



Canadian Crafts
Federation
Fédération canadienne
des métiers d'art



Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2025 Budget

by the

**Canadian Crafts Federation/
Fédération canadienne des métiers d'art
(CCF/FCMA)**

Recommendations

1. Review and adapt the timeline, eligibility and funds of existing and newly proposed federal funding programs in arts, culture, tourism and export.
2. Increase core funding for arts service organizations (ASOs) to ensure they can support their communities and retain competent staff.
3. Implement an Employee Insurance program tailored explicitly for workers in the arts and culture sector.
4. Establish a Federal Basic Income Guarantee for craftspeople and all workers.
5. We endorse the recommendations of the Canadian Arts Coalition to allocate a minimum of 1% of the Government of Canada's total spending towards arts, culture, and heritage. To accomplish this for the 2025-26 fiscal year, the Government should boost its allocations by \$270 million through:
 - a. An increase of \$140 million to the Canada Council for the Arts; and
 - b. An increase of \$130 million to the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Context

1. Review and adapt the timeline, eligibility and funds of existing and newly proposed federal funding programs in arts, culture, tourism and export.

As Canadian organizations work toward developing new, innovative programs to support artists and arts-based businesses, underfunding and eligibility restrictions hamper the craft sector from accessing programs for much-needed industry support. Many pre-pandemic federal funding programs were critically underfunded, excluded the craft sector, and were restrictive in the timeline for funding application and approval. Restrictions against sole proprietorships, fast-paced proposal application/approval, and stacking multiple levels of government funding have left not-for-profit organizations at a significant disadvantage.

We request a review of existing program eligibility and timelines, particularly for the slate of programs at Canadian Heritage. Currently, there are no funding opportunities specific to visual arts and craft within this department. Access for our sector has been limited to competition within the project funds open to culture, sport, and heritage organizations. At the same time,

other arts disciplines are supported through dedicated disciplinary funds such as the Canadian Arts Presentation Fund, Canada Book Fund, Canada Media Fund, Canada Periodical Fund, etc.

We ask that two streams of visual arts-specific funding be developed:

Operational funding to support visual arts and craft-based organizations whose mandates focus on the advancement, professional development, promotion, expansion, and innovation of the visual arts, including craft.

Mentorship/training and marketing funding specifically targeted to provide sector-specific professional development and business advisory services to artists. This funding is particularly relevant to those running sole-proprietorships, currently excluded from microgrant funding, such as the Grow Your Business Online programs through Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada.

2. Increase core funding for arts service organizations (ASOs):

Arts service organizations (ASOs) like the Canadian Crafts Federation are essential in supporting artists and promoting the arts. However, many of our Provincial and Territorial Councils and support organizations are in peril due to a lack of sustainable and stable core funding. This lack of funding leads to high turnover rates, loss of institutional knowledge, and an inability to attract and retain competent staff.

Craft Councils receive varying funding levels in different regions, significantly impacting craftspeople's safety and quality of life. 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 insufficient 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.

The CCF/FCMA and the Councils bear the burden of all associated costs yet are unable to regulate the inflow of funds. The CCF/FCMA frequently faces financial difficulties caused by insufficient core funding, and its 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 as per the principle of subsidiarity.

3. Implement an Employee Insurance program tailored explicitly for workers in the arts and culture sector:

Craftspeople and other cultural workers often lack the social protections available to other employees. An Employee Insurance program for arts and culture workers would provide much-needed support, similar to the special rules for self-employed fishers, hairdressers, and drivers. This program would allow self-employed workers to contribute to and collect EI, providing a safety net during periods of no work.

The Strengthening the Status of the Artist in Canada report by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage (2023) highlighted the need for fair remuneration for artists. Implementing an Employee Insurance program for the arts and culture sector would address this need and provide financial stability for craftspeople and other cultural workers.

4. Establish a Federal Basic Income Guarantee for craftspeople and all workers:

A Federal Basic Income Guarantee would provide financial stability for craftspeople who are often part of the gig economy and earn low incomes. According to Cultural Human Resources Council survey, 51% of responding artists have total personal incomes below \$40,000, with a mere 7% reaching \$80,000 or more. Financial stress is very common among artists, particularly BIPOC artists, who are more likely to experience financial precarity.

A universal basic income modelled on the Canada Emergency Response Benefit should be considered. A basic income guarantee would reduce poverty, stabilize incomes, and simplify the complex web of available benefits and programs. This guarantee is crucial for the well-being and safety of the arts and culture sector, ensuring that craftspeople can continue contributing to Canadian culture and economy without the constant stress of financial instability.

5. Allocate at least 1% of the Government of Canada's overall spending towards arts, culture, and heritage:

The arts, culture, and heritage sectors are fundamental to Canada's economic and social life. Despite their significant contributions, these sectors often face funding challenges. We support the Canadian Arts Coalition's recommendation that the Government of Canada permanently allocate at least 1% of its overall spending towards arts, culture, and heritage. This allocation would involve an additional permanent investment of \$270 million into these sectors, with \$140 million to the Canada Council for the Arts and \$130 million to the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The arts, culture, and heritage sectors significantly influence Canada's GDP. In the first quarter of 2024, the real GDP for the culture and sport sectors rose 0.6%, surpassing the growth for the total economy (0.4%). Including inflation, the nominal GDP for our sector increased by 1.2% over the same period. The craft sector alone created 28,876 jobs in Canada in 2023, underscoring its role as a key employer. This substantial number of jobs generated showcases

the vibrant and essential role that the craft industry plays within the national labour market, underscoring its importance not only as a cultural and artistic endeavour but also as a significant economic driver that supports a wide range of professionals, from artisans working in traditional crafts to individuals engaged in the modern creative economy.

Moreover, the sector's contribution to cultural exports was substantial, with crafts accounting for \$4.53 billion in 2021. These figures demonstrate the craft sector's vital contribution to the Canadian economy, cultural significance, and potential for future growth and development.

Allocating at least 1% of government spending would ensure sustained investment in these vital areas, support core operating grants, increase funding for museums, galleries, festivals, and cultural infrastructure, and address the financial precarity many artists and cultural workers face.

Impact of Craft on Economic Development in Canada

Craft economies are a vital attraction for local and global buying markets, creating linkages between people and handmade objects. They drive tourism, export, and entrepreneurship, empowering communities across Canada. The latest data from Statistics Canada shows that the craft sector contributed approximately \$2.7 billion to Canada's GDP and created 29,858 jobs in 2021. This significant economic contribution highlights the importance of supporting and investing in the craft sector to foster economic development and cultural richness across the country.

In summary, these recommendations are crucial for supporting the craft sector, ensuring the sustainability of arts service organizations, providing financial stability for craftspeople, and recognizing the significant role of arts, culture, and heritage in Canada. Investing in these areas is overdue and urgently needed to foster a vibrant and inclusive cultural sector that benefits all Canadians.

The Canadian Crafts Federation

As a Federation of Organizations, the CCF/FCMA works with the Provincial and Territorial Craft Councils¹ and affiliate organizations to unite, enrich, empower and celebrate the professional contemporary craft sector through collaborative action, networking, and community development. Provincial and territorial craft councils (PCC/TCCs) work on many levels—through individual and regional efforts to develop creative and economic activity within the craft sector. The CCF/FCMA and the PCC/TCCs represent all craft media, and cross-media initiatives are frequent. The PCC/TCCs perform dual roles for the Canadian craft sector: they promote both the culture of craft and the commodity of craft. Their activities range from

¹ Canadian provincial and territorial craft councils: Craft Council of British Columbia, Alberta Craft Council, Saskatchewan Craft Council, Manitoba Crafts Council, Craft Ontario, Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec, New Brunswick Craft Council, Craft Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island Craft Council, Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador.

providing permanent public galleries, boutiques, and seasonal shows to their members and, in some cases, to all professional craftspersons - stimulating domestic and international business development. The CCF/FCMA currently has ten provincial council member organizations and 15 affiliate member organizations.

The CCF/FCMA ensures consistent representation from all provinces and territories. Operational funding is garnered through membership fees, fundraising, and the Canada Council's National Arts Service Organization grant. As of 2018, the CCF/FCMA reached over 5700 professional Canadian craftspeople through the Craft Council membership alone. Additionally, the CCF/FCMA reaches a breadth of national, international, and regional organizations through their activities and member organizations through live and online programming.

The CCF/FCMA requests to appear before the Committee during its deliberations on this matter in Fall 2024 and would be pleased to discuss this matter further.

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The Craft Spectrum

Technology

Craft is closely linked to technological change within society. Making practices are ever-evolving, both reflecting and inspiring the use of new tools and technologies.

Materials & Process

Craft centres on a deep engagement with materials and processes, honed over time. It expresses the knowledge of the maker in conversation with the materials they use.

Making Traditions

Craft connects to longstanding making traditions, while continuing to develop them. Craft objects may express, reaffirm, and also question ideas of identity.

Community

Craft is deeply rooted in community. Makers have long gathered together, seeking shared resilience, kindred purpose, and professional support.

Human History

Craft is embedded in human history, spanning millennia. The impulse to make objects for use, ceremony, and expression extends to the earliest human societies and all global cultures.

Learning

Craft has long been fueled by an interest in learning through doing, propelled by a modern revival of peer-led skill sharing.

Cultural Exchange

Craft facilitates cultural exchange in a way that transcends language. We learn about each other and share knowledge through making practices and traditions.

Economy

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.

Artistic Expression

Craft emanates from human experience, cutting across geographic and cultural boundaries. Acts of making can connect an individual to a community, to a sense of well-being, and to the transformative potential of their own skill.

