order to support our clients and the dynamic role of the arts within a creative society.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

In recent years, the Saskatchewan Arts Board (SAB) has been raising questions about the manner in which our operating grant program functions. This is not uncommon. Public funders from across Canada and around the world are raising similar concerns, but these questions are particularly prevalent now for two principal reasons.

At its simplest level, public arts funding in Canada originally hoped to serve two primary purposes: the development of a unique Canadian body of artistic work and the provision of opportunities for all Canadians to have access to quality arts experiences. Over the first 50 years of public arts funding, a great deal of emphasis was placed on that first aim – the development of a unique Canadian voice. While funders will always need to continue to support this type of activity, public funding has succeeded in growing Canadian artists and arts organizations whose work is recognized both at home and internationally. Over the last ten years, funding bodies have begun placing increased emphasis on the second part of that mandate – the accessibility of the arts to all Canadians. This new focus is not surprising given increased expectations around accountability for the use of public funds.

The arts sector in Canada has also been changing. Over the last 50 years, the sector has experienced phenomenal growth, helped along by generous operating grants from public funders. This growth has been great for the sector, and funding practices have reflected the desire to support culturally specific work, new art forms, nascent companies, and emerging artists. In order to enter operating streams at arts funders, however, artists have been forced to create formalized companies to produce their work, and funders are no longer in a position to provide the resources necessary to support those administratively heavy structures. In addition, the way in which artists are working is also changing; emerging creators are choosing to work in cross-disciplinary ways, forming temporary collaborations around individual projects, and engaging in new entrepreneurial practices to support their art.

Both of these changes – the growth of the sector and different priorities in arts funding – are taking place in an environment where public monies available to arts funders are not increasing as before. As a result, public arts funders have identified a number of challenges with operating funding programs like Professional Arts Organizations Program (PAOP).

- There is some inequity in funding levels within the PAOP program, either as a result of when an organization began receiving funding or as a result of past funding decreases.
- Historical inequities may run deeper than individual organization funding. Arts disciplines that were not originally funded have not necessarily attained the same core funding as disciplines that have always been supported.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO (continued)

- With flat-lined resources and a desire not to destabilize organizations already in the funding system, money has not been available to fund new organizations, to return organizations to former funding levels, to reward success, or to recognize risk-taking and innovation.
- Traditionally, arts funders have defined success in terms of growth, without regard to the "right sizing" of companies.
- Arts funding programs have required new applicants to become incorporated and/or register for charitable status, establishing an infrastructure that requires a certain base level of support in order to be maintained.
- Questions have been raised about the role of various types of players in the full arts ecology. What is the role of larger institutions in relation to small and mid-sized companies and in relation to individual artists? How can we best support emergent or next-generation arts practice?
- Current funding models do not seem to address questions of organizational life-cycle; companies may require different levels or types of support at different times within that cycle.

As we grapple with these issues, we want to reflect the values of the SAB. We believe in transparent review processes that allow input from both the organizations that we support and the wider arts community. We engage in ongoing evaluation in order to support the arts community more effectively, and we remain steadfastly committed to the concept of excellence. We invited our partners and the community, therefore, to attend a number of public meetings to help us test our assumptions around the challenges in the program and to try to tease out creative solutions.

Those public meetings were amazing – both helpful and challenging in equal degrees. People entered the room with a real willingness to play; that spirit was reflected in their outspokenness, the respect they paid to other people's viewpoints, and their ability to build collaborative suggestions to address the challenges. The results of these meetings – *What We Heard* – are summarized in this document.

Michael Jones
CEO, Saskatchewan Arts Board

PHASE ONE – COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MEETINGS

During the week of November 30, 2015, a total of nine consultation meetings took place with over 60 arts organizations.

- Seven meetings were held with arts organizations currently funded through PAOP: four in Saskatoon and three in Regina. These meetings were by invitation. Organizations that we believed face similar challenges were clustered into small groups to facilitate discussion.
- One open meeting was held in both Regina and Saskatoon for organizations and individuals with a current or future interest in PAOP.

In advance of the meetings, a program review backgrounder and resource documents were circulated. The key issues promoting a program review at this time, from the perspective of the Arts Board were presented, and two questions were asked:

Question 1: Do these issues resonate for your organization? Do you have other issues?

Question 2: What is the best way forward?

Michael Jones, Arts Board CEO, and Arts Board Program Consultants Noreen Neu and Karen Henders facilitated all the meetings. Arts organizations were highly engaged in the process, open, and honest with their responses to the questions. Many diverse challenges and ideas were shared. The Arts Board staff listened and took many, many notes. We thank all those that participated so thoughtfully.

WHAT DID ARTS ORGANIZATIONS SAY?

This document presents a summary of what we heard during the consultation meetings. While only some quotes are included in this document, all comments were heard and are being considered during the program review process. Quotes were edited to remove personal information.

QUESTION 1: ISSUES

What we heard was that arts organizations face many challenges. Some are external and out of their control, some are organizational but difficult to address without adequate human resource capacity and funding. Some of these challenges are specific to the program requirements of the SAB and other public funders.

It was acknowledged that fixed (or the potential of reduced) funding levels to support arts organizations limits the options available to the Arts Board to respond to these challenges, as does the complexity of addressing funding inequities.

The following is a list of responses that were most frequently contributed regarding the question of issues faced by arts organizations in Saskatchewan.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

- Competition for audience, patrons, and volunteers
- Arts undervalued in society
- Lack of philanthropic culture

INTERNAL REALITIES

- Lack of capacity/funding: staff, technology, and infrastructure (makes it difficult to respond and maintain relevance)
- Chasing money and partnerships draws away from mandate
- Administrative overload results in an imbalance between operations and mandate (creation & presentation)
- Unsustainable organizational models: low pay and long hours make it difficult to attract and retain staff
- Unrecognized administrative cost to develop effective partnerships and community engagement
- Unrealistic programming expectations: fear of doing less restricts ability to respond to organizational realities
- Mandate and location inform organizations but may restrict revenue generation and fundraising potential

PROGRAM ISSUES

- Inadequate funding levels and inequities within the program
- Competition within the fixed funding system results in inability to address financial imbalances, support new entrants, restore funding levels of currently funded organizations, and reward success without cutting grant levels of currently funded organizations
- Arts organizations pressured to fill the current gap in arts education
- Ineligible to apply to Creative Saskatchewan and limited access to SaskCulture, Arts Board, and other project funding
- Program requirements favour larger organizations and cultivate an environment of competition and scarcity rather than abundance, cooperation, and collaboration
- Unclear program expectations and evaluation
- Assessment is broad and general, inflexible and prescriptive, and forces applicants to project too far in advance
- Assessment emphasizes development of organizational structures and growth and limits research, development, and risk-taking

The following are program aspects that we heard were working well:

- Peer adjudication
- Arms-length principle
- Multi-year funding

QUESTION 2: IDEAS

EXTERNAL REALITIES

Cultivate & Foster the Ecology

INTERNAL REALITIES

Additional Support & Resources

PROGRAM ISSUES

Program Improvement

Arts organizations offered some creative ideas to move forward. Here is a summary of some of the most common ones.

- Increase advocacy regarding the intrinsic value of the arts to promote appropriate funding levels from government and to encourage philanthropy and volunteerism
- Sustain and further define the arms-length principle
- Foster collaboration and partnership, in particular in the areas of fundraising, marketing, and administration
- Establish a base funding amount based on past practice and compete for additional funds
- Facilitate training for staff and board member education
- Facilitate peer networking and sharing
- Increase clarity of program expectations and evaluation
- Reduce reporting requirements by combining the year-end report with the application for new funding
- Assess an organization against its own goals and ability to achieve its mandate
- Increase the weight of past performance in the assessment process
- Make assessment reflect an organization's role in the ecosystem and assess organizations "like to like"
- Develop a fair notice policy in advance of any funding cuts and provide support to organizations to respond to the need for change
- Further define the roles of the SAB and Creative Saskatchewan in the provincial arts ecology
- Harmonize with other funding agencies such as Canada Council, Creative Saskatchewan, and SaskCulture
- Be strategic with funding cuts and don't cut across the board, because even small cuts have big implications for smaller organizations
- If you cut organizations, give them advance warning and support them to secure new funding through partnerships and sponsorships

NEXT STEPS

The SAB is extremely grateful to all of the people who came out to participate in these public review meetings. The conversations were lively and engaging, and the comments and suggestions that we heard were both supportive and searching. Although change can be intimidating, everyone who participated seemed to recognize that we needed to challenge all assumptions when trying to find new ways to address longstanding issues.

Over the coming months, the SAB will be continuing the review of our PAOP program.

- In late January, we will be opening an online survey portal. This survey will give people an opportunity to respond to the information in this document, and it will also give Arts Board staff a chance to ask more specific questions about certain topics.
- During March, staff will consider the responses to that survey and the material in this document as we consider any changes to the PAOP program.
- During the spring, the SAB will engage in further types of public consultation, testing our assumptions and looking for direct feedback on possible program directions.

Our goal is to have completed all consultations prior to the summer, so that the final version of the program guidelines and application form can be available in September 2016, well in advance of the next multi-year application deadline in January 2017.

QUOTES IN SUPPORT OF QUESTION ONE – ISSUES

External Factors

Competition for audience, patrons, and volunteers

“Your level of competition is greater, people are finding arts experiences in different ways – it’s just a changing landscape.”

“I come to the theatre because I can’t dial you up on Netflix – we’re competing with the couch experience.”

“Context within Globalization. A new factor is that we have audiences that will travel to other cities to see experimental and challenging work – not only wealthy patrons but millennials who will find the experimental stuff.”

“In rural areas, we are competing against sports for funds.”

Arts undervalued in society

“There’s a constant need for us to justify the importance of what we do – and I constantly have to say that I’m as important as an MRI which is stupid because we are comparing apples and farm equipment.”

“There is a cultural issue where the ‘product’ isn’t perceived to be worth what it costs.”

“Consumers vs patrons. Consumers need to know that patronage is required. We need to educate consumers on the importance of investing in the arts.”

“Ensure the public is aware and has access to see Saskatchewan’s own artists. The public can appreciate things that are experimental and that are in touch with their community. That’s something arts organizations can do on their own, but working together with other organizations can help.”

Lack of philanthropic culture

“We’ve created a mentality that the art experience is free, but that’s not sustainable.”

“The argument is that it’s like the public library and it’s already paid for with tax dollars, so they shouldn’t have to pay for admission.”

“A lot of the donors in Saskatchewan will give smaller donations to everyone. How do we get the culture of philanthropy, where we shift the ‘giving’ culture to be more strategic? For some of the donors, there isn’t even the ‘want’ to donate.”

Internal Realities

Lack of capacity/funding: staff, technology, and infrastructure (makes it difficult to respond and maintain relevance)

“Money and capacity go hand in hand. When you don’t have the capacity to do more, you are on a limited leash.”

“Retaining staff is a big issue.”

“We are often not paid at all for the work we do to keep the doors open.”

“We feel stretched because we can’t do everything, and there’s no time to work on the art.”

“The entire arts community is overworked and underpaid.”

“Most of our activity is not about creating the art but in inventing ways to find dollars – chicken-and-egg situation. Staff are becoming worn out, and more so when staff are passionate about what they do. There’s a human resources deficit and not enough young people, succession, and renewal.”

“Training people in small arts companies often ends with them leaving for larger institutions. Is a career possible in a small arts organization? It’s difficult within the economics of the smaller centres.”

QUOTES IN SUPPORT OF QUESTION ONE – ISSUES

Internal Realities (continued)

Chasing money and partnerships draws away from mandate

“Community project funding detracts from the core work of the organization and drains resources.”

“Is there a mechanism that can collectively help us with sponsorships? It’s a staff shortage problem.”

“Getting sponsorships is more competitive than getting grants. It’s often too much work for the return on investment. There’s not enough compatible sponsors.”

“Fundraising by organizations is becoming very competitive with concerns raised about saturating the public with funding requests. We don’t want the arts to be seen as something that always has its hand out.”

Administrative overload results in imbalance between operations and mandate (creation & presentation)

“35% of our operating money comes from public funders, and the rest of the money – we have to find it. We have to chase it. Now we’re a grant-producing machine, producing grant applications, not art. We should be funded to achieve our mandate, and we can’t afford to do less for fear of losing funding.”

“Continued support doesn’t necessarily come through once you become an organization.”

“The small organizations we are funding are half artist/half admin. You have to be at least equal, if not better at administration, if you want to get funding. You need to be able to write the grants to get the funds. You need to be able to ‘out write’ somebody else’s grant.”

Unsustainable organizational models: low pay and long hours make it difficult to attract and retain staff

“The notion of the life cycle of an organization is important. It leads to the point that when resources are tight, succession planning is neglected due to necessity.”

“Organizations are creating a house of cards that will collapse if that key ‘hat wearer’ leaves.”

“Organizations relying on volunteers reach a point where they have achieved all they can with volunteers but haven’t yet grown to the point of having resources to hire staff.”

“We are living on the knife’s edge constantly.”

“What we are doing has become something that is not traditional...not sure what it is, but it is at risk because we can’t hand it off yet as we are not paying ourselves enough yet so no one would want to take it over.”

“There’s a need for base-level funding for organizations that is greater than the project funding they can get.”

Unrecognized administrative cost to develop effective partnerships and community engagement

“Partnerships are so important, but there is no recognition or funding to go out and cultivate partnerships and build bonds in the community.”

“Relationship management takes a lot of time. There’s a significant amount of time required to write grant applications and meet with potential sponsors and partners.”

Unrealistic programming expectations: fear of doing less restricts ability to respond to organizational realities

“There is an expectation to do more with less. It means making a choice between less staff or lower pay. Leaders are working unpaid hours which leads to burn out.”

“The cost of operations is increasing each year, so more of our money is going to paying the concrete costs and less is going to creating art.”

“There is no room to fail, flounder, or regenerate.”

“There is pressure to keep up with a programming/production level for fear of being penalized by funders for scaling back.”

“We need different definitions of success.”

QUOTES IN SUPPORT OF QUESTION ONE – ISSUES

Internal Realities (continued)

Mandate and location inform organizations but may restrict revenue generation and fundraising potential

“Some companies have had success in partnering with local municipalities, blending disciplines at events, partnering with other local arts organizations.”

“We need support on different approaches to getting sponsorships in smaller communities and on sourcing together smaller funding pockets.”

“Acknowledge the cultural hub nature of some organizations, such as those in small communities. Strengthening them would strengthen their communities.”

“Public access – how is it achieved and assessed? Using it as an indicator of success, some organizations have different limits on access due to circumstance such as physical location.”

“It’s difficult for rural communities to keep any arts groups going.”

“A lot of Indigenous artists rely solely on us for work. Indigenous culture, language, and traditions – not just business challenges, opportunity challenges, in particular for young artists. It’s the way things are.”

Program Issues

Inadequate funding levels and inequities within the program

Competition within the fixed funding system results in inability to address financial imbalances, support new entrants, restore funding levels of currently funded organizations, and reward success without cutting grants levels of currently funded organizations

“The funding entitlements need to change. I can’t see our communities thriving if those artists who are starting their careers now have no way in.”

“We don’t spend enough time creating an environment so that when the organizations grow up they can ‘move out’ [of the funding program].”

“Money is a huge worry.”

“In some cases, there is more potential funding available for projects than an organization might receive annually to support operations.”

“For organizations to become sustainable, there needs to be a bridge to the next stage.”

“It would be great to have enough money to pay admin staff *and* for programming that we know will be successful, and then some for new ideas to try something developmental.”

“We need more money for staff, to have them qualified enough and to keep them at the organization for several years.”

“In the current situation for PAOP partners, organizations which received reduced funding at the last deadline are stuck at that lower funding level for an extended period.”

“We are dealing with a fixed system, a limited funding envelope – increases to one organization result in decreases to several others.”

Arts organizations pressured to fill the current gap in arts education

“We are asked to do more regarding education – this takes resources that are not in place.”

“Arts education is fundamental but challenging because of the lack of resources to support it in order to fill the gap. It’s not invested in by school boards. To have a society that values what we do, it really starts with our children. As arts funding is decreasing in school and parents aren’t exposing their children to as many different art forms, arts organizations react to that.”

QUOTES IN SUPPORT OF QUESTION ONE – ISSUES

Program Issues (continued)

Ineligible to apply to Creative Saskatchewan and limited access to SaskCulture, Arts Board, and others for project funding

“I can get funding to take a show abroad, but I can’t get funding to do work in the community. There’s funding to take the art out of Saskatchewan but not to do it here.”

“Projects may align perfectly with Creative Saskatchewan, but the problem is that those funds are not accessible if you already receive funding from the SAB.”

“There are missing opportunities because of lack of access to other sources of funding.”

“SaskCulture has funding available, but it is not accessible to all organizations.”

“The Culture on the Go grant is one of the only grant programs organizations can access, and most of the money has been taken out of the program and moved to Creative Saskatchewan, where organizations funded by the SAB cannot apply to access those funds. The impact is particularly difficult for organizations with minimal annual funding.”

“We can’t access programs outside of PAOP, can’t access Creative Sask, and are limited in what we can apply to at SaskCulture. The City of Regina limits funding as well.”

Program requirements favour larger organizations and cultivate an environment of competition and scarcity rather than abundance, cooperation, and collaboration

“[PAOP is an] admin-heavy program for small companies. We spend lots of time talking about what we’re going to do and what we did do and little on actually doing the work.”

“The application process – the burden to apply for a grant has grown exponentially in terms of paperwork and redundant information. Do I need to justify my existence to my provincial funder after a decades-long relationship and solid history? There needs to be more plasticity to it with more interaction between the funding body and the organizations.”

“It’s a lot of work to do these applications, so this continuous restructuring is hard for us.”

“We recognize the need to bring new organizations into the fold, but at the same time the funding is finite. New groups mean we need to be competitive.”

“Competitiveness of fundraising is a barrier to resource sharing.”

“We need to encourage a cooperative rather than competitive system, honouring each party’s respective role.”

“It doesn’t make sense for smaller companies to compete against larger organizations. We’re doing very different work and there needs to be funding for creation and development while still engaging with the community. While [support for creation] exists in [the SAB’s programs for artists], there’s a role for companies to play in bringing cohesion and guidance, a ‘home’ in which to work.”

“Writing grants is a full-time process in itself. The system is built to fund companies that have a stable admin structure and programming.”

QUOTES IN SUPPORT OF QUESTION ONE – ISSUES

Program Issues (continued)

Unclear program expectations and evaluations

Assessment is too broad and general, inflexible and prescriptive, and forces applicants to project too far in advance

Assessment emphasizes development of organizational structures and growth and limits research, development, and risk-taking

“Governance requirements are cumbersome – they should be used to determine eligibility for funding but not jury evaluation.”

“Organizational funding programs can be more company-oriented than you have staff or infrastructure to support.”

“The challenge is being innovative and creative and taking risks. But as a large organization, the ability to take a risk like that and come out on the other end isn’t there. The risk may be too great. Sometimes, risks fail, and there should be room for that.”

“Artistic risk-taking is a value.”

“The criteria for evaluating organizations should be less based on numbers. Programs need to be evaluated in relation to their life cycle with weighted criteria dependent upon where they are in that life cycle.”

“We’re pushed to have the product before we’ve had enough development time; it’s often easier to curate shows that are made elsewhere. [The program] model forces you into presenting mode as opposed to being creative, partly because you know how much existing works will cost.”

“The multi-year cycle makes it hard to be responsive when having to submit long-term projections. It’s difficult to respond to emerging needs.”

“We need to make the evaluation criteria as clear as possible to organizations.”

“There seems to be inconsistency in the rules and where funds are allocated.”

“There is a fear that program criteria will be too prescriptive and that’s not necessarily helpful for arts organizations or for the arts ecology of the province.”

“The application doesn’t allow for telling our story in the best way; we have to fit a mould.”

What is Working Well

Peer adjudication

Arms-length principle

Multi-year funding

“Applause to the SAB for having a consultative process. It’s important that we feel we’re heard.”

“Ask organizations what’s working well, and don’t mess with it.”

“Peer jury is important and should not be messed with.”

“The make-up of juries is quite important and should include people with expertise in the disciplines they are judging. That’s a strength of the SAB.”

“If someone is doing a great job, why would you bake them a smaller pie? When there’s continuity, there’s growth.”

“Global funding and multi-year funding should be continued.”

“A three-year cycle is helpful for planning and budgeting.”

“Back-door, non-juried processes are wrong and should not happen, and the government should not be creating programs – the principle of arm’s length is important.”

QUOTES IN SUPPORT OF QUESTION TWO – IDEAS MOVING FORWARD

External Realities

Increase advocacy regarding the intrinsic value of the arts to promote appropriate funding levels from government and to encourage philanthropy and volunteerism

Sustain and further define the arms-length principle

“What role does SAB have in the arts, and in getting the government to understand the role of the arts in the province and federally?”

“Encourage donors to ‘adopt a company’ – one-on-one contact between the public and artists is very appealing.”

“What about the provincial government giving tax breaks to arts sponsors/donors?”

“Or the city says ‘Anyone who contributes to an arts organization gets their sign on a bus!’”

“We need to look for another pie, rather than slicing the same one into smaller and smaller pieces.”

“It should be made clear to the provincial government that inflation should be acknowledged, especially with PAOP clients. If Saskatchewan is continuing to grow, it’s not too much to ask the government for compensation in those areas, without even adding other programs. CARFAC urges 3-5% increases in artist fees.”

“How can the SAB help organizations connect with other avenues of funding, benefiting the ecology as a whole?”

“A case could be made to government that organizations need to modernize.”

“Unless we can get governments to recognize arts on an intrinsic level, we’re all vulnerable. SAB’s mandate is about stewardship and being there for the community, but they should also be stressing the value of art. Help the community be a louder voice for the arts in a non-economic way.”

“Fundors should lead in reconnecting with politicians, and let them know how pervasive the arts are in this province.”

QUOTES IN SUPPORT OF QUESTION TWO – IDEAS MOVING FORWARD

Internal Realities

Foster collaboration and partnership, in particular in the areas of fundraising, marketing, and administration

Facilitate peer networking and sharing

“Peer to Peer – If the SAB utilized its network hub for organizations, to encourage learning/networking/partnering and mentorship to strengthen organizations/applications. Having us all in a room to talk together to create the partnership is great. If there was a meeting where you know that everyone will be at, you’ll go to it. The arts community is the most valuable thing here. Not only is it valuable to create the network, but it’s good to speak to other artists.”

“There was a point when the SAB felt like a part of the community. It feels different now. The strength of the Arts Board vs the Canada Council was that I felt connected to the SAB and they knew me. One of the most important things the SAB did was *come to see your work*, not so much anymore.”

“Increase support for collaborations; target different audiences, and it will increase collaboration on the funding side.”

“Could organizations share jobs? Fundraising?”

“*Speed dating* for patrons and artists would be great. Introduce artists to people with money, have a database of donors, and hold an event with live arts.”

“Organizations with money in the bank could ‘sponsor’ a smaller organization.”

“There could be reciprocity between larger organizations with financial resources and smaller ones with skills.”

“Perhaps there are models that can be pursued that take advantage of the fact that you have considerable long-time investments in your larger organizations. Encouraging mentorship is a good idea. Pair short-term projects with long-term organizations.”

“Invest in knowledge or shared resources. We talk about not having financial resources, but we often don’t have time resources. Work toward something so the organizations that are playing the key role in Saskatchewan can get the information they need and the transformation they need to get to the next step.”

“It’s challenging to get corporate or donor funding in Saskatchewan, particularly for smaller arts organizations.”

“Could smaller organizations be ‘romancing’ larger organizations to act as umbrella organizations?”

“Have a ‘brain trust’ – collective knowledge/history of organizations. When organizations rely heavily on one person, they lose continuity when that person moves on.”

“A free internship program through the SAB. Perhaps summer students from the university, with the Arts Board providing ‘matching’ funds for internship programs, would be great.”

“Collaborating with non-arts organizations benefits everyone.”

“Instead of holding multiple fundraisers all the time, is there a way to do *one big massive* fundraiser between three or four groups so it’s not a constant ask? If there’s one thing, people can support it all.”

“Create more partnerships with the university – that’s where the new artists are.”

“We need to consider combining resources between organizations. We need to find creative ways to pool resources so that new players get a piece of the pie.”

“Could there be a type of ‘United Way’ organization for the arts? ArtsVest demands you do well – if not, you get nothing. It’s not reliable, you can’t depend on it for funding.”

“Could there be a database of organizations interested in collaboration/sharing knowledge? There are potential benefits of cross-pollination and peer-to-peer mentorship.”

“Grassroots collaborating and networking is best, rather than a top-down approach. It’s fine for SAB to influence this, as long as it’s not creating more hoops to jump through.”

“Some larger organizations offer benefits to smaller organizations, which should be considered when looking at re-engaging the arts companies. For example, larger galleries sometimes service rural galleries – the network of community galleries really helps. But some other types of organizations, like theatre, might not have the benefit of a network. Can there be some connections made with organizations that are already established to give smaller organizations a leg up?”

“Reimagine the process for creation. Lots of independent artists have quit or moved elsewhere, because they feel new work isn’t supported in process or by an audience. There could be a broker or liaison for artists to develop projects. Make the operational model flexible enough to fit that kind of innovation.”

QUOTES IN SUPPORT OF QUESTION TWO – IDEAS MOVING FORWARD

Internal Realities (continued)

Establish a base funding amount based on past practice and compete for additional funds

Facilitate training for staff and board member education

“Is there support that could come from the SAB on how to recruit/train/retain volunteers and how can we access funding to hire staff?”

“Could the SAB invite boards in and provide education, resources, networking?”

“Bringing in an outside consultant to work with the board would be beneficial if there were funds available, such as capacity-building grants.”

“Some young people may create organizations to create their own jobs. Arts funders may have steered the direction of organizational creation, but young artists want to belong to the milieu and have an income. Arts funders should look at new funding for those artists without them having to make a separate entity with a building, board, etc.”

“If there are no capacity-building funds available, the funding isn't enough to be able to build the organization and grow capacity.”

“A certain level of guaranteed funding based on specific performance markers would contribute to organizational stability.”

“We're looking to address disparities between new and old organizations in the program. We need to look at evaluation in terms of discipline vs role in the arts ecology and organizational life cycle.”

“People and relationships always end up being what drives this ship. I would love to see if a funder had the capacity to look at an organization and recognize that they are a champion/leader. Have funders fund a 'position' with an actual living wage. Let's push the funders to value the position.”

“Have support to identify transformational changes and invest in transformation as a sustainable change.”

Program Issues

Increase clarity of program expectations and evaluation

Reduce reporting requirements by combining the year-end report with the application for new funding

“It would be great to go to all the agencies we get funding from, show them everything we want to do, and ask for operational and project funding.”

“SAB should communicate very clearly about what its expectations are and what success looks like while fitting with SAB's mandate and that of the organization.”

“There is confusion about whether SAB's priorities are changing. What is it trying to accomplish for the people of Saskatchewan? We spend a lot of time trying to check off all those boxes: recreation, entertainment, social justice. The main emphasis should be on the artist and artwork.”

“Moving to a four-year multi-year term in order to harmonize with the Canada Council would be good.”

“Look at the timing of deadlines compared with those of other funders. If they line up and the structures and criteria are similar, it is helpful to have the deadlines be similar. But if they are not, it's nice to have a year to work on it.”

“There isn't a 'good time' to write grants. Having enough lead time to get your application done is needed.”

“Consider separating financial and programming information.”

“Online applications could be helpful, possibly with an online portal, so everything we need is right there, including feedback.”

“To take some of the work load off the organizations, SAB could ask for letters of support from partners and audience members, like 8-10 letters to create a 360-degree view of your impact on the community. Let them write the narrative for you.”

“If an organization has a strong/long history of successful applications, if there is a relationship built over many years ('grandmothered'), is there a way to streamline the grant process, less narrative, more of a checkbox?”

“If SAB could communicate or share best practices, that would help everyone. ArtsVest, for example, has a national awards process.”

QUOTES IN SUPPORT OF QUESTION TWO – IDEAS MOVING FORWARD

Program Issues (continued)

Assess an organization against its own goals and ability to achieve its mandate

Increase the weight of past performance in the assessment process

Make assessment reflect an organization's role in the ecosystem and assess organizations "like to like"

"Paying staff professionally and cultural impact (work by new Saskatchewan artists) should be included in [assessment] criteria. It's hard to know if criteria are met when jurors don't have room to reward our organizations."

"Make sure the programming you're doing is reflective of the diversity of Saskatchewan, as far as cultural background and ages, as it relates to your mandate. Some organizations have been asked to apply to different programs that didn't necessarily fit – high art programming trying to fit with community-oriented criteria."

"Using organization growth as an indicator of success creates the danger of growing for the sake of growth."

"Organizations welcome jury feedback. We need to milk more feedback from juries, regarding efficiencies, 'lean' practices, are we the right size, are we charging the right amount – a mentorship approach."

"The commercial nature of certain organizations can't be recognized in PAOP in an evaluative way. Creative Saskatchewan seems to understand that. There needs to be a dialogue between the two agencies about what will happen in sectors in the next few years."

"Which organizations should stop operating? A 'flying squad' could be available to intervene and fix things or shut the organization down."

"Applicants should also be weighted by what they've accomplished in the past, not only what they're planning to do. Has the organization fulfilled its mandate to this point? How did they innovate?"

"The power of narrative is important, though stats are too. Just basing the story on data is counter-intuitive to what the arts community does. Allow organizations to tell their stories in the way they tell it best. Applications can make organizations fit a mould when it should instead ask how the applicant contributes to Saskatchewan."

"Retention of artists in the province has been a big goal, and contributing to the conditions that allow artists to develop here could be an indicator of success."

"Assessment should consider how progressive/innovative an organization is and how relevant, which is not about size. Quality over quantity as an indicator of success."

"Organizations need to be evaluated in relation to their life cycle with weighted criteria dependent upon where they are in that life cycle."

"Quality of the art, the impact on the community, and the impact on the cultural environment, how can we tell the story of our impact in Saskatchewan?"

"Acknowledging the contribution of volunteers: it's an investment in culture, and it takes resources to look after them. Are volunteers an indicator of success?"

"Look at the history of an organization and its ability to perform – history is something active – and look at development. Longevity and the ability to change or adapt are good indicators of success."

"How do you measure quality? Do not write off a mainstream production right away, because it may be challenging as far as production and may be original for the province, though not necessarily an avant-garde work or Shakespeare. Audience is a loaded indicator. It's relative to what you're doing."

"It is important to assess like with like, as opposed to assessing against peers who may not have comparable mandates or sizes."

QUOTES IN SUPPORT OF QUESTION TWO – IDEAS MOVING FORWARD

Program Issues (continued)

Further define the roles of the SAB and Creative Saskatchewan in the provincial arts ecology

Harmonize with other funding agencies such as Canada Council, Creative Saskatchewan, and SaskCulture

“Be cognizant of overlaps between funding agencies.”

“Is there a way for the SAB, Creative Saskatchewan, and SaskCulture to work together with organizations that fit into different pieces of these agencies?”

“We need marketing to expand reach, and we need access to funds from Creative Saskatchewan to do so.”

“The Canada Council is currently overhauling their application process, and the SAB is also. Is there a way of streamlining it and making the process easier? It’s a lot of work to do these applications, so the continuous restructuring is hard for us.”

“[Could we have] one grant application and apply to both? Or, if the criteria for Saskatchewan is slightly different, could we submit our Canada Council application with an addendum responding to the difference in criteria?”

Develop a fair notice policy in advance of any funding cuts and provide support to organizations to respond to the need for change

Be strategic with funding cuts and don’t cut across the board, because even small cuts have big implications for smaller organizations

If you cut organizations, give them advance warning and support them to secure funding through partnerships and sponsorships

“Some organizations will get dramatic cuts that irreversibly change their organization. How does SAB keep to its mandate to support high-quality work and support the organizations as they go through that? Or should they be dramatically cut at all? Prepare organizations for the realities of cuts, for example ‘Here are areas where the jury noticed you’re flagging, so you’ll be cut next year.’ That might be a way to get new organizations into the program. Have a fair notice policy with a maximum percentage of how much an organization can be increased or cut within a year.”

“Are there groups with surplus funds still receiving funding? How could they give back?”

“Could juries be advised on how to distribute cuts, keeping in mind the percentage of the reductions relative to the size of organizations? A \$2,000 cut has a huge impact on an organization receiving \$10,000 compared to one receiving \$50,000. The impact of funding cuts to small organizations can be significant.”

“Is there room to do less (and do it better) without being penalized by funders for doing so?”

“If you’re taking money from big companies and giving it to the little guys who have better community engagement, then you are going to create a theatre-going community which will go to more shows. That helps everyone.”

“How do we help companies at the top find alternate funding so that money can go back into funding the new work and organizations?”

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