

Arts and Culture Resources in Canada

Menon Dwarka, Senior Vice President

When the arts and culture sector does its job well, all that anyone sees is the interaction between the artist and the audience. All the other systems and people involved in delivering an artist's vision to the world largely remain hidden—so much so that even insiders to the sector might have trouble navigating the complexities of how it is supported locally, regionally, and nationally. Here are a few resources on Canadian arts and culture organizations, with reference to their American counterparts, that provide a deeper understanding of the sector in the context of their own resources.

The Charity Report

"Arts Charities in Canada: How they are funded and what they're facing," published in May 2021, gives a broad historical overview of Canada's cultural industries in 2018 while considering the tremendous impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in the arts.¹

Number of Arts Charities: 2,515

Total Gross Asset Value: \$3.8 billion

Average Gross Asset Value: \$1.5 million

Total Annual Revenue: \$2.4 billion

Average Annual Revenue: \$970,000

Percentage with Full-Time Employees: 38% with at least one, 7% with 10 or more

Number of Full-Time Employees: 8,555

Number of Part-Time Employees: 27,198

The following summary represents the breakdown of revenue sources for arts organizations in Canada:

Funding Source	\$ Millions	Percentage %
Sale of Goods or Services	\$728.2	29.5%
Federal Government	\$467.1	18.9%
Provincial or Territorial Government	\$300.5	12.2%
Revenue Not Included Elsewhere	\$219.2	8.9%
Tax Receipts Issued for Gifts	\$170.7	6.9%
Municipal/Regional Government	\$121.6	4.9%
Non-Receipted from Fund Raising	\$96.4	3.9%
Received from Other Registered Charities	\$91.8	3.7%
Interest and Investment Income	\$76.6	3.1%
Tax Receipts Not Issued	\$65.4	2.7%
Income from Rental of Land and/or Buildings	\$45.1	1.8%
From Disposition of Assets	\$26.2	1.1%
Dues, Memberships, and Association Fees	\$23.5	1.0%
Outside Canada, Non-Receipted	\$10.0	0.4%
Proceeds from Disposition of Assets	\$7.0	0.3%
Tax Receipted Tuition Fees	\$6.1	0.2%
From Any Level of Government	\$5.4	0.2%
Ten-Year Gifts Received	\$3.9	0.2%
Outside of Canada	\$0.7	0.0%

¹ "Arts Charities in Canada: How they are funded and what they're facing," The Charity Report, May 2021, https://www.thecharityreport.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/6054_ArtsOrgs10Gail.pdf.

A similar report for consideration by American readers is Public Funding for Arts and Culture in 2020 from Grantmakers in the Arts. In summary, “the federal government, states, and localities appropriated a combined \$1.47 billion to the arts in FY2020, for a total per capita investment of \$4.42.”²

Investing in the Arts

Beyond financial resources, larger societal benefits have also been assessed and are highlighted here for deeper consideration on the impacts of investing in the arts. For example, Canada Council for the Arts published its 53rd *Statistical Insights on the Arts* report series, Canadians’ Arts Participation, Health, and Well-Being, in March 2021. Based on Statistics Canada’s 2016 *General Social Survey*, the report explores the connection between several arts, culture, and heritage activities and compares that to four characteristics of health and well-being: overall health, mental health, satisfaction with life, and satisfaction with the feeling of being part of the community. For each characteristic, the analysis shows that there is:

- “A strong connection between cultural participation and health.
- Solid evidence of a connection between cultural participation and mental health.
- A moderate connection between cultural participation and satisfaction with life.
- A limited connection between cultural participation and community belonging.”³

A parallel report in the United States, commissioned from a 2017 survey and published in 2019 by the National Endowment for the Arts, U.S. Patterns of Arts Participation, highlights additional trends in adults who engage in the arts in visual arts, theatre, music, dance, and literary activities.⁴

Canada Census

Canada Census profiles are an underutilized tool for the arts and culture sector. These profiles provide users with relevant data on income, immigration, ethnic origin, and housing, but they can also be used to compare data between provinces, regions, and cities down to the specific postal code. This data has immense implications for understanding community engagement and audience development programs, shaping messaging by knowing the demographics of a particular neighbourhood, considering appropriate sales distribution channels, and developing content. Including this information in stakeholder mapping reports can help demonstrate how arts organizations are being responsive to local audiences. American readers can reference the Unites States Census Bureau for similar information to determine how best to consider demographic trends and shifts over time.

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation / Radio-Canada

Most Canadians have grown up with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Radio-Canada (CBC/Radio-Canada) as part of their daily lives. With its mandate to “inform, enlighten, and entertain; to contribute to the development of a shared national consciousness and identity; to reflect the regional and cultural diversity of Canada; and to contribute to the development of Canadian talent and culture, CBC/Radio-Canada uses television and radio to broadcast a variety of news, music, and scripted and documentary programming to reflect the Canadian experience to a domestic and international audience.”⁵ This publicly funded Crown corporation delivers services similar to, but uniquely different than, those offered by the Public Broadcasting Service and National Public Radio in the United States.

CBC/Radio-Canada has exponentially expanded its offerings through digital channels. An overview of its services and platforms demonstrates the breadth and depth of Canada’s creative industries. The endless virtual channels available on the web allow a wider variety of niche audiences to be served by this national broadcaster. Forty years ago, CBC/Radio-Canada had two television and radio stations in most major markets. Now, there are 26 distinct digital channels where visitors can explore news, television, film, and documentaries in English, French, and several Indigenous languages. If there is a window to the soul of Canada, it is the CBC/Radio-Canada, highlighting the arts and cultures of a diverse nation.

² Reina Mukai, Ryan Stubbs, and Patricia Mullaney-Loss, “Arts Funding Snapshot: GIA’s Annual Research on Support for Arts and Culture,” Grantmakers in the Arts, 2021, <https://www.giarts.org/public-funding-arts-and-culture-2020>.

³ Kelly Hill, “Canadians’ Arts Participation, Health, and Well-Being,” *Statistical Insights on the Arts*, Hill Strategies, February 2021, https://hillstrategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/sia53_arts_wellbeing.pdf.

⁴ “U.S. Patterns of Arts Participation: A Full Report from the 2017 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts,” National Endowment for the Arts, December 2019, https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/US_Patterns_of_Arts_ParticipationRevised.pdf.

⁵ Mandate, CBC/Radio-Canada, February 22, 2022, <https://cbc.radio-canada.ca/en/vision/mandate>.

Public and Corporate Funding

Public funding is a vital part of any Canadian arts organization's revenue generation. The Canada Council for the Arts, a Crown corporation founded in 1957, and Canadian Heritage, founded in 1993, have provided project and operating funding for decades. Most provinces and major cities also have arts councils that support local arts organizations and artists.⁶ The National Endowment for the Arts along with the National Endowment for the Humanities (both founded in 1965), Corporation for Public Broadcasting (founded in 1967), and Institute of Museum & Library Services (founded in 1996) would be the closest organizations in the United States with similar mandates.

What might be more difficult to access is the municipal and provincial funding that supports civic cultural masterplans where investment in the arts serves as a 'quality of life' issue. The best way to discover a city's cultural plan and how an arts organization's work might support such efforts is to connect with the constituency office of your local political representative. Do not be dissuaded if a councillor's schedule precludes in-person meetings, as staff often have direct connections with their counterparts in various city agencies.

Canada's Big Five banks also fund several social good initiatives that often support the arts at the local level. It may seem counterintuitive but making an appointment with a branch manager is often a great way to learn about the bank's current cultural vantagepoint. Gauging how an arts organization's work intersects with the bank's priorities can save a lot of time before filling out lengthy grant applications.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report

Arts Consulting Group recently published an *Arts Insights* on Truth and Reconciliation in the Arts and Culture Sector (Volume XXI Issue:1) and the calls to action set forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). However, this set of cornerstone documents provide much of the background and specific language that funders require for ongoing financial support, while more deeply honouring the commitments that Canadians have and must make with Indigenous peoples. Engaging with this information is vital at the board, staff, and constituent levels, and it is a catalyst to document authentic policies, appropriate processes, and significant progress. Moving towards Reconciliation requires all civic and cultural institutions to be united in repairing Canada's founding wounds and ongoing inequities.

Arts Service Organizations

According to Ontario Presents, "Arts Service Organizations (ASOs) support the arts through advocacy, professional development, resources, financial support, and/or networking. Many ASOs are member-based networks that allow like-minded organizations to come together and support each other, much like professional associations."⁷ For arts creators and organizations, these ASOs⁸ can be helpful in learning the dynamics of the Canadian arts ecosystem with a solid starting point.

Toronto also has a group of Local Arts Service Organizations and there are also ASOs that serve specific disciplines within the arts.⁹ Forming relationships with ASO workers can lead to presentation opportunities. Often, they have funding that is separate from arts councils and government agencies. Despite the significant difference in size and scale, Americans for the Arts would have a similar mission as both an ASO with a collection of local ASOs and other regional organizations.

LinkedIn

Building relationships across the sector is a great way of making people aware of an arts organization's unique contributions to the cultural life of Canada. While resumes are more concentrated views of an arts and culture leader's activity, a sustained timeline of accomplishments, achievements, and artistic activity can be more impactful when it comes time to seek new opportunities. This is even more vital given Canada's low population density. With a handful of major institutions spread out across the country, forming relationships with various leaders might be the key to long-term career success. It is surprisingly easy, and most leaders are kind enough to respond to direct questions, provide mentorship, or a request for a virtual meeting.

⁶ Young Associates, <https://www.youngassociates.ca/links>.

⁷ Arts Service Organizations and Sector Events: Who's Who?, Ontario Presents, <https://ontariopresents.ca/resources/arts-service-organizations-and-sector-events-whos-who>.

⁸ Who and what are Registered National Arts Services Organizations (RNASO) in Canada?, Canadian Charity Law, January 2012, <https://www.canadiancharitylaw.ca/blog/who-and-what-are-registered-national-arts-services-organization-rnaso-in-ca/>

⁹ Young Associates, <https://www.youngassociates.ca/links>.

Resource Roundup

When we think about resources, we often think of funding or other hard assets. The resources listed above demonstrate that information and statistics can help us better understand and frame the challenges that our organizations face, especially as we emerge from the global pandemic. While our particular challenges may seem overwhelming and specific to our particular cultural discipline or geography, ASOs and social networks are there to remind us that there are many people across the world who are there to help us. It's easy to forget that we live in a time when we all have access to more tools and data than at any other time in history. Making more informed decisions, in dialogue with our colleagues, will ensure a brighter future for those of us who continue to work in the arts and culture sector.



Menon Dwarka, Senior Vice President

Menon Dwarka joined ACG in 2021 and has held numerous arts leadership positions in Canada and the United States over the last 25 years. His innovative approach to the arts has always resulted in increased audience engagement and community development with a focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, and access. His expertise resides in leveraging technology in service of creating more diverse programming and administrative spaces. A disruptor of stratified ecosystems, Mr. Dwarka has also led grassroots organizations like Toronto's 918 Bathurst Centre and served as a board member of Canadian Opera Company, guiding its equity, diversity, and inclusion taskforce. His cross-sector work to achieve public/private sector partnerships demonstrates his unique ability to work with a variety of stakeholders to ensure the viability of arts spaces and venues across urban and suburban settings. Mr. Dwarka has worked as a peer reviewer of grants for the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts

Council, Manitoba Arts Council, City of Ottawa, and Toronto Arts Council, where he currently sits on the Music Committee. Organizations that he has led have received support from all three levels of government, as well as the Metcalf and Jackman Foundations, among others. A sought-after public speaker, Mr. Dwarka has been featured on numerous television and radio programs, including a regularly occurring segment on *Sesame Street*. He was part of the inaugural cohort of the Banff/Toronto Arts Council Cultural Leaders Lab as well as the City of Toronto's Economic Development and Culture's Strategic Planning Committee, which oversaw the creation of Toronto's 2018-2022 Culture Plan. In addition, Mr. Dwarka served as Support Lead for the Metcalf Foundation's Creative Strategies Incubator and is Chair of Humber College's Program Advisory Committee and Canadian Opera Company's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. He holds a bachelor of music and master of music in music composition from the University of Toronto.

Contact ACG for more information on how we can help your organization increase its funding, diversify its programming, and create a more equitable workplace.

(888) 234.4236
info@ArtsConsulting.com
[ArtsConsulting.com](https://www.ArtsConsulting.com)