

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC: What policy changes and public support are needed to advance equity in the arts?

- **“When we know about who created these policies, we need to know the history and outcomes of the people who were the intended beneficiaries of the policies.”** SAA prepares does a research paper on provincial legislation and policies that affect art, culture and artists, with a decolonizing perspective, to allow everyone to understand before proposing changes.
- **Treaty commitments come first when proposing legislative changes.** i) Artists and art organizations need Indigenous awareness and Treaty training. 2) Indigenous governments and governing organizations must be involved in verifying or proposing legislative changes.
- **“Cumbersome words are meant to deceive”.** Advocate for simple language in legislation, policies and grants to create understanding and less colonial bullshit.
- **Acts requiring changes:** Multiculturalism Act; Status of the Artist; Accessibility Act.
- **Government/agency contacts:** make the responsible person’s name and contact easy to find.
- **Universal Basic Income.** Addressing low income levels for artists through UBI.
- **Changes made in presence of reflective members of the arts community.** Changes proposed to government need genuine involvement from artists and opportunity to learn and comment.
- **Making spaces safe.** i) Participants in gatherings like this one need to have had anti-racism training, and/or Indigenous awareness training beforehand. li) efforts need to be redoubled to make sure Indigenous artists and organizations are invited and welcomed appropriately.
- **Public perception.** The public supports funding, and supports artists. So they are important. Sharing more economic information about the impact of artists. Or approaching this from a different worldview – that art and culture is essential to being human, an inextricable part of a healthy society and economy. Create ways for public to contribute in-kind.
- **Accessibility.** i) For people and artists with varied abilities; ii) affordable for children.
- **Taxation changes.** i) create a foundation to accept tax-deductible donations for artists and small organizations; ii) make the tax burden on artists go away, or be lighter; iii) tax landlords who leave potential studio or rehearsal or performance spaces empty, then give the money to artists and arts organizations, iv) give tax incentives to landlords who share their spaces with artists.
- **Employment benefits:** create a service centre that delivers employment benefits to artists and for arts organizations, including mental health service benefits.
- **Free studio spaces.** Accessible, with the insurance and maintenance managed.
- **“As Indigenous people we want to lift each other up”.** Arts organizations only have enough funding for one artist. Address competition in the granting process; find a new way to allocate.
- **Authentic representation.** i) We need respectful representation on the boards of key artistic organizations that guide how we lead artistic lives. li) pay people to be on Boards, like SAA.

ARTS AND CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS: How can organizations, based on their size, embed equity, diversity, and systemic change into their organizations?

- **Education.** Pay to be educated, don't expect others to teach you. No harvesting of information as opposed to partnership or revenue opportunities. Learn from people who have set themselves up to teach and share. A collective of arts organizations could earn together.
- **Ask some difficult questions** with reflection and time to respond, and come up with answers. Questions like:
 - Is everything for everyone? Grappling being true to who we are as an organization with access (for everyone).
 - Why would someone want to be involved in our organization?
 - Why aren't we getting a representative response to our calls for artists?
 - Do we have enough time and commitment to dedicate to relationships, learning, listening, and changing?
- **Don't make excuses about the absence of people** from your circle or table. If they're not there, take responsibility.
- **Leave your office and regular circles** and go to those who have been strategically underserved, and repressed, and extracted from. Be trustworthy, offer something, and create relationships.
- **Different forms of accessibility.** i) active and participatory children engagement during events (not just child-minding); ii) affordability (or no charge at all); iii) young people included through pedagogy-based arts education from an early age and throughout their schooling.
- **If you're already doing it, we need to do it as a group. (We can) lean into other peoples' specialties.** Create support circles for organizations to practice new pathways for representative decision-making and full participation together.
- **Representation requires considered commitments.** Make it specific, and dedicate resources. Time and money are required for the "slow build" of relationship and new pathways in.
- **"There's no box to tick for 'quality relationships'."** Plus, grants end too fast to create trust.
- **Funding renewal,** through funders listening and elevating voices in the room, and being responsive, there can be a change.
- **Arts organizations are systems.** SAA can share their experiences embedding systemic changes around intersectionality. Other arts organizations with embedded change can share that experience.
- **Examine your strategic plan, policies, procedures, and programming.** Choose who you want to include, how to make it more expansive, and make a plan.
- **Diversity needs to happen at a core level of the definitions of an artist, and definitions of a discipline.** We need to be asking: What's theatre? What belongs in a visual art gallery? Who is a professional artist?