

APAC is an informal coalition of Alberta’s eight Provincial Arts Service Organizations and four Cultural Industry Service Organizations. APAC advocates for a strong, sustainable arts and cultural sector in Alberta and speaks collectively on priorities and opportunities that impact our members. APAC member organizations understand that a strong, sustainable and vibrant arts and cultural sector plays an important role in Alberta’s success, reputation, future growth and the vitality of our communities.

We are mindful of the realities facing our province as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. While all parts of our economy have been impacted, Alberta’s arts and cultural sector has been one of the hardest hit industries in the province.

The Canadian Association for the Performing Arts, responding to the Statistics Canada Labour Force survey said, “in proportion to its size, the arts, entertainment and recreation sector is the furthest away from recovery... the sub-sector runs the risk of facing a major shortage of skilled workers when live performance activities (finally) resume.”<sup>1</sup>

A September 2020 survey conducted by Calgary Arts Development found 47 per cent of the 140 organizations responding said they would have to cease operations in the next six to 12 months if current conditions persist.<sup>2</sup> Lost revenue in the current fiscal year, just from the 140 organizational respondents, is anticipated to be more than \$20.6 million.<sup>3</sup> Further, these same organizations anticipate losing additional \$16 million revenue going forward.<sup>4</sup>

If you extrapolate that to the more than 450 non-profit arts organizations supported by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA), that loss balloons to more than \$117 million, about **four times** the amount of AFA funding in 2019-2020.

Further examples include:

- Two-thirds of arts and cultural organizations in Canada have had to lay off staff or reduce employee hours as a result of COVID-19.<sup>5</sup>
- Magazine publishers have seen advertising, newsstand, subscription and events revenue reduced by up to 80 per cent since March. The closure of bookstores, libraries and educational institutions will result in a projected 50-80 per cent revenue loss for Alberta book publishers this year.
- For independent artists, their revenues from live performing, touring and sales of their products have been reduced significantly, and for some to zero. Many of these are seriously considering leaving the sector due to economic hardships, and the facts that there are many festivals and events that have indicated that they will not return in the next year.
- Employment in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector fell 10.6% in September 2020. Total actual hours worked in the arts, entertainment and recreation went down 13.1%. They were 28.9% lower than a year ago for the same period.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://capacoa.ca/en/2020/10/employment-in-arts-and-culture-september-2020/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://calgaryartsdevelopment.com/publications/covid-19-impact-survey/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://calgaryartsdevelopment.com/publications/covid-19-impact-survey/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://calgaryartsdevelopment.com/publications/covid-19-impact-survey/>

<sup>5</sup> Festivals and Major Events Canada, [COVID-19: Survey of Festivals and events in Canada](#), August 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada, [Labour Force Survey, by selected industries, Canada, unadjusted for seasonality, September 2020](#). Calculations by CAPACOA.

While COVID-19 impacts have strained our economy, the Government of Alberta has a number of tools and options to resolve it over the medium term, as indicated in your public survey. The cultural sector does not have these same advantages.

However, we are highly productive and efficient with investments received both in return on investment and in creating jobs. Alberta's non-profit arts and culture sector relies heavily on a volunteer workforce, but it is also an important employer of professional artists, arts administrators, and technicians. The sector is home to professional and community arts initiatives, fulfilling the diverse tastes of Albertans in their demand for access to the arts across the population. Communities continue to sustain the arts even when competition for time and money from other sectors is constant.

A 2014 AFA study noted, "There is one aspect in which the sector truly shines and that is the amount of employment it creates per dollar spent. Information from the input-output model indicates that the arts sector creates almost 22 full-time equivalent jobs for every \$1 million of expenditure in the sector. The oil and gas sector creates fewer than three jobs for every \$1 million expenditure."<sup>7</sup>

Implementing three proposals identified the Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women's 2020-23 Business Plan is paramount considering the COVID impacts on our sector:

- growing Alberta's creative and cultural industries by 25%, or \$1.5 billion over the next decade;
- implementing an Arts Professions Act to give formal recognition to artists, their representative associations, and all culture creators, and;
- establishing the Creative Partnerships Alberta program to mentor and assist artists, arts organizations, the cultural industries and civil society to generate income and support from the private sector, and build partnerships between the arts, philanthropy and business sectors.

Investment now in these priorities will increase Albertans wellbeing while contributing to our economic recovery. We see it as a government priority over the next three to four years to make this vision a reality – through active engagement and collaboration with the cultural sector, targeted and increased investment, focused measures for employment retention and growth, and a shared commitment to building a global cultural powerhouse.

These are challenging times, and bold leadership is required. We must continue to tell our stories. Alberta's artists and cultural creators are a key component to sharing Alberta's stories with the world. Artists and arts businesses are ready to work at full capacity, when it is safe to do so, to again create, entertain, and engage. To fully return will require the commitment of the entire sector, government investment, and individual and corporate patronage.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/dd8b6894-c350-4559-b7a4-18c16e38635d/resource/25c9f9f3-a9c7-4441-8857-0c592451ab9c/download/6799644-2014-arts-impact-alberta-ripple-effects-arts-sector.pdf>