



2021/2022 **ANNUAL REPORT**



2021/22 COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

1. OPERATIONAL FUNDING
2. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION
3. ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CULTURE SECTOR
4. TOURISM AND CULTURE
5. SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL PRACTICES
6. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building Back Better: A Vision for Culture Sector Recovery in Nova Scotia is a report that was delivered to the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage on behalf of the Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council in June 2021. The paper was the predominant focus of Council's work in 2020/21, and was the basis on which we developed our focus for 2021/22. While the pandemic forced us to take pause and consider how we can all be more thoughtful and tenacious in our recovery, the world has shifted significantly in many ways that need our attention today. To that end, the Council has identified additional priorities that will take centre stage among those outlined in the Build Back Better report over the years to come.

Overall our strategic focus in 2020/21 leaned largely towards increasing operational funding for cultural organizations, advancing equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility, developing sustainable cultural practices, discovering the value and intersection of culture and tourism working together to build the cultural workforce.

To initiate this work we spent our 2021/22 meetings listening to Government presentations in an effort to understand what work was happening to advance these priorities, both internally and for the culture sector. We established an inventory of the existing intelligence, tools and resources available in government, noting where they were lacking and if so, developing an inventory of what plans are in place in government to begin or bolster existing work.

This work would include a second phase, which we identified as shifting our takeaways into our 2022/23 session. Here we will delve deeper into what we learned in the year prior. We'll endeavour to understand where priorities have been developed into active policy. We'll determine if the policy aligns with the Culture sector's needs. If it is determined that there are gaps, we'll identify what's missing and seek to understand how we can support the culture sector in bridging these gaps.

In the case where we identify priorities that have policy in place, and resources are readily available for use by the culture sector, we'll determine how we can support CCTH in its efforts to communicate, disseminate and support the Sector's implementation of the resources and toolkits.

This paper will serve as a summary of what we learned in Council's 2021/22 year and to expressly convey our intent and strategy to support the Culture sector's evolving priorities in the years to come.



1. OPERATIONAL FUNDING

The first and perhaps fundamental tenet of *Build Back Better: A Vision for Cultural Recovery in Nova Scotia* is the importance of increasing operational support to the province's arts and cultural organizations and expanding the program to engage new organizations, specifically from marginalized and underserved communities.

The critical need to increase and expand core funding was referenced continuously during the consultation phase of the Build Back Better report.

Despite inflation, rising infrastructure costs, emerging urgent priorities, and the pressing demands posed by a global pandemic, operational funding has not increased in more than 20 years. Approximately 97 organizations and programs receive operational funding from Arts Nova Scotia and the Department of Communities Culture Tourism and Heritage. The total investment is \$3.75 million annually. Nova Scotia's arts and cultural sector leverages this and additional support to contribute close to \$1 billion dollars to the provincial economy each year.

At present, there is virtually no capacity to provide operational support to new organizations which is essentially silencing dynamic young voices and creators from equity-seeking communities, ultimately diminishing the province's vibrant cultural landscape. This presents a multi-layered barrier to progress for the sector, preventing organizations from developing forward-thinking models of sustainability, addressing prescient issues around equity, diversity, and inclusion, and undertaking meaningful strategic planning and succession planning for the cultural industries.

Consistent with input provided during the Build Back Better consultations, Council believes increased investment for operating funding from the Department and Arts Nova Scotia will facilitate stability, welcome new organizations, and include avenues to recognize and sustain self-producing artists, all required for a successful economic recovery in the post-pandemic world.

Building on the Department's Business Plan, this investment will: help sectors grow and recover, reduce requests for ad-hoc funding; assist in addressing systemic racism, create a more equitable province and support healthy communities developed by harnessing the vitality and capacity of Nova Scotia's arts and creative sectors.

During the past year, Council has discussed operational funding with the Minister of Communities, Culture Tourism and Heritage and senior staff and will continue to advance this priority and work with the sector to support and realize this goal.

2. EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Across the arts and culture sector, there is a strong desire to be a tenacious partner in Nova Scotia's collective efforts to be more inclusive of all Nova Scotian cultures and voices. First and foremost, this means dismantling institutional barriers to access and creating more opportunities for marginalized communities, while ensuring their participation is grounded in authenticity.

One of the major themes of Building Back Better was that "equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) should be used as a lens through which we choose to reinvigorate the sector."

Government has begun the work of reducing barriers to make funding more accessible, and the Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council is further exploring what cultural shifts are required to allow for greater access by all equity-seeking groups.

New resources have been made available through the department of CCTH. Aja Joshi, Director of Community Outreach and Inclusion presented the CNSLC with "Inclusive Leadership: An Equity, Diversity and Inclusion EDI Toolkit and Resources for CCTH Boards." This work aims to provide EDI training support and tools to CCTH Agencies,



Boards and Commissions' chairs and members to promote greater cultural responsiveness and achieve greater equity, diversity and inclusion on its boards that align with the provincial government's diversity strategy.

In 2022/23, Council will explore how dissemination of this Toolkit can be expedited, and in combination, how can government play a leadership role in helping the culture sector implement the resources within their organizations.

3. ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CULTURE SECTOR

Preventing and removing barriers in the Culture Sector is paramount to supporting broadened public engagement and meeting the province's Access by Design 2030 (ABD 2030) goals. We acknowledge that disability is fluid and that language used for Public Policy to define disability and barriers is changing and can pose challenges for those seeking support. We are committed to becoming more informed about how administration of the Accessibility Act will impact and benefit our sector and stakeholders.

The Council identified this priority to action Gaps, Inequities and Sustainability named in the Building Back Better report and will apply EDI as a lens to specifically examine opportunities and needs within our sector. In January 2022, a presentation was delivered to the Council by the Executive Director of the Accessibility Directorate outlining the 2022-2025 Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan and projected timeline. We were oriented to ABD 2030, draft priority areas, and introduced to the roles of the Accessibility Directorate and Interdepartmental Committee on Accessibility (IDC). GNS Accessibility Plan builds on long term outcomes set in the 2018-2021 inaugural plan and aligns with government, CCTH, and culture sector EDI priorities.

To carry out this work and reach our goals for Nova Scotia to lead by example, we will need to identify and strengthen relationships with organizations and stakeholders who have accessibility expertise. What tools and resources are currently available to the sector and what support is still needed? What relationships already exist with members of the disability community? How can we stay connected and nurture new relationships and what is missing to bolster outreach strategies? Evolving examples of tools and resources to support implementation may include Access Guides, ASL interpretation (at online and in-person cultural events and at CCTH meetings), Standards Development, Awareness and Capacity Building, Collaboration and Support, Compliance and Enforcement, Monitoring and Evaluation.

A key to moving this priority forward in Council's 2022/23 year will be to partner with the province at large to identify concrete examples that related to and serve sectoral exigencies, namely, provide operational and special project budget support for accessibility and development best practices for Accessibility in the Culture Sector (develop Access Guides, make ADA infrastructural updates to the built environment, provide low-sensory hours, designate fragrance-reduced spaces, etc.). Still early in its development, this priority is critical and long overdue. Extensive models are available to realize and measure our work together to achieve the province-wide accessibility goals of ABD 2030.

4. SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL PRACTICES

In 2019, the province outlined the pillars by which the Government would use to reach its sustainable development goals. These include building circular and inclusive economies that are created around the Mi'kmaq concept of Netukulimk, or the use of natural bounty to support communities without jeopardising the integrity and diversity of the natural environment.

The CNSLC established that advancing sustainable cultural practices would be prioritized, and once the concept of Netukulim is developed into a toolkit, the model will be one to consult in creating sustainable prosperity for all Nova Scotians across government, industry, and community.



When we talk about building inclusive and sustainable economies, we too often default to focusing on the product: prosperous economies. And when we focus on that prosperity, we forget the story that carries us there. Economies built on Netukulimk are not only sustainable, but create landscapes on which lasting prosperity can be built. Nova Scotia's cultural sector is constantly undergoing evaluation by the individuals, organizations, and institutions that support us. This means our sector is not only a model on which economies can be built, but teachers in the way we can execute these systems. Nova Scotia's economy should be one that not only brings us wealth, but meaning. And our thriving cultural sector can play an important role in teaching us how the economy can proliferate within the river streams of inclusivity, equity, and diversity.

In 2019, the Nova Scotia government established Bill 213, The Act to Achieve Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity. In this act, the government searches to outline how we can raise awareness, create conditions, and adapt and support existing goals towards sustainable economic practices. If we are to reach the goals of that act, including converting our economy to green energies and creating conditions for circular economies, we must begin to look to our cultural and creative sector to define and learn those tools that lead to inclusive and equitable economies.

On July 17, the CNSLC met in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia for their AGM and a presentation from Alex Cadel and Aleen Stanton from the Department of Environment and Climate Change. Mr. Cadel addressed the inevitable climate and environment impacts that are on all our doorsteps: rising ocean levels, increased temperatures, more severe weather events, and other serious impacts from our changing climate. Ms. Stanton outlined the ways that not only will these changes in our climate impact cultural institutions, but also how our cultural sector can adapt and present new avenues to mitigate impacts to our economy and environment. And our sector is able to not only adapt and mitigate, but be teachers in how institutions and our economy can attain net-zero emissions, communicate the severity of climate change, and inspire our province towards improved climate goals. As our provincial government searches to shift towards a circular, environmentally conscious economy, we look forward to our creative institutions playing their part in communicating changes and cultivating new behaviours.

In the Council's 2022/23 session we look towards an economy that is not only prosperous, but built in beauty, reconciliation, and equity. We will do this in partnership with the province.

5. TOURISM AND CULTURE

During the consultation phase of the Build Back Better report, stakeholders stressed the importance of featuring Nova Scotia's rich arts and cultural sectors in provincial tourism marketing. Research on other jurisdictions demonstrates how the arts and culture enrich the visitor experience and play a critical role in the growing demand for experiential travel. Leveraging the reach and the influence of the music and film industries has also proved successful for other jurisdictions.

The integration of Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS) with the Department of Communities Culture Tourism and Heritage presents an excellent opportunity for greater collaboration to promote all Nova Scotia has to offer.

Council met with representatives from TNS in April to explore opportunities for alignment and discussed how the arts and culture are fundamental to tourism. TNS provided a detailed presentation on the markets of highest priority and emphasized the importance of creating authentic experiences. The presentation also outlined numerous opportunities for the sector to be highlighted on digital assets like NOVASCOTIA.com as well as social media, digital display ads and marketing campaigns.

TNS has developed a range of programs and resources which are available to the arts and creative sectors. Several cultural organizations have already accessed programs such as the Digital Content Marketing Program, the Radiate Program and Digital Adoption Program. TNS welcomed the opportunity for other creators and cultural organizations to participate in these programs and noted several ways for the sector to get more information and resources.



TNS encouraged the arts and cultural sectors to participate in stakeholder engagement sessions scheduled for the summer of 2022.

There are obvious synergies between tourism, the arts and cultural sectors. Continued dialogue and collaboration are essential for the Council to advance this priority

The Council is committed to continued discussions with TNS and to facilitate connections between leading service organizations and TNS to support mutual growth and opportunity. Research on best practices is also needed to ensure Nova Scotia can and to harness the collective capacity of tourism, the arts and cultural sectors to differentiate the province and accelerate post-pandemic economic recovery.

6. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A robust and sustainable cultural sector cannot be possible without consideration to ongoing development and education of the workforce. Workforce development is at the core of many of the council's priorities that were identified in the Building Back Better report. We need to develop a workforce that models a diverse representation of communities—that has the digital tools needed for success in a marketplace that has been interrupted and forever changed by the pandemic. We need to develop a sector that has long term sustainability—one that is well-trained and able to adapt to new challenges.

The pandemic has brought to light some training gaps in the sector and the need for diversification of revenue models for many areas of activity within the cultural industries. Though there have been some investments into the digitization of the workforce via CCTH's Creative Industry Fund as a response to Covid 19, more training-specific funding needs to be made available to future proof the workforce in the province. Public confidence in the cultural industries must be restored for Nova Scotian youth to look at creative careers as viable career paths. As we look to create a more diverse workforce within the creative sector, education and skills development should be a key area of focus—and best practices like community-specific student cohorts should be explored.

To advance this priority, community engagement must take place to identify where gaps are present. Where is there a shortage of workers? What skills are needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the sector? What best practices can we look at and model after as we work to move this priority forward? The movement towards micro-credentials in education aligns well with the development of key skills gaps in the sector, and collaboration with post-secondaries and other organizations who are experts in training should be explored to meet sector needs on training initiatives.

An investment in workforce development is an investment in the long-term sustainability and viability of the sector. Council recognizes the importance of a strong workforce and the long-term positive impacts it will have on our continued growth for creative industries in the province. As we work to build back better, ongoing development of a stronger and more diverse workforce will be a priority for the council in the coming year.



CONCLUSION

The Council's work in 2021/22 was an extension of the work completed in 2020/21, during the height of the pandemic. The social, cultural and economic concerns that existed in the Culture sector pre-pandemic still exist today. Despite this, the Sector has been tenacious about rebuilding thoughtfully. The community has been supportive and the department of CCTH has taken a greater leadership role in educating and financing the sector than in years past. There is still much to do.

The Council was privy to a presentation from the committee behind the work of the Nova Scotia Live Performance Recovery Coalition on their paper, "A Roadmap for Recovery: Rebuilding Nova Scotia's Live Performance Sector". This paper proposed that emergency relief funding was still needed. It described why an increase in operational funding is critical to growth in the culture sector, and how a \$3 million investment over three years in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion programming would change the face of the sector, amongst other observations. The Council wrote a letter to the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage in support of the paper, and we encourage the department's understanding of why the requests within are both true and essential for the sustainability of the culture sector ecosystem at large. We must reiterate that project funding is compounding the HR issues within Cultural organizations - we can no longer afford to increase our volume of projects and the results are less than what they could be. With an increase in operational funding these organizations will be in a position to hire the staff they need to accept and properly steward essential projects.

The pandemic forced an unprecedented relationship between the culture sector and the department of CCTH. We've seen the department prioritize engagement, provide unlimited access to its resources, tools and personnel. This is a remarkable shift that we hope to see continue. In the years ahead we are confident that increasing diverse representation, accessibility, sustainable practices and workforce development will remain a forefront priority. The Council is steadfast in its commitment to supporting the Department of CCTH's recommendation to increase operational funding for the Culture sector.

We are excited about the art of the possible, when tourism and culture intersect and to leveraging one of the greatest workforce transitions in history to create more highly skilled well paying jobs for Nova Scotians.

