

March 19th, 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

The Honourable Pascale St-Onge, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Canadian Heritage

The Honourable Anita Anand, P.C., M.P.
President of the Treasury Board

House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Ministers,

The Professional Association of Canadian Theatre (PACT) is the collective voice of Canadian theatres, representing over 160 professional theatre companies in communities across the country. We are writing in response to the recent refocusing of government spending and the resulting changes in programming at the Department of Canadian Heritage, outlined in the 2024-25 Departmental Plan.

In particular, we would like to draw your attention the reduction in funding to the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund (CCSF), the Endowment Incentives component of the Canada Cultural Investment Fund (CCIF), and the elimination of the Strategic Initiatives component of the CCIF. Canadian theatres rely heavily on these programs to improve the physical conditions of theatre spaces and provide the necessary resources to encourage new innovative projects that will help grow the sector. As the performing arts sector continues to find themselves in a state of recovery, stable and consistent government support is paramount. Having experienced some of the longest and most restrictive lockdown measures in the world, these funding changes are likely to cause irreparable harm to many in the performing arts.

The sector is at a tipping point - theatres will not survive if their pathways to recovery are blocked by program reductions and eliminations. In addition to these proposed changes, theatres are experiencing an uphill battle on multiple fronts, and these disruptions in funding are experienced alongside increases in operating costs, the lack of affordable cultural spaces, the continued hesitancy of audiences, the loss of consistent donors due to the cost of living, and the instability of the arts workforce.

Canadians enjoy a world-class theatre industry and PACT members across the country continue to innovate in this new reality by actively reaching out to new audience communities, growing cultural tourism offerings, transforming business models, and expanding the diversity of programming. But these initiatives take time, and for many Canadians who stand in solidarity with their local community theatre, these endeavours have not gone unnoticed, and we are joined in calls for greater government partnership and support.

The Standing Committee on Finance recently tabled its [final report](#) on the 2024 Pre-Budget Consultations in the House of Commons. PACT was pleased to find the all-party committee included many recommendations targeted towards the cultural sector.

In particular, PACT would like to highlight recommendations 222 and 225, which highlights the importance of cultural buildings, workers, and the future of the performing arts sector.

Recommendation 222

Provide permanent funding to Canadian Heritage's arts branch, heritage programs and the Canada Council for the Arts to ensure a resilient, equitable future for the Canadian arts and culture ecosystem, its workers, buildings, and communities.

Recommendation 225

Increase funding for the Canadian Heritage's Endowment Incentives component of the Canada Cultural Investment Fund for existing performing arts recipients.

PACT would like to reiterate the importance and necessity of the above recommendations and hopes Budget 2024 is reflective of the committee's report. Further, we strongly urge the government to reconsider the elimination the Strategic Initiatives component of CCIF and the reduction of the Endowment Incentives component of CCIF and the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further with theatres who are directly facing the impacts of these reductions and cuts, PACT would be happy to facilitate these conversations.

We hope you will stand alongside the hundreds of theatres across Canada who bring lasting economic and social benefits to communities across Canada.

Kind Regards,



Brad Lepp
Executive Director
PACT
BradL@PACT.ca