



# 2022/2023 **ANNUAL REPORT**



## 2022/23 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
7. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council is encouraged to see the renewed focus and support for culture with increased funding support to the sector in the 2022/23 budget.

*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, which continued into 2022/23.

In 2022/23 we experienced a contraction in emergency measures related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Largely, the world returned to in person events over the past year. As we wind up the 2022/23 Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council year, there are no longer any provincially mandated health and safety protocols. This is a profound milestone for Nova Scotians and potential non-Nova Scotian tourists who are slowly but surely readying themselves to get back out there and experience all that we have to offer, across this province.

A second milestone for the art and culture sector was met this year, as an increase in operational funding was established in this fiscal year's budget. This marks the first increase to funding for arts organizations across the province in decades.

Council's focus over the past few years leaned largely towards supporting Minister Dunn's work to increase operational funding for cultural organizations. Communities who support, develop and celebrate the many sectors that make up culture and heritage across NS have been vocal about advancing equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, developing sustainable cultural practices and increasing mental health and wellness systems in our workplaces. It follows that without an increase in funding to arts organizations, this work has been fragmented and slow for most, and impossible for many others.

Given the significant announcement of an established increase in funding, the Minister might include a future focus on supporting and educating arts organizations to adopt policy around the above identified priorities. This is one of those few pivotal moments in history, and policy will be essential in order to ensure that we're all held accountable to communities who have long been marginalized as well as to reduce the cultural carbon footprint. The Council recommends that together with the culture and heritage department of CCTH, we work towards an action plan that is approachable for all sectors in the arts.

In addition to this work over the past two years, the council has been exploring the intersection of culture and tourism, and how we can work together to build the cultural workforce. We're pleased to see the work already underway by Tourism NS, and we look forward to working more closely with Tourism NS to increase visibility for the arts in their strategic plan.



## 1. OPERATIONAL FUNDING

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Significant focus and priority has been invested by the Council in supporting the Minister's work to secure an increase in operating funding for cultural organizations. The Council extends their sincere appreciation and thanks to Minister Dunn, and members of the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, as well as the staff team of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage for their hard work in supporting and facilitating this valuable investment in Nova Scotia's Culture Sector.

A robust Creative sector has a direct correlation to increased tourism in our province, and strengthens our community. Investing in the cultural sector increases the cultural value of the province, and enhances our ability to attract and retain talent, and large employers. This increase in operating funding will assist in stabilizing and supporting cultural organizations throughout Nova Scotia. This investment also provides for the inclusion of organizations not currently supported. There is much data to support the notion of Arts and Culture playing a key role in creating sustainable, economically healthy communities. This investment in the Culture sector is an investment which will enhance the sustainability of the province of Nova Scotia and our communities.

The Build Back Better Report was a pivotal tool in supporting the cultural recovery here in Nova Scotia as we work to recover from the ongoing impacts of the pandemic and create a path forward. The Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council members provide a valuable connection to a broad cross section of the community. We encourage the ongoing investment in the cultural sector to continue to strengthen the cultural value of the province resulting in positive economic impact for the province.

## 2. EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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Council continues to recognize the significant strides forward made by CCTH to advance equity and inclusion for all Nova Scotia communities. Specifically we acknowledge the ongoing dismantling of institutional barriers to funding access as well as ensuring those affected are included in all discussions around best practices for this work.

Greater resources have been made available through the department of CCTH over the past fiscal year, including tailored funds for diverse creatives through the many funding programs available.

In 2021, 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 continues to provide EDI training support and tools to CCTH Agencies. It supports Boards and Commissions' Chairs and memberships to promote greater cultural responsiveness and equity, diversity and inclusion on its boards. In 2022/23, Council continued to discuss the dissemination of this Toolkit and how it can be expedited, and in combination, how can government play a leadership role in helping the culture sector implement the resources within their organizations.

Of utmost importance is that CCTH continues to ensure more meaningful conversations are happening with the offices that support marginalized and racialized groups in order to understand what support and best practices looks like from their perspective, rather than prescribing how the work will unfold.



### 3. ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CULTURE SECTOR

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In October 2022 Laura Beth MacPherson, Senior Policy Analyst with the Accessibility Directorate and Andrew Sare, Senior Policy Analyst with CCTH joined the council to discuss the Accessibility Directorates strategic plan. Phase one of the plan (2018-2021) has already been released and phase two (2022-2025) was to come. This work was delivered to address the government policy of Access by Design 2030.

We acknowledge and applaud the Department's work of releasing Access by Design 2030, a thoughtful and thorough plan to support Nova Scotians in their work to ensure individuals and businesses alike are accessible by the year 2030.

Moving forward, the Council will consider what relationships already exist with members of the disability community. We'll consider how we can 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.

The Council would like to leave the department with the following thoughts, regarding the Access by Design 2030 plan:

- Consider developing a roadmap that prioritizes the plan's work
- We recommend the PSC provide training to the ABC's.
- How can arts orgs address the widespread issue of accommodating disability invisibility.
- Grants to provide accessibility should be built into funding, not extra.

### 4. SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL PRACTICES

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In 2022 the Province of Nova Scotia released its Climate Adaptation Plan. While the plan "provides an evidence-based platform for ongoing teamwork and action. It's a resource to engage all Nova Scotians, governments, businesses, and communities in conversations and action to address climate change", it does not provide solutions. We're encouraged to see the plan addresses the wellness of all Nova Scotians, and specifically addresses the concerns of inequity in citizen response. Those who currently exist in marginalized communities will be substantially more affected, a fact which should trigger greater support for the people of these communities in the short term.

During our 2022/ 23 session we heard from Laura Mackenzie at Screen Nova Scotia on how they're encouraging the Film and Television industry to adopt sustainable filming practices. A strategic and communications plan were presented, and Council was encouraged to consider adopting a similar plan for the culture sectors they belong to.

The takeaway was that prioritizing education within the sectors and providing training to help organizations learn how to reduce their greenhouse emissions is paramount at this stage in the educational curve of carbon footprint reduction.

Creative Green Tools Canada was created, similar to its British counterpart Julie's Bicycle using funds from the Canada Council. CCTH is in discussions about whether these tools could be repurposed to support the culture sector.





## 5. TOURISM AND CULTURE

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After last year's engagement with Darlene MacDonald, Executive Director of Tourism NS, and Kelly MacDonald, Director of Outreach and engagement, we have begun to see the execution of the public consultation directed by TIANS president Darlene Grant Flander who co-chairs the consultation's steering committee. We understand our province's creative industry to play a vital role in not only informing the consultation, but meeting the CCTH Minister's mandated priorities: growing local tourism to ensure all regions benefit from growth; leveraging assets like national parks, sports, and food and culture; supporting an integrated airport marketing plan; and using film to showcase Nova Scotia's beauty and unique experiences.

One of the CNSLC's members, Marshall Feit, attended an online consultation discussing the challenges of transportation and its impact on access to our provincial tourist and cultural destinations. This conversation highlighted the importance of well-maintained roads, the need for extended public transit, and the way a lack of stable transportation impacts not only tourists, but the industry employees who fuel the tourism labour market.

The CNSLC continues to hold discussions on how we can continue to take advantage of the integration of Tourism into the CCTH portfolio. We see directly the positive impacts of our creative industry on tourism, be it live performance, visual art destinations, or other creative industry events and programs. The CNSLC sees our ability to support the minister and their government in reaching the mandate of leveraging our cultural assets and continues to include supportive ways we can be involved in our discussion. With both culture and tourism built into the same department, the collaborations between us continue to be close knit and productive.

As the consultation moves into its in-person meetings and journey through Nova Scotia this Fall, the CNSLC looks forward to connecting with all leads on the consultation to expand conversations on how our creative industry can not only inform, but continue to support the execution of a strong tourism industry. Our members, both in the creative community at-large and on the CNSLC, see firsthand the impact of a thriving tourism industry and we hope to continue prioritizing equity and inclusion, mental health and wellness, sustainability, and workplace development in our conversations and collaborations with our tourism leaders.

Our two communities carry a longstanding synergy and its development will continue to promote a prosperous and equitable Nova Scotia for visitors and residents alike.

## 6. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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The health of our cultural sector relies on a workforce that is well-trained, adaptable to change, and equipped with the skills needed for success both now and in the future. Thinking strategically about the development of the creative sector workforce can have long lasting impacts— not only through training new skilled workers and upskilling industry to align with current trends, but also in the integration of core values throughout strategically planned training.

Workforce development has been a key consideration for the Creative NS Leadership Council for the past year, and will continue to be a focus for the year ahead. The pandemic exposed many training gaps and the creative sector's need for diversification of revenue models— and these gaps need to be addressed if we are to continue to build back better. With this year's announcement of an increase in operational funding, Arts and Culture organizations have more capacity to consider training initiatives that will help prepare Nova Scotia's cultural workforce for the future.



The cultural sector can look to the recent educational movement towards microcredentials as a model for training and upskilling to meet key skills gaps. As training is developed, the core values of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Sustainability, and Accessibility need to be embedded to model continued consideration of these values throughout business operations. While specific modules on EDI and Sustainability can have an impact, incorporating these values into all future training initiatives will help ensure they are constant considerations for people working in the creative sector. With more and more industry benchmarks put in place around sustainability, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and accessibility we need training that will help to develop a workforce where these values are consistently modelled in practice.

If the minister is to consider supporting arts organizations to adopt policy around EDI and Sustainability, education of the workforce will play an integral role in making meaningful change to the way we incorporate these values into our operations—and will have a long-lasting impact on the Creative Sector in the province. A comprehensive plan for workforce development will help to ensure that our creative sector has the skills to adapt to change and thrive in the future.

## 7. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Mental health and wellness is a rising priority for the culture sector. Key learnings from work done in the areas of IDEA have given visibility to the notion that health and wellness must be considered as we move through a period of intensified social reform. That notion is now being carried forward across all sectors. Individuals, businesses and organizations are placing an increased emphasis on supporting their employees, partners and stakeholders overall wellness in the work they perform.

In 2022/23 Council heard from Halifax based Clinical Therapist, Errin Williams. Errin presented an overview of a project she's been developing around a wellness initiative for cultural industries. An overview of the initiative is as follows:

### PROJECT SUMMARY

A grass roots, sector led approach to engage artists and industry partners to address the unique factors impacting the wellness of individuals working in the Creative Arts Sector in Nova Scotia. The project, a partnership between the East Coast Music Association, Errin Williams Counselling & Consulting, and arts-based organizations, will explore concerns of artists on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. This will be a multifaceted project to engage artists and industry to address how the creative industries impact the social determinants of health and hence the wellness of artists. Engagement to include artists supporting artists through peer facilitated activities and an artist and industry working group to develop a well industry strategic plan.

### BACKGROUND

The creative industries have been anecdotally known to negatively impact the mental wellbeing of artists. Society, through common discourse, presents the belief that those who are mentally unwell are naturally artistic or that their mental unwellness is the muse for their art. This depersonalization of the artist ignores social determinants of health. Social determinants of health are events, situations, and life / personal factors which impact a person's ability to be well, resilient, and successful.

Council was impressed with the breadth and depth of Errin's research and would highly recommend that CCTH consider the opportunity to engage in this work.



## CONCLUSION

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The Council's work in 2022/23 was an extension of the work completed in 2021/22. Both the Department and the Sector made significant advancements across all of the Council's identified priorities. While many of the social, cultural and economic concerns that existed in the Culture sector pre-pandemic still exist today, we've seen CCTH under the leadership of Minister Dunn attack many of the issues with ferocity. Consequently, the Culture sector at large has been tenacious about working to meet the government's energy and commitment to changemaking. As we leave our 2022/23 session and all pandemic emergency measures behind us, we are truly excited about what the future holds for Nova Scotian artists and arts organizations.

Of greatest significance to the Culture sector was the permanent increase in operational funding to the arts in the 2023/23 budget. Additionally a one-time application for new operational grants was also approved. This increase in funding is what the sector needed to commit to not only increasing the standard of work their organizations do, but to also begin to establish the foundational HR support in their offices required to even begin to address the institutional barriers that exist in the culture sector as laid out in the Council's priorities above. This is an incredible milestone and will be paramount to shaping a brighter future for all Nova Scotians.

We thank the department of CCTH and the Honorable Minister Pat Dunn for an exceptional year of service.

