

Ontario’s Performing Arts Funders: Who’s who?

A Guide for Presenters

Funding for the arts in Ontario comes primarily from all three levels of government, as well as some private foundations. Many organizations are also financially supported by corporate & individual sponsorships.

Here are a few major organizations funding the arts in Ontario.

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Funding source:

- The Canadian Federal Government provides the funding to the Canada Council, but does not decide how it is distributed (this is called arms-length funding)

What they fund:

- **Mission: to foster and promote the study and enjoyment of the arts and the production of artistic works**
- Provides grants and services to professional Canadian artists and arts organizations in dance, integrated arts, media arts, music, theatre, visual arts, and writing and publishing.
- Promotes public awareness of the arts through its communications, research and arts promotion activities.

What you need to know:

- Most funding decisions are made by a jury of artists and arts professionals selected from the community (this is called peer assessment)
- In any given program, funding is awarded to “applications that show the **highest artistic excellence** and meet all relevant assessment criteria, as compared to other applications
- All applications go through their online portal; you must first create a profile [here](#) and have it approved. It is recommended that you submit your profile at least 3 weeks in advance of your first grant application.

Key grants for presenters:

[Arts Across Canada & Arts Abroad](#) both have **travel grants** to allow you to attend “significant events” where you can research artists for potential presentation, and bring in artists from abroad.

[Arts Festivals and Presenters Grant](#) provides core funding to presenting organizations. To qualify, you must have received at least 3 Canada Council project grants in the last 5 years. You must also have at least one professional staff member in your organization.

[Professional Development for Arts Professionals](#) Includes support for mentorships, internships, specialized training and more

[Foreign Artist Tours Grant](#) supports presenters who want to circulate exhibitions or tour artists from other countries.

Funding source:

- This is the department of the Federal Government responsible for policies and programs relating to areas of creativity, arts and culture; heritage and celebration; sport; diversity and inclusion; and official languages.

What they fund:

- **Mandate: fostering and promoting Canadian identity and values, cultural development, and heritage.**
- They fund more than 20 sub-agencies, including the Canada Council for the Arts, the National Arts Centre and the CBC, as well as a robust group of programs which they manage and fund directly.

What you need to know:

The following will be considered when making granting decisions:

- the **variety** of your programming such as: new artistic disciplines or new genres within a discipline; ethnocultural expressions; Aboriginal artistic expression; artists from official language minority communities; artistic productions created in other provinces or territories or outside Canada; and works by emerging artists;
- community engagement activities, presenting conditions and opportunities offered to professional artists, partnerships, and the variety and amount of professional artistic presentations available within your region.
- Click here for [Application Guidelines](#)

Key grants for presenters:

The [Canada Arts Presentation Fund \(CAPF\)](#) is the primary funding stream for presenters from the Department. It offers financial assistance to organizations that professionally present arts festivals or performing arts series and organizations that offer support to arts presenters. It has two main components:

1. **Programming:** The [Professional Arts Festivals and Performing Arts Series Presenters](#) program provides support to existing professional arts festivals and performing arts series presenters, to offer a variety of professional artistic experiences to Canadians.
2. **Development:** provides support for the emergence of arts presenters and presenter support organizations for under-served communities or artistic practices.

Ontario Arts Council (OAC)



Funding source:

The Ontario Arts Council receives its funding from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, but is free to decide how it is distributed (arms-length funding).

What they fund:

- **Mandate: to foster the creation, production and presentation of art for the benefit of all Ontarians**
- Provide grants to Ontario-based individual artists and arts professionals, ad hoc groups/collectives and organizations. Grants support a range of arts activities and disciplines.
- Most OAC grants are evaluated by people selected from a large, diverse pool of artists and arts professionals from communities all across Ontario (this is called peer assessment). See the [Guide to OAC Assessment](#).

For all grants, OAC places a strong importance on supporting the following six under-served groups (called priority groups), to ensure that all Ontarians have equal access to funding.

- Artists of colour
- Deaf artists and artists with disabilities
- Francophone artists
- Indigenous artists
- New generation artists (18-30 years old)
- Artists living in regions outside of Toronto

What you need to know:

- Applicants must set up a profile on OAC's [Nova system](#), accessible approximately two months before the deadline of the program. Applications are then submitted through the online system.
- The [Guide to OAC Support Material](#) outlines the types of material you may be asked to submit with your application
- Most OAC grants are accessible to professional and volunteer organizations, ad hoc groups, and individuals

Key grants for presenters:

OAC grants fall into 4 funding streams:

- [Creating and Presenting](#)
- [Building Audiences and Markets](#)
- [Engaging Communities and Schools](#)
- [Developing Careers and Arts Services](#)

While all have opportunities for presenters, depending on your project, **[Creating and Presenting](#)** is of course the most relevant to presenters.

Of particular note, volunteer presenters can look at the [Arts Presenters Projects](#) grant. The [Northern Arts Projects](#) grant provides funding specifically for organizations in Northern Ontario.

Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF)



Funding source:

- The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations.

What they fund:

- **Mission:** To build healthy and vibrant communities throughout Ontario by strengthening the capacity of the voluntary sector, through investments in community-based initiatives.
- OTF has 6 Action Areas: Active People, Connected People, Green People, Inspired People, Promising Young People, and Prosperous People
- **Inspired People** focuses on enriching people's lives, quality programming and infrastructure, and connecting people through arts, culture and heritage.

What you need to know to apply:

- This quick **Self-Assessment** will help you decide which [Investment streams](#) to apply for. It does not apply to certain programs such as the Youth Opportunity Fund.
- Before applying, you must register [here](#). Note that registration deadlines are typically several weeks before grant deadlines.
- Granting decisions are made by comparing grants in all action areas in the region, not only in the arts and culture sector.

Key grants for presenters:

Presenters can apply for any of the following Investment Streams:

Seed grants: To try out a new project idea.

Grow grants: To develop an existing idea/activity

Capital grants: These are grants for equipment, renovations structures and technology.

Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

Funding source:



The Ontario Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport is one of the 23 ministries funded by the Ontario Provincial Government.

What they fund:

- **Mission:** Working to improve quality of life and promoting economic growth by supporting and delivering tourism and cultural experiences, supporting the arts and cultural industries and championing participation in sport and recreation activities across Ontario.
- **Arts and culture areas funded:** arts and cultural groups and other members of creative industries, public libraries, community museums, heritage organizations and historical societies.
- **Other areas funded:** Tourism associations, economic development corporations, municipalities, festivals and events, tourism businesses and organizations involved in tourism-related initiatives

What you need to know to apply:

- For the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund (OCAF), it is recommended that you start the application process approximately nine months before the event, and that you contact OCAF staff before applying
- OCAF has a two-stage application process:
 - a. The first application requires basic information about the project and target market, to determine eligibility.
 - b. The second requires the development of a detailed business case that includes a marketing plan, attendance and revenue projections and an analysis of the benefits of the project for the community.

Key grants for presenters:

The [Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund \(OCAF\)](#) is a partially repayable loan intended to increase cultural tourism, increase the earned revenue capability of the applicant organization, and support events that foster economic growth and contribute to job creation. The [Celebrate Ontario](#) and [Tourism Development](#) funds may also be worth exploring, depending on your project.

Metcalfe Foundation

**METCALFE
FOUNDATION**

Funding source:

The Metcalfe Foundation is a private foundation that was established in 1960 by George Cedric Metcalfe and continued and expanded by his family. It now focuses its resources in three areas: performing arts, environment, and poverty reduction.

Where the money goes:

Mission: The mission of The George Cedric Metcalfe Charitable Foundation is to enhance the effectiveness of people and organizations working together to help Canadians imagine and build a just, healthy, and creative society.

The Metcalfe Foundation creates meaningful change by:

- Leveraging opportunities for new approaches and shared learning in the performing arts
- Building a low-carbon, resource efficient and resilient Canada
- Improving economic livelihoods for low-income people in Toronto

What you need to know to apply:

- Applicants to the Staging Change Grant must be based in the City of Toronto (organizations in the GTA may be considered if they have a significant presence in the City of Toronto) and have a minimum of three years' of organizational/production history

Key grants for presenters:

Metcalfe has three key [Performing Arts Grants](#):

- **Staging Change** supports innovative solutions to challenges and opportunities organizations face in rapidly changing environments.

- The **Creative Strategies Incubator (CrSI)** helps companies explore new strategies for addressing longstanding sectoral issues, and supports the organizational change that comes from developing and implementing innovation.
- **Performing Arts Internships:** This program supports training and professional development for artists, administrators, and production staff, and helps organizations create entry points, develop leadership, and address skill shortages in critical areas.

Municipal Arts Councils

Most municipalities offer arts and culture funding as well – be sure to check and see what grants your municipality, county or region has available.