



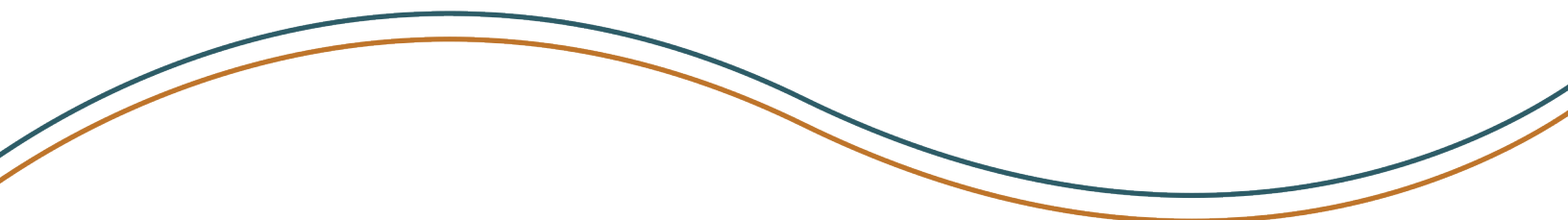
Canadian Crafts
Federation

Fédération canadienne
des métiers d'art

Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2024 Budget

Recommendations

1. That the Government of Canada extends the same respect, value, and consideration to the craft sector as they do to all other professions.
2. That the Government of Canada provides arts service organizations, such as the CCF/FCMA and their member organizations, with sufficient operational funding to ensure they can support the communities they represent, as well as retain competent staff.
3. That the Government of Canada continues to work with provincial and territorial counterparts to ensure robust protections and supports for artists, makers and cultural workers throughout the country.
4. That the Government of Canada provides adequate resources to art service organizations to help meet the equity, diversity, and social inclusion targets established by Canadian Heritage.
5. That the Government of Canada allocates funding to the parties closest to those in need in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity.
6. That the Government of Canada implements an Employee Insurance program for workers in the arts and culture sector.
7. That the Government of Canada establish a basic income guarantee for craftspeople and all workers, which holds significant merit for the safety and well-being of our sector.



As a society, we are currently grappling with a complex web of crises, ranging from mental health to financial stability to environmental and climate changes, each drastically impacting the craft community. Unfortunately, craftspeople - who are often low-income and part of the gig economy - are the first to lose work and the last to regain it, undermining their capacity to cope with these challenges. Craft is a valued professional practice within Canadian culture and identity. Statistics Canada's latest release shows that the Craft Sector contributed \$2,668,353 to Gross Domestic Product and created 29,858 jobs in 2021. "Craft economies are a key attraction for local and global buying markets, creating linkages between people and handmade objects. They drive tourism, export, and entrepreneurship, empowering communities across Canada" ([Canadian Crafts Federation Craft Spectrum, 2020](#)).

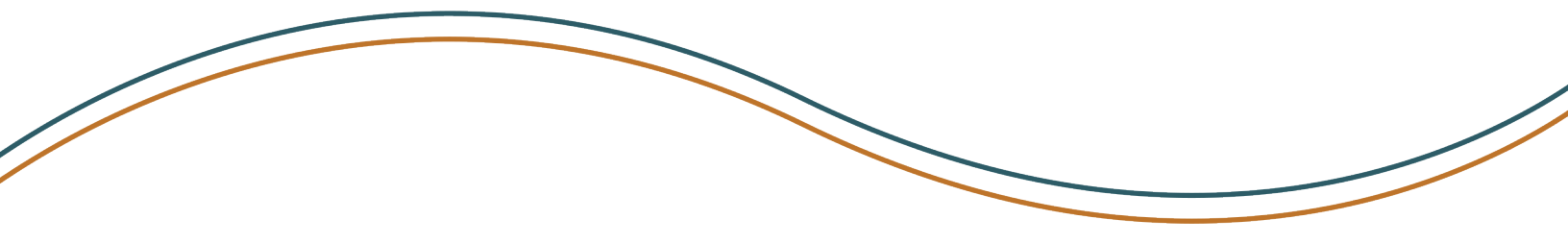
Nevertheless, the sector faces considerable challenges. Many skilled craftspeople depend on additional income earned through other part-time work or sharing living expenses with their partners or roommates. These artists and makers play a vital role in civil society, promoting well-being and enhancing our lives, sustaining craft traditions, fostering cultural exchange, and contributing to economic health. **The federal government must extend the same respect, value, and consideration to the craft sector as they do to all other professions.**

Organizations are struggling to respond to inadequate investments and high turnovers, resulting in a depletion of historical and institutional knowledge due to insufficient investment. The arts and culture ecosystem relies on craftspeople, who have been negatively impacted by non-profit system cuts. Some craftspeople need aid with necessities like food, insurance, and rent for their homes or workspaces. They are bearing the brunt of inflation without adequate income, and ASOs are underfunded to assist these individuals. It is our responsibility to preserve our culture, which distinguishes Canada. Craftspeople have always been the creators of our culture and economic drivers in our communities and beyond. **Arts service organizations require sufficient funding to ensure they can support the communities they represent.**

Non-profit and support organizations face a significant challenge with high turnover rates of employees and executives. The problem is only exacerbated by the lack of investment in talent development and systemic support. The CCF/FCMA and several other councils have experienced these turnovers firsthand. **The federal government must address the issue by investing in the future of arts and culture in Canada. This can be achieved by providing essential operational funding to arts service organizations to ensure that they can retain competent staff.**

While we acknowledge the efforts made toward Covid-19 recovery, it is crucial to recognize that we are now dealing with a new reality and economic paradigm characterized by instability. This instability hinders progress in innovation, development, export capacity, and international recognition for Canada and its artists and makers. The Strengthening the Status of the Artist in Canada Report by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, released in March 2023, stated that self-employed cultural workers do not have the same social protections as other paid employees. The Covid-19 pandemic has amplified the financial difficulties faced by many cultural workers. It is time to address this issue and provide the necessary support to rectify it. **The Government of Canada must continue to work with provincial and territorial counterparts to ensure robust protections and supports for artists and cultural workers throughout the country.**

When it comes to achieving equity and diversity, we face a significant challenge in cultural infrastructure. The issue is that we are unable to bring resources to the table. Without sufficient resources to distribute, any attempts to redistribute them will be in vain. **In order to meet the equity, diversity, and social inclusion targets established by Canadian Heritage, arts service organizations require sufficient resources.**



Craft Councils receive varying funding levels in different regions, which significantly impacts the safety and quality of life for craftspeople. Many councils have not received funding increases for several years and must rely on project funding to sustain themselves. This means constantly seeking short-term grants to secure permanent staff. The councils find it challenging to continue supporting members with stagnant funding, leading to struggles for the craftspeople who make up their membership. This is a vicious cycle where access to council support is crucial for survival and sustainability, yet without appropriate income; craftspeople cannot access council membership. Without visibility, funding is not possible, and without funding, visibility is challenging to achieve. We bear the burden of all associated costs yet are unable to regulate the inflow of funds. The CCF/FCMA is facing financial difficulties caused by insufficient core funding. The CCF/FCMA's reliance on Council membership fees is unsustainable. It is imperative that the Federation has access to sufficient funds to support our struggling Council members and that Councils have the necessary resources to assist craftspeople in their jurisdictions. Regrettably, in our current funding structure, this is impossible. **It is critical that the federal government allocate funding to the parties closest to those in need in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity.**

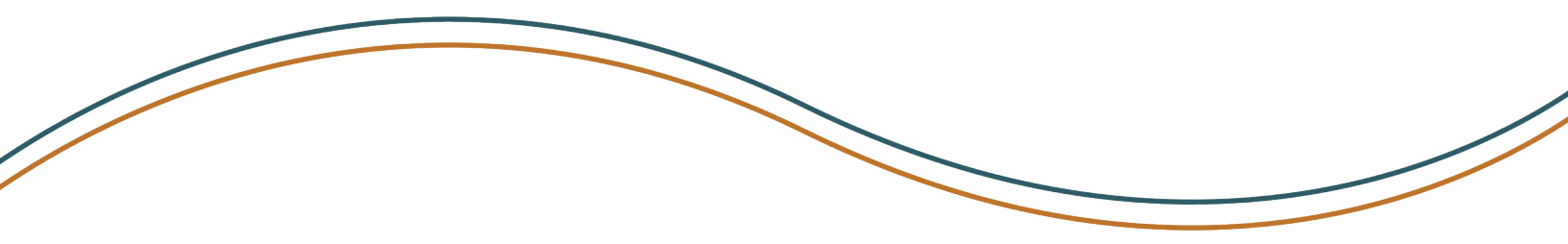
We want the Federal Government to make craftspeople eligible for Employment Insurance. According to Mr. Brault of the Canada Council for the Arts, it is necessary to “find a fair way of remunerating artists, rather than obliging them to run from one contract to another, knowing full well that they will have long periods when they have no work.” Mr. Gordey of ACTRA suggested establishing a benefits model based on earnings rather than insurable hours: Employment Insurance has special rules for others. In particular, self-employed fishers, hairdressers and drivers qualify for regular benefits based on earnings rather than insurable hours. The same earning model could be adapted for artists and craftspeople. An Employment Insurance program for a modern economy would allow self-employed workers to contribute to and collect EI despite the absence of a traditional employer-employee relationship.” ([House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage](#), 2023). **We advocate for the implementation of an Employee Insurance program for workers in the arts and culture sector.**

We want a guaranteed basic income for craftspeople. “A universal basic income modelled on the Canada Emergency Response Benefit should be considered. Canada could follow the example of Ireland, Finland and the State of New York in providing a guaranteed basic income to artists” ([House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage](#), 2023). **Providing a basic income guarantee to craftspeople and all workers is crucial and holds significant merit in the safety and well-being of our sector.**

The CCF/FCMA looks forward to discussing this submission with you further.



Jennifer Wicks, PhD
Executive Director | Directrice générale
Canadian Crafts Federation | Fédération canadienne des métiers d'art
jennifer@canadiancraftsfederation.ca



The Craft Spectrum

