

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

Culture Talks

A Summary of What We Heard from Ontarians

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Culture is not easy to define, but its many creative expressions can be found everywhere: in music festivals, art shows, movies, video games, books, design, public libraries, museums, community gatherings, buildings of heritage value, language and natural landscapes. Ontario is rich in creative talent and home to many artists, creators, producers and audiences who take pleasure in a range of cultural activities.

The Ontario government is committed to supporting and growing Ontario's vibrant arts and culture environment and we recognize the many social and economic benefits culture brings to our communities and to individuals. We are also keenly aware of the new context in which the culture sector operates: the current fiscal environment, how digital technologies have transformed the way we create and participate in culture and the changing diversity of Ontario's population.

In fall 2015, we set out to facilitate a province-wide discussion, Culture Talks, to hear new ideas on actions we could take to strengthen culture in Ontario. We held public town halls, community conversations with smaller groups and met with representatives from Indigenous communities. We also encouraged people to submit ideas online and post ideas on an interactive discussion forum.

There was no shortage of feedback. We heard from a range of culture sectors and individuals, including artists, educators, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, newcomers, Indigenous communities, Francophone communities and people living in urban, rural and northern communities.

In this summary, we report back on what we heard. This input will play a key role in developing a Culture Strategy for Ontario to guide our support for the sector in the years to come. Our plan is to share a draft Culture Strategy later this year.

WHAT WE HEARD

Diverse perspectives on culture

During Culture Talks, Ontarians clearly indicated that they value culture and its overall power to enrich the lives of individuals and communities. We also heard what culture means to people and how they participate in culture is wide-ranging. Indigenous communities emphasized the holistic nature of culture and its inseparable connection to identity, as well as the fundamental importance of language to Indigenous culture. Many participants also emphasized the importance of sharing cultural experiences between generations and passing on cultural knowledge, such as between Elders and youth.

We also heard that for many Ontarians culture includes personal heritage and cultural background. It includes attending festivals, visiting museums or going to a fashion show. It is also the act of producing and creating, such as making a movie, performing on stage or designing a video game.

Many people also highlighted a number of challenges to fully participating in culture. For audiences, we heard about high costs, lack of availability, inaccessible or intimidating venues, daunting travel distances and lack of awareness of activities and events. For individual artists and culture makers, we heard about the difficulty of accessing government funding and the challenges in making a reasonable living.

Many voices, some common themes

We heard from a diversity of individuals and groups, but looking at all of the feedback we received throughout the engagement process, some key themes emerged:

- **Ontarians would like to be able to participate in cultural experiences that are more accessible, affordable and inclusive and that better reflect Ontario's diversity.** Many said that culture needs to be more accessible, with central, barrier-free welcoming places to offer arts and culture programs, exchange ideas and share resources. At the same time, many also wanted culture to travel to them, giving people in rural and northern communities access to a wider array of cultural activities.
- **Improving arts education, especially in the early years, is essential to the success of future generations.** Ideas included strengthening the arts curriculum and ensuring that our schools, libraries, communities and cultural organizations work together to enhance cultural literacy. Feedback also emphasized the value of lifelong learning.
- **Breaking down silos and fostering collaboration across culture sectors and with other sectors, large and small organizations, municipalities and ministries will help strengthen the sector and, in turn, enhance creative and economic benefits for Ontarians.** People also spoke about expanding partnerships with the private sector, for example to develop technology, business and entrepreneurial skills.
- **Sustained, reliable funding is essential to artists, cultural organizations and infrastructure.** Many participants said it was important to increase funding and expand

funding eligibility to a wider range of individuals and groups; in particular, to Indigenous and Francophone communities, people with disabilities and other non-mainstream artists and organizations.

- **Technology offers a multitude of opportunities, but there are a number of significant challenges the culture sector needs help to address.** Opportunities mentioned included reaching new audiences, encouraging artistic innovation and growing cultural organizations. Issues raised included the need for more training on technology, better sharing of resources and lessons learned, more support for the rights of creators and helping audiences discover content created in Ontario and Canada.

Inspiring the next generation

We set out to hear directly from young people, our future artists, creators, producers and consumers of culture. Throughout Culture Talks, we asked for ideas on how to inspire youth. We heard that it is important for young people to be engaged and empowered in creating programs designed for them. We also need to provide young people with a range of cultural opportunities throughout their lives, from early arts education to volunteer opportunities in high school and paid internship programs at college and university. Technology came up frequently in discussions with young people as a way of accessing and learning about culture. Many said that culture is often about self-expression, and technology allows them to make their own music videos, compile playlists and share photos, for example.

Indigenous cultures are vital to Ontario

Indigenous participants told us that a strong and healthy culture is fundamental to the well-being of individuals, communities and the natural world. We heard that the diverse Indigenous cultures in Ontario are integral to strengthening culture for all of us. Participants from other cultural backgrounds told us of their desire to learn more about Indigenous history and cultures in Ontario.

There were many ideas for keeping Indigenous culture strong, with a particular emphasis on supporting Indigenous languages. Other areas included better promotion of Indigenous history and stories to Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and youth in schools, and supporting economic opportunities such as cultural tourism.

Participants said that Indigenous communities are in charge of their own cultural priorities. They also

discussed how Ontario could collaborate with them. In strengthening Indigenous culture in Ontario, it is important to recognize the diversity and distinctiveness of Ontario First Nations, Métis, Inuit and non-status Indigenous peoples, each of whom has a unique identity and history.

A roadmap for supporting culture

Culture Talks shone a spotlight on culture and on the many great cultural activities and creative productions happening across this province. It was also an opportunity to share ideas on how we can move forward on supporting culture in Ontario so that it continues to grow and flourish in the years to come.

Our next step is to develop a draft Culture Strategy, informed by the feedback we heard. We invite you to read through this summary of the many ideas Ontarians shared with us during Culture Talks.

Introduction

Culture as a concept is not easy to define, but it boils down to the idea of telling stories about ourselves and each other, to each other, and to the world.

— Written submission

This past fall, we launched Culture Talks to start a conversation with Ontarians about the value of culture in their lives and communities to help us develop Ontario’s first Culture Strategy. The strategy will set out a vision for culture and guide the Ontario government’s support for the culture sector in the years to come.

Culture Talks is part of our Open Government commitment to engaging citizens and gathering public input before making policies. Thousands of Ontarians participated in the conversation, sharing their ideas on directions the government should consider and their thoughts on what culture means to them. What they told us will play an integral role in shaping Ontario’s Culture Strategy.

Why Ontario needs a Culture Strategy now

Supporting culture is an important priority for the government of Ontario. In 2014-15, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport’s investment in culture was approximately \$800 million. The ministry currently supports four areas of culture:

- The arts (including craft, dance, literary arts, media arts, music, opera, theatre and visual arts);
- Cultural industries (including film and television production, interactive digital media such as video games and applications, the music industry, and book and magazine publishing);
- Public libraries; and

- Cultural heritage resources (including built heritage, cultural heritage landscapes, archaeology and museums).

A thriving culture sector brings significant individual, social and economic benefits. Participating in cultural (and leisure) activities is one of the indicators in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing that measures quality of life. In Ontario alone, the culture sector adds almost \$22 billion to the economy. The sector also supports more than 280,000 jobs and includes more than 58,000 artists—nearly twice as many as any other province in Canada.

Ontario’s culture sector is experiencing the impact of some important influences:

- Ontario is culturally diverse. It includes the largest Francophone community in Canada outside of Quebec and more than 40 per cent of all newcomers to Canada settle here.ⁱ Ontarians come from more than 200 ethnic backgroundsⁱⁱ and speak as many different languages.ⁱⁱⁱ
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities have identified unique cultural needs and priorities. They are also the youngest population in the province, with almost half under the age of 30.
- Our young people are the future creators and audiences of culture. At the same time, our population as a whole is getting older.
- New and emerging technologies have transformed and will continue to change how

we create, share, consume and experience culture.

Against this backdrop of influences, the culture sector continues to focus on sustainability and on finding ways to make the most of limited resources. In developing the Culture Strategy, we are committed to finding the best way forward to strengthen the culture sector in individual communities and throughout Ontario.

About this report

This report is a summary of the many ideas we heard. Although we have not included all of the ideas we heard, we have tried to capture the themes that recurred across Culture Talks and provide an overall picture of the input we received.

Part 1 of this report describes the Culture Talks engagement process.

Part 2 is a summary of what we heard about what culture means to Ontarians and how they participate in culture.

Part 3 describes the overarching themes and ideas emerging from the engagement process.

Part 4 discusses ideas for engaging youth in cultural activity.

Part 5 summarizes the feedback from our meetings with Indigenous communities and organizations.

In Part 6, we discuss next steps in developing the Culture Strategy.

1. The Culture Talks Engagement Process

To help ensure that we heard from a wide range of the groups and individuals that make up the diversity of this province, we invited Ontarians to participate and share ideas in a number of ways.

We heard from arts and culture organizations and individuals representing a range of areas: the visual, literary and media arts, music, dance, theatre, cultural industries, heritage, museums and public libraries. We heard from festival organizers, educators, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, newcomers, municipalities, individuals living in urban, rural and northern communities, and from Francophone and Indigenous communities.

Town halls

Last fall, more than 1,400 Ontarians participated in 11 town halls across Ontario in: Barrie, Hamilton, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Ottawa, Markham, London, Toronto, Kingston, Mississauga and Windsor.

Facilitated by community engagement expert Jane Farrow, each evening began with a conversation between two guest artists or culture makers who shared their experiences of culture. Town hall participants then had the opportunity to join in roundtable discussions on what culture means to them and to contribute ideas and proposed actions for the government to consider in supporting culture. (See Appendices for more information on the town halls.)

Community conversations

In the communities where we had town halls, we also held meetings with local community groups, including Francophones, youth, seniors, newcomers, ethno-cultural communities and people with disabilities. We wanted to hear from under-represented groups and individuals about the

meaning of culture in their lives and potential barriers to their participation in culture. We engaged more than 300 people in 24 community conversations. (See Appendices for the list of organizations and locations.)

Meetings with Indigenous communities and organizations

The Honourable Michael Coteau, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, invited the Chiefs of Ontario, all First Nations in Ontario, the Métis Nation of Ontario and other Indigenous communities to share their priorities for culture.

We invited 133 First Nations communities to attend one of four regional meetings at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, Fort William First Nation, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, and the Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation. Facilitated by Former Grand Council Chief John Beaucage, the meetings drew more than 100 participants from 49 First Nations communities, including representatives from remote areas in Northern Ontario.

We also met with the Métis Nation of Ontario (where representatives from 29 Métis communities gathered), Red Sky Métis Independent Nation, Historic Saugeen Métis, the Algonquins of Ontario and the Huron-Wendat First Nation.

We spoke to the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, the Tungasuvvingat Inuit and Indigenous artists and arts administrators.

Written submissions and the Culture Talks online forum

We received and reviewed about 600 written submissions in response to our discussion paper.

(See Appendices for the questions we asked.) We also received more than 200 ideas on Culturetalks.ca, an interactive discussion forum where people could post, discuss and vote on ideas. More than 30,000 votes were cast.

2. What We Heard: What Culture Means

Perspectives on culture

An important goal of the engagement process was to get a picture of what culture means to Ontarians.

We found that Ontarians have a broad view of culture. Most of the feedback emphasized the overall value of culture and its power to enrich the lives of individuals and communities, broaden thinking, enhance health and well-being, and build the creative talent of future generations. Ontarians said that culture has the power to be bold, innovative and thought-provoking.

Indigenous communities emphasized the holistic nature of culture and its inseparable connection to identity, as well as the need to preserve and promote their languages. Participants from other cultural backgrounds recognized the importance of Indigenous cultures, and wanted to know more.

More often than not, we heard that culture is not one thing, but many things. Ontarians said that culture includes personal heritage, language and cultural background, as well as expressions of associated traditions and food—their own or the opportunity to experience those of others.

They also said that culture includes attending festivals, participating in outdoor activities (such as angling, hunting or camping), reading books, listening to music, going to museums, attending art galleries, going to the opera, taking art classes, using Instagram and playing video games. Others mentioned street art, fashion, pow wows, architecture, movies, cultural heritage and crafts.

Ontarians also see culture as the act of producing and creating: making a movie, writing a book,

designing and programming a new app, passing along stories, preserving a landmark or curating an art show. Culture includes the natural landscape and environmental stewardship.

For some, culture is intrinsically linked to another area of interest, like sport, tourism or science.

Despite the breadth of activity included in the view of culture, most people valued the areas supported through the government: the arts, cultural industries, public libraries and cultural heritage resources.

Culture is connection to the land, medicine, fish, food and 'everything we do.'

—Participant, Native Canadian Centre of Toronto meeting

We heard additional perspectives on culture from the groups we met:

- Francophone communities emphasized the interconnectedness of culture, language and identity. They also said that culture is what brings the Francophone community together to celebrate its history, traditions and language. Some participants felt that culture is best experienced collectively, for example as part of a festival.
- Many newcomers to Ontario said they identified with more than one culture—their original and adopted cultures.
- Young people put a strong emphasis on music, food, experiencing many cultures, fashion, festivals and video games.

- Many parents spoke about the importance of opportunities to expose their children to culture, helping them become the transmitters of culture to the next generation.

Many ways to participate

We asked people to tell us about their best cultural experiences in Ontario. Many experiences were memorable because of their highly personal impact, the opportunity to participate actively, or because the experiences connected communities.

One person wrote about hosting a workshop with a playwright-actor and 30 students from a local high school. At that event, the playwright described being a newcomer teen and finding her voice through theatre.

Best cultural experiences included going to the Stratford Festival, attending Canadian Deaf Theatre performances, visiting the National Gallery of Canada, going to Afrofest in Toronto, attending Halls Creek Festival of Creativity in Ingersoll, and visiting Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung, an Ojibway Cultural Centre on the Rainy River.

Active participation was the highlight of many peoples' best cultural experiences. Examples included participating in "The Whole Shebang," an afternoon of dancing and singing at the Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning in Kingston. For some, it was participating through their work as artists, creators and producers. Examples included working as a Summer Youth Cultural Program Interpreter with the Métis Nation of Ontario, and setting up a volunteer-run art gallery.

We heard from many organizations about the range of creative talent that actively participates in culture and comes together to create engaging cultural content: designers, writers, illustrators, trades people and directors. Young people talked about the value of making and starring in music videos,

performing on stage, painting and selling their artwork.

Shared cultural experiences, many participants said, brought communities together and created a sense of belonging. Best shared cultural experiences included going to Riverfest (a music festival in the Township of Wellington), attending a pow wow on Manitoulin Island, visiting the St. Williams Forestry Interpretive Centre in Norfolk and walking the interpretive trail, attending a multicultural food festival in Victoria Park in Kitchener, and going to the Festival du Loup in Penetanguishene.

The chance to share Ontario's cultural wealth, nationally and internationally, or to take part in hosting world-class talent in Ontario, was also cited as a best cultural experience; for example, the annual Toronto International Film Festival.

Challenges and barriers

When town hall participants were asked to choose words to describe culture today, top of mind were: **diverse, enriching, evolving, collaborative**; but also: **underappreciated, underfunded and disconnected**.

The majority of people we heard from take part in a range of enriching cultural experiences and said that they value and appreciate culture. But we also heard about challenges and barriers to participating more fully in cultural activities—high costs, lack of availability, inaccessible or intimidating venues, daunting travel distances and lack of awareness of activities and events.

Relevance was an issue often raised. Many participants spoke about the lack of access to cultural activities that felt relevant and inclusive, or reflective of their age, diversity and cultural backgrounds. For example, participants in Francophone communities wanted to see more cultural expression reflecting their cultural heritage and presented in their language.

Artists, creators and producers talked about the challenges of financing their work through the entire life cycle of artistic production, from initial concept to audience engagement. Creators also discussed the ever-increasing challenge of bringing their work to the attention of global audiences. Individual artists and culture makers also spoke about the ongoing difficulty of finding affordable live-work spaces and the overall challenge of the high cost of living relative to their incomes and changing employment status.

Young people frequently identified specific barriers to engaging in cultural activities: high costs, limited time, inconvenience, transportation challenges and lack of personal relevance. They also talked about

limited exposure or access to cultural activities earlier in life, perhaps affecting their desire to participate as young adults. Some young people expressed a preference for experiencing culture via digital technology.

Ontario's cultural offerings are focused too much on cities and not enough on rural and northern communities, some people told us. They travel long distances to urban centres to participate in cultural activities. Others talked about the challenge of finding information about cultural activities and events in their own communities.

The responses indicate that many Ontarians would like to have more opportunities to participate in culture.

3. What We Heard: Themes and Ideas

Theme 1: Make participation in culture more inclusive, affordable and accessible

Access to the arts is transformational, because it eliminates barriers between people, especially young people. The arts help us understand and empathize with each other, and feel that we belong.

— Written submission

As creators, producers and consumers of culture, many people throughout Culture Talks expressed a desire to be able to participate in a full range of cultural activities. We heard many ideas on how to remove barriers and make it easier to take part. The ideas mainly revolved around helping to make participation in culture more inclusive, affordable and accessible for both the audience and the artist.

Create central hubs for culture

Community centres, public libraries and schools were offered as examples of places that could serve as inclusive, central hubs—welcoming places to offer arts and culture programs, bring people together to exchange ideas, encourage participation in cultural activities, and provide resources and training to support artists and arts and culture organizations. Francophones expressed the wish to have places in their communities to access cultural content in French.

Take culture on the road

We also heard about the importance of culture producers proactively reaching out to audiences and providing people in rural and northern communities access to a wider array of cultural activities.

When town hall participants were asked to choose words to describe what they would like to see culture look like in ten years, the top words chosen were: **accessible, inclusive, collaborative, valued and innovative.**

Ideas included establishing visiting artist programs and encouraging artist exchanges. At the London town hall, the Maker Bus program was described as an example of a travelling maker space initiative to bring culture and science to communities and school groups. Some Indigenous participants suggested programs for Indigenous artists to bring their knowledge and expertise directly to communities and schools. Another suggestion was cultural exchanges among Francophone, English-speaking and Indigenous community organizations.

Professional artists and cultural industries spoke about the issue of exporting culture, highlighting the need to travel to global markets to promote their work.

Encourage culture in daily life

Our heritage places should be valued as the cornerstones of our identity, memory and sense of place, and recognized as essential to a vibrant economy and a sustainable future for all.

— Written submission

We heard that it is easier to discover culture if we see it in our daily lives. Many municipalities and some participants suggested the need to create and fund art in public spaces and encourage art in non-traditional places such as workplaces and waiting rooms.

Participants also highlighted the importance of architecture, design, fashion, buildings of heritage value and landscapes in helping to enrich daily life and make culture more accessible. We heard, for example, how people enjoyed celebrating heritage associated with the rivers and waterways that were Ontario's first transportation routes and brought settlement to the province.

Help make participation in culture affordable

We often heard that participating in cultural activities should be more affordable, especially for children and youth. Ideas included free admission, subsidized tickets, event or venue passports and tax credits for families participating in cultural activities.

Ensure barrier-free access for people with disabilities

Ontarians told us that existing cultural spaces like museums and galleries should be physically accessible and barrier free. People with disabilities talked about the many barriers they face, such as obtaining accessible transportation, assistive

devices or access to sign language. They said that facing barriers at a cultural centre reduces their ability and desire to participate in cultural activities.

Provisions need to be made for artists with disabilities—it's not just about people with disabilities being able to attend cultural events, it's also about artists with disabilities being able to perform and participate.

— Participant, Ottawa Culture Talks town hall

Reflect Ontario's diversity

"Diverse" was one of the words we heard most often throughout Culture Talks, including at the town halls. People used it to describe culture in Ontario now and for the future. Indigenous communities, Francophone communities, northern and rural communities, people with disabilities, ethno-cultural communities and youth all pointed to the need for cultural activities that are relevant to their experiences. They said they want to participate in ways that connect them with their communities and across generations. And they want to tell their stories from their own perspectives and in their own languages.

One young person said, "As a young Francophone it takes real effort to live in our culture. You have to get involved and make a point of speaking your language. You have to go far to take in culture events, i.e. travelling from Thunder Bay to come and see Stromae in Toronto..."

Culture is inclusion; culture is transformation.

— Written submission

We heard a number of ideas for supporting diverse cultural experiences and creative expressions:

- Broaden the definition of culture within the ministry's mandate to ensure that a wider range of groups and individuals are eligible for funding.
 - Better promote funding opportunities to Indigenous communities.
 - Create an accessible and simplified process for funding/grant applications to ensure that more artists have an opportunity to participate in the production of art.
- Ensure that Ontario's diversity is reflected in funding criteria and on juries, and across provincially funded arts organizations at the staff and board level.
 - Deepen and broaden community engagement—for example by strengthening partnerships with local ethno-cultural organizations and grassroots initiatives.
 - Support municipalities in serving the culture sector of their diverse communities.

Theme 2: Promote cultural literacy

I want the Culture of Ontario to be one where the creative talent of every Ontarian is encouraged, and has opportunity and support to thrive in whatever medium she or he chooses.

— Written submission

Throughout Culture Talks, we heard significant support for boosting cultural literacy in Ontario, especially among children and youth. Our schools and communities are seen as playing a fundamental role in fostering an early appreciation and awareness of arts and culture and in nurturing lifelong creativity and cultural literacy.

I think culture is central to my child's development and our ability to integrate into the community. Make it easy for me as a parent to access places, heritage, arts and culture.

— Participant, Sudbury Culture Talks town hall

Support early arts education

Participants sharing ideas on early arts education highlighted the benefits, such as equipping children with a variety of ways of thinking and expressing themselves, developing more innovative and creative adults and creating engaged audiences and culture producers. Those sharing ideas on cultural heritage resources pointed out that early education increases awareness of shared stewardship responsibilities in preserving culture.

Strengthen cultural experiences in the school curriculum

There were many calls for the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to work with the Ministry of Education to strengthen and broaden the curriculum to better integrate arts and culture into core teaching subjects. It was suggested that STEM

(science, technology, engineering and math) should become STEAM by adding the arts as a key curriculum component. Other ideas included enhancing teacher training in arts and culture, ensuring that Canadian books are an integral part of the curriculum, strengthening local and Ontario history content, adding new areas such as design thinking (creative problem-solving and learning tool) and enhancing music education.

Many people also told us that the curriculum should better reflect the diversity of culture. Francophone communities emphasized the importance of including more Francophone culture. Indigenous participants spoke about the need to ensure that the curriculum includes a rebalanced history of Indigenous culture and contributions. As one high school student wrote to us, “We need to be more informed about Residential Schools, Treaties and Land Disputes.” Participants also called for consideration of ways to integrate Indigenous languages into the curriculum.

Safeguarding our cultural resources is a shared responsibility for the benefit of present and future generations. Our heritage buildings, cultural landscapes, sacred places, archaeological resources, archives and collections inspire creativity, tell the story of our past, educate our people, stimulate economic activity, create destinations for tourists and create healthy communities in which to live.

— Written submission

Encourage schools and the culture community to work together more

Some participants underscored the importance of strengthening relationships among communities, boards of education and local culture stakeholders. In this way, in-class learning would be complemented with hands-on experiences, and young people could visit cultural venues early on to give them a chance to develop an appreciation for an array of cultural expression. The Francophone community placed special emphasis on this as well, since French-language schools have a mandate to promote, enhance and transmit French culture in their communities.

Some participants suggested that cultural organizations and artists should play a more active role in developing and delivering arts programming in schools and in communities, and that artists should be engaged to assist and mentor teachers in the classroom.

Support public libraries to fulfill their potential as cultural hubs

Libraries and librarians play an important role in fostering creativity and appreciation of culture, especially in their programs for children and by promoting literacy for all ages. However, we heard that some libraries, including First Nation public libraries, struggle with capacity and resource issues in trying to meet the demand for their services. They called for more support to fully engage and inspire students, and all members of their communities, in cultural activities.

Support lifelong learning

Many Ontarians spoke of the value of culture to lifelong learning and advocated for access to affordable and engaging cultural programs for all ages. Some cited information about the importance

of cultural activity to overall health and well-being, in particular pointing to the therapeutic benefits for people with physical or learning disabilities or degenerative diseases. We also heard about the importance of cultural programs for seniors in general, and about how opportunities to express their creativity bring a wide range of physical and mental health benefits.

There are health benefits [to culture]: it keeps seniors out of hospital systems; keeps individuals stronger; creates a healthy community. It also keeps professionals in the community, which is important for quality of life.

— Participant, community conversation with seniors in Thunder Bay

Champion our culture sectors

Many community conversation participants were surprised to learn about the economic contribution of Ontario's culture sector. Active promotion was proposed as key to reaching new audiences and building confidence and pride in Ontario's culture, including championing the excellence of Ontario's culture producers throughout Canada and around the world.

Some spoke about the important role arts and culture play in building Ontario's reputation, attracting tourists and in helping Ontario's artists remain competitive in the global marketplace.

Promoting our culture sector was also seen as a way to raise awareness of the individual, social and economic benefits of culture. Creative use of technology was often mentioned as a tool to increase awareness and broaden engagement for a range of groups, including youth, newcomers and rural communities.

Theme 3: Foster more partnerships and strengthen collaboration

It is important to understand how through collaboration all of the organizations and individuals can work together to help improve and build upon the economic and creative potential of the cultural sector.

— Written submission

A common thread in the feedback we received was the value of partnerships and collaboration in helping artists and the culture sector flourish and grow. “Collaborative” was one of the top words chosen at the town halls to describe how participants would like to see culture in Ontario in 10 years.

Help different culture sectors connect with one another

We heard that it is important to help foster relationships between culture sectors to break down silos. Participants called for the province to help create opportunities for culture producers to work together to share creative resources and best practices, as well as physical resources, such as databases and artist spaces. Tools suggested to help support collaboration included funding incentives, community hubs and artist exchange programs.

Help large and small culture organizations to collaborate

We heard about the value of collaboration between larger institutions and smaller groups to increase capacity and share best practices. Smaller galleries, museums and libraries, for example, sometimes face capacity, resource or expertise issues, and larger organizations could potentially help. At the same time, smaller organizations can be flexible and nimble in generating creative ideas that can be shared and grown within the larger organizations. Groups involved in heritage conservation told us that small and large organizations should be brought together to digitize Ontario's collections.

Indigenous participants spoke about the value of being able to share information and best practices to help one another address culture priorities.

Encourage partnerships beyond the culture sector

Many people talked about expanding partnerships outside of the culture sector, for example, with the private sector and health and community organizations to leverage their expertise, innovations and funding.

It was suggested that partnerships with the private sector could help artists and culture workers develop technology, business and entrepreneurial skills to support their work and organizations. Consideration of various funding mechanisms was highlighted by some, such as matching public and private sector contributions.

Participants also emphasized the value of partnerships in helping to expand audience reach; specific examples included travelling exhibits and satellite museums.

We also heard frequently that culture and health organizations should collaborate to further explore the therapeutic benefits of participation in cultural activities.

Work with other ministries and other governments

Many people spoke of the potential benefits of closer collaboration within Ontario's government, across ministries, to ensure that culture is a key

consideration in making decisions and policies, and to ensure that the government's approach to supporting culture is consistent and coordinated. Culture intersects with so many other areas. Some ministry portfolios mentioned included education, training, health, economic development, innovation, housing, and natural resources and forestry. Our conversations with Indigenous participants echoed this idea. We heard that cultural priorities should be considered and integrated into all government activities. Not only will this help strengthen culture

in Ontario, but it will also strengthen the initiatives and mandates within the other ministries.

The need for collaboration was also raised with respect to local, regional and federal governments. In particular, the need for the province to work more closely with Ontario's 444 municipalities was often mentioned. Participants called for the province to more fully acknowledge and incorporate the unique role of municipalities in strengthening the culture sector, including developing and implementing cultural plans.

It is the responsibility of the government as a whole to ensure that the different ministries are connected and mutually supportive of the government priorities. All the pieces come together in the common goal for a better future —one where we can collectively address the economic and environmental challenges with [the] foundation of a strong culture.

— Written submission

Theme 4: Invest in arts and culture

Access to government funding relies too heavily on proving your worth through metrics such as headcounts and dollars spent, instead of qualitative information or a story. For instance, how does a library go about quantifying the value of community meeting spaces, and the experiences people can have when they have access to information for free?

— Participant, London Culture Talks town hall

There was unwavering support across Culture Talks for investing to better support individual artists, ensure organizational sustainability (for arts and other cultural organizations, museums, libraries and galleries, for example), and meet infrastructure needs (such as new artist spaces, maintenance of aging cultural facilities, and conservation and repurposing of buildings of heritage value).

Make funding more stable and take a fresh look at criteria

Many organizations and individuals highlighted the need for reliable, consistent and long-term funding, and often advocated a need for more of it, in order to foster a strong culture sector in Ontario and promote it internationally. Tax credits were suggested for some sectors.

We also heard throughout the engagement process, including from Indigenous participants, that funding programs and processes should be revised to make them more simple, inclusive and accessible. Some participants recommended exploring opportunities to streamline the granting process, increase awareness of funding opportunities and encourage coordination between government funding agencies (for example, the Ontario Arts Council and the Ontario Media Development Corporation).

Overall, we heard significant support for expanding funding eligibility to a wider range of organizations and individuals to promote the diversity of cultural experiences and expressions. There was a particular focus on reducing barriers for Indigenous peoples,

Francophone communities, artists with disabilities and other artists and organizations facing barriers. Francophone participants, for example, pointed out that funding criteria should take into account their smaller or more dispersed audiences. We also heard that funding criteria should recognize the greater length of time it may take people with disabilities to emerge as artists given the barriers they must overcome.

Most of the discussion about funding focused on areas that need financial support or more of it. Some organizations and individuals called for new or increased support for areas such as fashion, industrial and graphic design, and architecture.

In the community conversations, some people questioned the need for government funding in certain areas. They wondered why commercial entertainment projects such as film, television production and book publishing required financial support. On the other hand, many in the cultural industries spoke about the essential role the cultural industries play in enriching individuals and communities and contributing to job creation and economic prosperity in Ontario.

Understand community priorities

We heard that by working closely with communities and local governments, the province could better understand their funding priorities. Some suggested that provincial financial support should concentrate on helping municipalities to develop and implement

their community-driven culture initiatives, including funding for cultural infrastructure.

Indigenous participants emphasized the importance of ongoing engagement to better understand their needs and priorities. Examples included youth education and language support, financial supports for Elders as the transmitters of culture and knowledge, and increasing support to First Nation public libraries and Indigenous cultural tourism.

Balance funding between the large and the small

Many participants wanted to see a more balanced distribution of funds between larger institutions and smaller community organizations, and between rural and northern communities and Ontario's urban centres. It was suggested that urban centres are at a funding advantage. Feedback from public libraries, for example, pointed out that current funding does not address the extra costs and capacity issues facing libraries in smaller communities.

Invest in creativity and entrepreneurship

We heard support for investing in start-ups, grassroots initiatives, and innovative ideas and programs. Many people identified a need to help fund digital initiatives as a way to support innovation and to promote Ontario's cultural offerings overall.

Some people spoke about the need to develop entrepreneurship and business skills across the culture sector to encourage innovative ways of doing business, generating revenue and improving productivity. This included helping individual artists and culture workers develop new skills to help grow their careers.

Plan for the future cultural workforce

We heard that there is a need to invest in capacity building and training for culture sector workers where there may be a future shortage. Examples included archaeologists and heritage consultants. We heard about the potential need for new skilled workers, such as digital curators. It was also suggested that we need to look for ways to inspire youth to pursue careers in the culture sector.

Help the culture sector find new revenue streams and funding sources

Studying what other jurisdictions are doing was a frequent suggestion for discovering ideas for finding new revenue sources and new ways to fund cultural activity. Other ideas included the following:

- Leverage private-public funding partnerships and philanthropy through matching endowment funds.
- Explore digital opportunities such as crowdfunding to support artists or web portals with philanthropic organizations.
- Provide tax credits for volunteer hours, as many culture organizations rely on the work of volunteers.
- Support municipalities in seeking new revenues to dedicate to culture development (for example, levying taxes on billboards) or improved conservation of cultural heritage resources (for example, changes to property taxation).
- Collaborate with partners to share financial resources and strengthen both culture and related areas (focusing on, for example, festivals, sport, health, education, tourism).

Theme 5: Support the culture sector in its digital transformation

Like all cultural industries sectors, magazine media is in the midst of the digital evolution, whose forces were at first experienced as disruptive, but which will, we believe, ultimately be understood as transformative.

— Written submission

We heard from individual artists, museums, libraries, performing arts, heritage organizations and cultural industries about how they are adopting technologies for a range of creative and business needs (digitizing collections, live-streaming performances, reaching broader audiences via social media). The potential benefits they hope to realize include engaging youth and other new audiences, generating new revenues, encouraging artistic innovation and collaboration, and enhancing the audience experience. But the majority of feedback focused on the number of challenges organizations and individuals are facing and the need for a range of supports.

Help the culture sector respond to digital challenges and opportunities

As one submission put it, “Responding to digital challenges and opportunities...will make or break our success in the coming decade.”

Some participants called on the province to lead the development of a digital strategy to help establish a framework for the culture sector and identify best practices. They also called for the province to set up a task force or working group to ensure the future success of the culture sector in the digital age.

Other recommendations included the following:

- More funding is needed for digital projects to support technology research projects and to encourage collaboration between the digital sector and the culture sector.

- To share resources and lessons learned, individual culture sectors need help to establish partnerships and exchange ideas with other culture sectors and with the private sector outside culture.
- Culture producers need help with intellectual property and copyright issues to protect the rights of creators.
- More training is needed to better understand and use digital tools, for example to reach audiences, help audiences discover Ontario and Canadian cultural content online, and grow cultural organizations. Training ideas included working closely with colleges, universities and youth-led programs; tech-savvy young people could help culture sectors develop and execute digital innovations.

Respond to different sector needs

Many museums, archives and cultural heritage organizations highlighted their current work to digitize their collections to preserve historical information, provide greater public access and expand relationships within and outside their sectors. At the same time, they also emphasized the need for significant funding and staff resources to make any real progress.

Participants from the music, book, magazine publishing, public library and other sectors told us that they have made progress in responding to the digital world by providing digital products. At the same time, they said, there is still a demand for the

Enabling public collections to be accessed on-line, educational programs and performances to be live-streamed to communities across the province, digital forums for the exchange of ideas to be launched, and courses and workshops to be delivered digitally reaching schools and centres in remote communities, are only some of the ways the cultural community can connect many cultures through the arts, while reaching and growing broad and diverse audiences.

— Written submission

physical products, therefore placing greater pressure on limited business resources.

Participants from sectors such as architecture, design and fashion told us that they have successfully adopted new technologies. They said they would like to have opportunities to share lessons learned with other sectors. At the same time, many of them said they needed support to continue to innovate and push ideas farther, grow their domestic industry and anticipate the next digital challenge or opportunity.

Support improved access to digital cultural content

Free public WiFi and access to high-speed Internet were seen as essential to accessing and participating in culture. For example, artists in remote areas need this to be able to disseminate their work and to collaborate with other artists. We heard that many rural and northern communities are underserved, and that not all public and First Nation public libraries have the technology infrastructure that is available to their urban counterparts. We also heard about the need to support the accessibility and dissemination of Francophone cultural content across all technology platforms.

Many people saw digital technologies as an opportunity to reach wider audiences and facilitate inclusive participation for people with a range of abilities. At the same time, however, there were many who cautioned that relying solely on technology could create isolation, while live cultural experiences increase connection to the community.

4. What We Heard: Ideas to Inspire Youth

There should be more opportunities for young artists and performers to compete, appear in talent shows, have their work publicized...

— Participant, community conversation with youth in Kingston

We talked to young people in our community conversations to discover what culture means to them and how they would like to be able to participate more than they do now. We also heard many ideas on the subject at the town halls and in the more than 600 written submissions we received.

Provide youth with a continuum of opportunities

Often, we heard about the importance of ensuring that young people have “a continuum of opportunities” (written submission). This begins with a strong foundation in elementary school education to establish an early appreciation of culture. Interest is sustained in high school through experiences such as community theatre or volunteering in the culture sector. Interest then carries through to university or college with opportunities such as paid apprenticeships and internships. Mentorship was also suggested as a way to engage youth while transmitting knowledge and culture (such as information about local history or new artists and technologies) between youth and older members of their communities.

Funding for paid internships for recent grads as well as funding for developing highly educational volunteer programs would go a long way to keeping young people engaged pursuing careers in arts, heritage and culture.

— Written submission

Promote careers in culture

The arts are widely undervalued. When I get asked what I do and I say I'm a painter, I get asked, 'interior or exterior'?

— Young participant, Thunder Bay Culture Talks town hall

Some young people suggested that working in the culture sector is not seen as a viable career option. Yet we heard from a number of culture sectors that they need more skilled workers (for example, in the entertainment industry and in the conservation of cultural heritage resources) and specialized professionals (for example, archaeologists). We also heard about the emerging need for new skilled workers such as digital curators. Some sectors highlighted the important contributions the cultural industries make in attracting and employing youth. The video game sector is a good example, where the average age is 31—10 years younger than the average age of Canadian workers overall.

Ideas on how to connect culture to future careers included paid internships, artist mentorship programs, arts-friendly apprenticeship programs, a combination of arts, business and technology skills training workshops, and stronger links with youth employment strategies. Some participants suggested replicating existing programs, such as the internships offered by the fashion sector, or activities of organizations such as The Remix Project in Toronto (which serves young people wishing to enter into the cultural industries).

Give youth a voice in program design

We heard that one of the best ways to engage young people in cultural programs is to include them early in the decision-making process and give them a voice in program design. Many young people told us they find museums and galleries intimidating and not interesting and suggested promoting more interactive and relevant activities as a first step to encourage visits. They may want to go to galleries, attend cultural events and make movies if they can incorporate their ideas and help shape the programs and activities. As one young town hall participant in Mississauga said, museums and arts organizations should get youth “in the boardroom” and on grant juries.

Meet the needs of youth outside the mainstream

Meaningful engagement with youth emerged as a high priority in conversations with Indigenous communities, Francophone youth, and youth from rural and northern communities. They called for consideration of their unique needs across culture programs and activities. Some told us that part of the challenge for northern and rural communities is retaining talent. Often, talent is fostered locally, but then young people move away to urban areas.

Incorporate technology in any youth engagement strategy

I can bring Picasso or the Taj Mahal to me. I can see the architectural wonders of the world...on the internet.

– Participant, community conversation with youth in Ottawa

Many youth participants said that technology is key to engaging them, and that they access a range of cultural experiences online through various devices. They also create culture by compiling playlists and sharing photos and videos on social media.

We frequently heard that discovering content from Ontario and Canada is a unique challenge given the high number of cultural experiences available through technology. At the same time, young people may be well positioned to help Ontario’s culture sector navigate the challenges of discovering content, and they could potentially advise organizations on new ways to reach young audiences.

A number of cultural organizations and municipalities recognized the importance of including youth strategies in their plans and overall mandates. They said that the challenge often lies in creating awareness of the youth programs. They recognized the need to more effectively reach out to youth through digital media.

5. What We Heard: Indigenous Cultures are Vital to Ontario

My culture means a lot to me and I don't know where I would be without the support from the Métis Nation of Ontario. Being knowledgeable on my cultural heritage allows me to share it with people who may be unaware of whom the Métis people are. I am always doing cultural art on my free time because I am able to express myself freely and it really helps me connect back to my cultural identity.

— Written submission

Keep culture strong

We heard it was important to recognize the diversity and distinctiveness of Ontario First Nations, Métis, Inuit and non-status Indigenous peoples, each of whom has a unique identity and history.

Indigenous participants in the Culture Talks process told us that a strong and healthy culture is fundamental to the well-being of individuals, communities and the natural world. Participants said that culture cannot be separated from their way of life.

Participants spoke of the lasting, intergenerational negative effects of culture loss stemming from the legacy of Canada's residential school system and colonial past. They also spoke about the need to recognize and celebrate Indigenous knowledge, including developing ways to recognize and protect Indigenous intellectual property.

They emphasized the need for their communities to be in charge of their own cultural priorities, while also discussing how Ontario could collaborate with them on shared priorities.

As such, participants saw culture as integral and fundamental to their relationships with government and across all provincial ministries.

We heard about how Indigenous communities are strengthening their cultures. Participants also pointed out that Ontario's culture can be strengthened through its connection to Indigenous cultures.

Support Indigenous languages

Language is interrelated with culture, so if you lose your language, you lose your culture.

— Participant, Fort William First Nation meeting

Indigenous participants said that language is the foundation of culture, and that knowledge of Indigenous languages is fundamental to understanding the grounding concepts of Indigenous culture, such as the connections between all living things.

Some participants described language loss as a crisis situation and said that time is of the essence as Elders age and knowledge is lost.

Ideas to promote Indigenous language learning included expanding support for Indigenous languages in the education curriculum, creating economic opportunities for Indigenous language users (for example, as interpreters and translators)

and recognizing Indigenous languages as official languages.

Focus on youth

Participants repeatedly spoke of the importance of youth in Indigenous communities. The cultural connection between youth and Elders is important, they said, for creating strong, healthy individuals, reducing the risk of marginalization and mitigating intergenerational trauma. A number of participants also emphasized the importance of sport as a cultural strategy for engaging youth.

Promote Indigenous history and stories

Our culture is important to all of Ontario; we're the base.

– Participant, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation meeting

Many participants spoke about wanting Ontario's schools to do a better job of supporting and promoting Indigenous history and stories to Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth and children. This includes increasing awareness of treaties and highlighting the positive contributions Indigenous peoples have made in the development of the province.

Non-Indigenous participants also indicated their desire to learn more about Indigenous history and cultures in Ontario and called for more support to ensure that Indigenous culture makers can “take their place within the core of Ontario's cultural activities and enterprises” (written submission).

Participants also expressed the need to raise awareness about Indigenous history in urban areas to promote relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, as well as to help urban Indigenous people connect to the land. Indigenous Friendship Centres were valued for the cultural programs and activities they provide.

Protect cultural legacy

Concern about preserving cultural heritage was frequently raised in our meetings. There was also concern about the treatment of Ancestors when Indigenous burial sites are disturbed during excavation for development projects.

Participants described the importance of integrating Indigenous interests early on and throughout the process of archaeology, from background studies to fieldwork to the management of artifact collections. Protection of artifacts and sacred objects was raised as a key concern. Indigenous communities would also like to increase their involvement in archeology to create economic, educational and cultural opportunities.

Participants saw a need for better relationships between Ontario's museums and Indigenous communities. They said museums should provide more roles for Indigenous people in curation and interpretation and give a higher profile to local Indigenous communities. Participants also emphasized that Indigenous communities are seeking the return of artifacts and sacred objects.

Support culture and economic opportunities

Ontario provides funding to Indigenous communities, organizations and individuals for cultural purposes. We heard that these programs need to be better promoted and barriers need to be addressed, such as by implementing culturally appropriate criteria and processes and reducing the paperwork required.

It was suggested that Ontario work with communities to design programs to meet specific cultural needs. For example, funding support could help Elders, interpreters and community members to engage in cultural heritage work.

Participants saw a role for government in working with communities to develop Indigenous culture-

based tourism and other economic opportunities, such as audience development, professional training for arts administrators and support for entrepreneurs.

There were also discussions about the need to financially support cultural infrastructure, including how Ontario could improve its existing support for First Nation public libraries.

6. Moving Forward on Developing the Culture Strategy

Everything depends on creativity. It underpins human enterprise, bolsters our daring, keeps fresh our past and thus ensures our prosperity, a precious bequest to leave our children.

— Written submission

At the concluding town hall in Windsor, guest artist Cameron Bailey (Artistic Director of the Toronto International Film Festival) remarked in his closing comments that what he liked most about the evening was hearing “the variety of opinions and perspectives.”

It was this diversity of rich ideas that underscored the entire Culture Talks process: at the town halls, community conversations, meetings with Indigenous communities and in the written submissions.

Culture Talks also served as a strong reminder of the many creative initiatives happening across Ontario, and of the many artists, culture workers, volunteers and organizations it takes to bring to life the vast range of cultural activities and creative expressions.

We would like to express our thanks to everyone who shared their stories and their passion about what culture means to them and the many ways they contribute to culture in Ontario.

We are now in the process of looking at the feedback we received and developing a draft Culture Strategy. The strategy will articulate a new vision for culture and include a set of priorities to guide Ontario’s support for culture so that it continues to grow and flourish in the years to come.

Later this year, we will share the draft Culture Strategy for your feedback. We look forward to continuing the conversation

Appendices | Town Halls

We held 11 town halls across the province to gather a range of ideas on culture. We'd like to thank the host organizations and the artists and culture makers who inspired the conversation at the beginning of each meeting.

- Barrie—MacLaren Art Centre
Nova Bhattacharya (choreographer, dancer) and Peter Lynch (filmmaker, documentarian)
- Hamilton—Art Gallery of Hamilton
Lynn Coady (author, screenwriter) and Tyler Tekatch (film and video maker)
- Thunder Bay—Thunder Bay Art Gallery (with cultural partner Thunder Bay Museum)
Lora Northway (visual artist) and Molly Johnson (musician)
- Sudbury—Science North (with cultural partner Art Gallery of Sudbury)
Danielle Daniel (writer, painter) and Jack Blum (actor, director, filmmaker)
- Ottawa—National Arts Centre
Joel Beddows (playwright, professor) and Bear Witness (musician, Tribe Called Red)
- Markham—Markham Museum (with cultural partner Varley Art Gallery)
Bryan Prince (author, historian) and Alison Evans Adnani (Maker culture, founder Maker Junior Ottawa)
- Toronto—Toronto Reference Library (with cultural partner Canada's National Ballet School)
Alana Wilcox (editorial director, Coach House Press) and Kardinal Offishall (musician, producer)
- London—London Museum
Ravi Jain (director, playwright, actor) and Ali Al-Aasm (web developer)
- Kingston—Tett Centre for Creativity
Jamie Kennedy (chef) and Marilyn Simonds (writer, editor)
- Mississauga—Mississauga Civic Centre Great Hall (with cultural partners Mississauga Arts Council and Art Gallery of Mississauga)
Bonnie Devine (artist, writer, professor) and Arlene Paculan (musician)
- Windsor—Art Gallery of Windsor
Cameron Bailey (Artistic Director Toronto International Film Festival) and Daniel Wells (publisher Biblioasis)

Appendices | Community Conversations

We also held 24 community meetings with local community groups, including Francophones, youth, seniors, newcomers, ethno-cultural communities and people with disabilities. We'd like to thank those who participated and the host organizations:

- Barrie, YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka, Newcomer Services program
- Penetanguishene, Clé d'la Baie
- Hamilton, Wesley Urban Ministries
- Thunder Bay
 - Thunder Bay 55 Plus Centre
 - Regional Multicultural Youth Council
- Sudbury
 - l'ACFO du Grand Sudbury
 - Walden Seniors and Pensioners Centre
 - Independent Living Sudbury Manitoulin
- Ottawa
 - Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa
 - Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne
- Toronto
 - Centre Francophone de Toronto
 - Auberge Francophone
 - Harbourfront Community Centre
 - East Metro Youth Services
- Town of Ingersoll, Fusion Youth Activity and Technology Centre
- Kingston
 - Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre, Queen's University
 - Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington Children and Youth Services Planning Committee
 - Kingston Immigration Partnership
 - Seniors Association Kingston Region
- Mississauga
 - Coalition for Persons with Disabilities
 - Bramalea Community Health Centre
 - YMCA-GTA, Peel/Mississauga
- Windsor
 - New Beginnings
 - Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County

Appendices | Discussion Paper Questions

In our discussion paper, *Telling our Stories, Growing our Economy: Developing a Culture Strategy for Ontario*, we posed a series of questions:

1. What does culture mean to you and your community?
2. What is the greatest cultural experience you have had in Ontario? What made it great?
3. How do you and members of your household (if applicable) participate in culture?
4. Are you participating as much as you would like? If not, why?
5. How can we strengthen and grow the culture sector in Ontario so that it continues to contribute to our social and economic well-being?
6. How can we inspire more youth to create, consume and participate in Ontario culture?
7. How can we help ensure that support for culture reflects Ontario's diverse regions, communities and populations?
8. How can we help the culture sector respond to digital challenges and opportunities?
9. In a time of scarce resources, what key culture priorities should the Ontario government support? How can your organization (if applicable) work in partnership with the government to support these priorities?
10. Do the guiding principles* reflect what is important to you? Are there others we should consider?
11. What is the Ontario government doing well to support the arts, cultural industries, public libraries and cultural heritage sectors? What would you like to see changed? Are there best practices that Ontario could learn from and adapt?

*Guiding principles:

Creativity and innovation

Culture exposes us to new ideas, inspires new ways of thinking, and fosters creativity and innovation. Support for culture should help enrich our lives, animate our communities, and build a dynamic business environment in Ontario.

Quality of life and economic development

Culture contributes significantly to both quality of life and economic development in Ontario. Support for culture should maximize both the social and economic benefits of culture for individuals and communities.

Diversity and inclusiveness

Ontario's rich diversity is one of our province's greatest strengths. People in all parts of Ontario, and from all of our communities, broadly defined, should have the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from cultural experiences according to their individual interests and abilities.

Respect for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives on culture and heritage represent distinct identities, histories and ways of life. Ontario is committed to strengthening and transforming its relationship with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, and to implementing changes that reflect First Nations, Métis, and Inuit priorities.

Public value and accountability

Government investment in culture will be guided by what Ontarians value and what makes a positive difference in the lives of individuals and communities. The ministry, its agencies, and the organizations that receive funding through us are accountable for achieving the best possible outcomes within available resources.

ⁱ According to Statistics Canada, “In 2010/2012, two out of five (40.2%) immigrants settled in Ontario, the largest share among the provinces and territories.” [Please see Statistics Canada webpage.](#)

ⁱⁱ Ontario Ministry of Finance, “2011 National Household Survey Highlights, Fact Sheet 2: Ethnic Origins and Visible Minorities.” ([Analysis of data from Statistics Canada’s 2011 National Household Survey.](#))

ⁱⁱⁱ Ontario Ministry of Finance, “2011 Census Highlights, Fact Sheet 6: Mother Tongue and Language.” ([Analysis of data from Statistics Canada’s 2011 Census.](#))