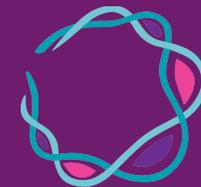


# The Multicultural Artists' Coalition (MAC)

Report on gaps and systemic barrier that inhibit immigrant/refugee artists to achieve their goals to a better capacity (larger scale, audience, & impact)



The  
Multicultural  
Artists'  
Coalition

La  
Coalition  
des Artistes  
Multiculturels



## Who we are

- ▶ We are a collective of immigrant/refugee artists coming from different nationalities, nationhood, cultural backgrounds, gender/sex identities, ages, incomes, and disciplines living in the National Capital Region.

# Our mandate

- ▶ We believe that knowledge is the foundation for capacity. Thus, our actions aim to construct a long-term continuous process to empower the immigrant and refugee artists' community by developing community assets, abilities and capacities.

# Our principles

Self-determination

Self-management

Sustainability

Participation

Ownership

Agency

Bottom-up planning

# Services



## Networking:

Monthly events to develop a professional network for immigrant/refugee artists living in the City of Ottawa.



## Exhibitions and Art Festivals:

Improve visibility of immigrant/refugee artists by organizing art festivals and exhibitions.



## Workshops:

Improve capacities and abilities of immigrant/refugee artist with workshops, lectures, and panel discussions.

# Our Mission: Capacity- Focused Community Development

- ▶ Our approach to cultural and community development is based on a capacity-focused alternative, developing policies and activities based on the capacities, skills and assets of immigrant/refugee artists. Unfortunately, the dominance of the deficiency-oriented social service model has led many marginalized communities to think in terms of local need rather than assets.

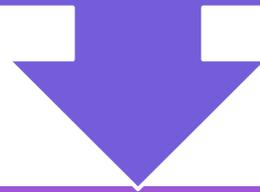
# Capacity- Focused Community Development



Historic evidence shows *that significant community development only takes place when the local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort.* Reason why development can't come from top down and from outside in. <sup>1</sup>

# The Report

This report aims to identify the obstacles that inhibit our community of immigrant/refugee artists living in the National Capital Region, to achieve our goals to a better capacity (larger scale, larger audience, larger impact)



The final section contains a list of recommendations informed by the needs and goals of our community.



# ▶ Methodology

Community Engagement Continuum vs. Consultation

# Community Engagement Continuum <sup>2</sup>

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
					
GOAL	To provide stakeholders with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and solutions.	To obtain stakeholder feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood.	To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of the decision from development to solution.	Shared leadership of community-led projects with final decision-making at the community level.
STYLE	"Here's what's happening."	"Here are some options, what do you think?"	"Here's a problem, what ideas do you have?"	"Let's work together to solve this problem."	"You care about this issue and are leading an initiative, how can we support you?"

Note: To simplify we have divided the process in three steps



Inform

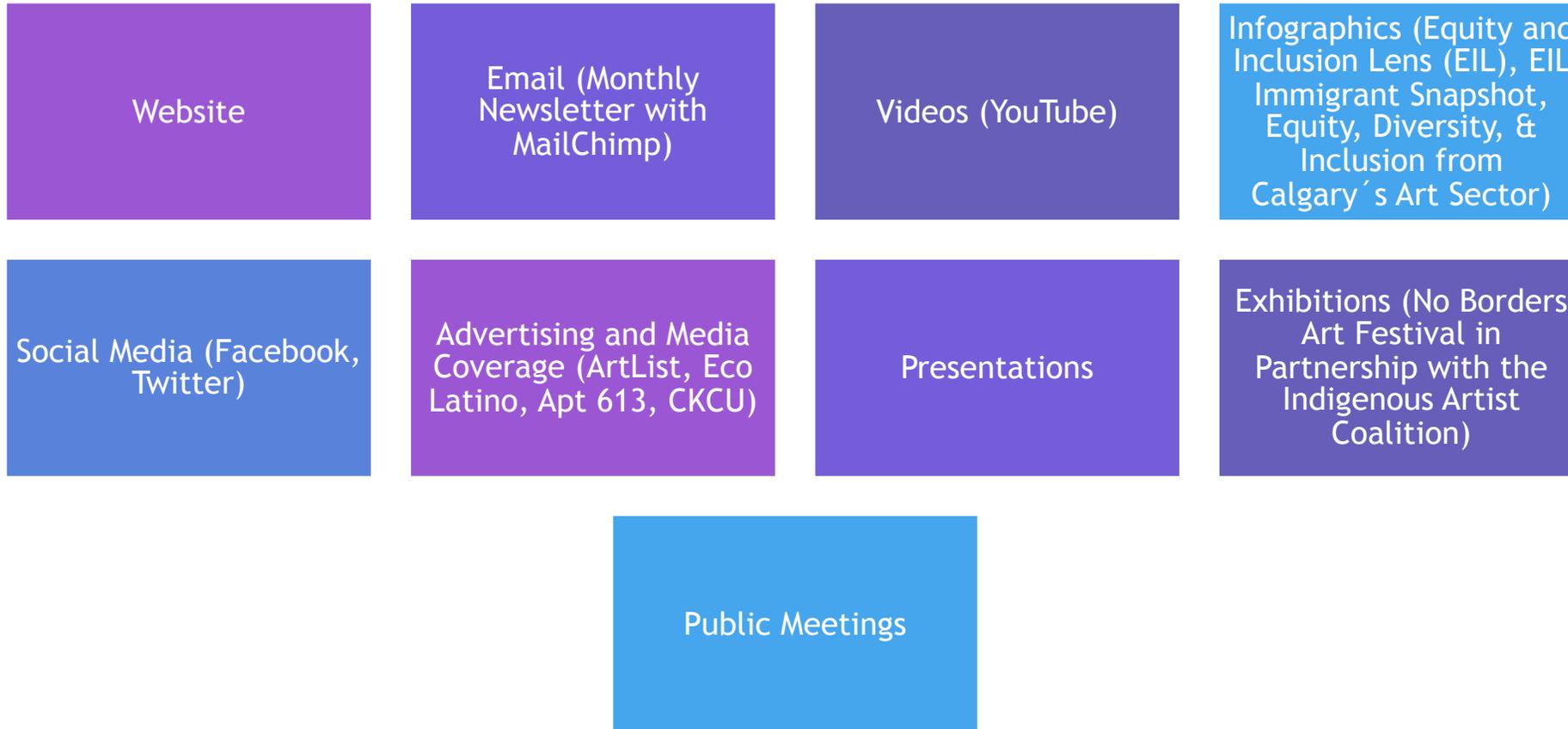


Involve



Empower

# 1. Inform



## 2. Involve

Voting

Surveys  
(printed and  
online)

Focus  
Groups

Capacity  
Building  
Workshops

Door-to-  
door

Kitchen  
table talks

### 3. Empower (Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD))<sup>3</sup>

- ▶ A methodology for the sustainable development of communities based on their strengths and potentials. It involves assessing the resources, skills, and experiences available in a community.
- ▶ Organizing the community around issues that move its members into action.
- ▶ Determining and taking appropriate actions.

# Note: Immigrant Intersected Identities



Our intersected identities make difficult the generalization of gaps and obstacles that we experience as a community. They might vary depending on singular experiences and contexts.



This report intends to provide a synthesis of what we hear from the community.

# Note: Immigrant Intersected Identities



There is a wide range of different categories of people within our community because our intersected identities.



We can be racialized people, Caucasians, Indigenous, First Nations, Youth, Adults, Seniors, Low-Income, High-Income, Unemployed, Partially Employed, Full-time Employed, Underemployed, Women, Men, LGBTQ2S, Academics, Non-Academic professionals, etc.



We may have English or French as first language. Sometimes English and French are second or third language.



Our culture can be similar to Canadian, or can be totally or partially different.

# Vocabulary

- ▶ Intersectionality is a framework derived from black feminism that attempts to identify how interlocking systems of power and authority impact the most marginalized people in society. It considers the various forms of social stratification (class, race, gender/sex, age, abilities) as interwoven together.

# Obstacles & Systemic Barriers

Cultural barriers

Language barriers

Economic barriers

Lack of access to resources (information, spaces, grants, materials, tools, knowledge, networking, etc.)

Lack of understanding between City of Ottawa staff, partners, artists, and audiences.

Advocacy and development dependency projects coming from top-down and outside-in approaches.

# Cultural Barriers

The concept of art as a universal and homogenous structure is an artificial construction imposed by Western Powers.



It has been created in Western Europe and Euro-America, and has been legitimized as universal knowledge by power/knowledge institutions like universities, government, and art academies.



It is a concept that has been constructed on Modern scientific positivism, which lays on the base of Western epistemology. However, Western knowledge stands on a series of assumption that haven't been resolved:

# Vocabulary

- ▶ **Positivism** is a philosophical theory stating that certain ("positive") knowledge is based on natural phenomena and their properties and relations. Thus, information derived from sensory experience, interpreted through reason and logic, forms the exclusive source of all certain knowledge. Positivism holds that valid knowledge (certitude or truth) is found only in this a posteriori knowledge.
- ▶ *We have to remember that what we observe is not nature herself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning.*  
Werner Heisenberg
- ▶ **Epistemology** is the branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge. Epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge, justification, and the rationality of belief.

# Unresolved Assumptions of Western Knowledge <sup>4</sup>



The notion of archival stability.



The objective/subjective dichotomy.



Perception of history as a unidirectional arrow of time that ends in Western Civilizations (Concept of progress)



Neutrality of the scientist/academic.



Universality of scientific/academic knowledge and its ethereal location of production (loci)



The stability of disciplines and clear margins.



Nation States as the main and unique apparatus of political power and agency.

# Assumptions within Art Discipline



Separation between high culture and folklore/popular culture (subjugated/subaltern knowledges vs power knowledge)



Exclusion of certain artistic practices from official art sector.



Patriarchal and white structure of history of art.

# Notes:



Not all art disciplines are at the same level of decolonization. Music, for example, is a discipline that has been more decolonized from an academic perspective. History and theory of music has included in the last century a large amount of racialized men. The process of dismantling patriarchy hasn't been achieved yet.



This hasn't been the case for Visual Arts, Literature, Cinema, and Theater.



A common aspect between all disciplines is the marginalization of seniors.

# Assessment Criteria



Most of the grants at municipal, provincial, and federal level have as principal criterion the artistic merit.



The criteria of merit often comes from Western cultural sources.



The process of decolonization of knowledge is not reflected in the grant's assessment criteria.

# Language Barriers



The majority of immigrants and refugees speak English and/or French as a second language. This creates barriers when applying to grants, residencies, exhibition, and spaces.



Language used in grant application is highly bureaucratic, colonial, and specialized.

# Economic Barriers <sup>5</sup>



When immigrating, a person or family will start a new life. No relatives, no savings or little savings because currency exchange, no university titles validity, no credit history, no employment.



Every single case is different and the conditions may vary depending on the type of immigration status, geo-political, social and cultural origin, among other factors.



The naturalization of colonial epistemology implies a distrust of non-western education. As a result, there is a high level of unemployment or over-qualification in our community.

## Statistics <sup>5</sup> (Immigrant Snapshot from the Equity and Inclusion Lenses of the City Of Ottawa 2016)



Ottawa receives the highest share of immigrants with university degrees in Canada.



82% of immigrant in Ottawa have university degree.



67% of Canadian born population have university degree. (City of Ottawa, 2013)

Despite these skills, many have a harder time to find a job due to lack of:<sup>5</sup>



Recognition of credentials, education and experience from overseas as assets; racial bias views them as 'inferior' to Canadian assets;



Fair, consistent criteria to enable newcomers to re-enter their professions;



Access or support to re-educate/re-train in Canada;



Access to mentorship and networking opportunities;



Cross-cultural competency and racial harassment in the workplace;



Access to professional development and advancement opportunities;



Employer competency in reaching, hiring and developing immigrant workers.

# Unemployment and over-qualification (Ottawa) <sup>5</sup>

## ▶ IMMIGRANTS

- ▶ 15.5 % unemployed
- ▶ 16% of over-qualification in employed men.
- ▶ 24% of over-qualification in employed women.
- ▶ 29% of over-qualification in women from 45-64 years

## ▶ NON-IMMIGRANTS

- ▶ 6.4% unemployed
- ▶ 9% of over-qualification in employed men
- ▶ 11% of over-qualification in employed women.
- ▶ 7.2% of over-qualification in women from 45-64 years

# Overqualification and Credentials <sup>5</sup>



It is also harder for immigrants to find long term, stable, work and they are more often employed in short term and less secure contracts.



If their international credentials are not accepted, immigrants have to pay for retraining to work in their fields.



About half of immigrants work in fields that are unrelated to their skills and abilities when they first arrive in Canada.



If they do succeed in being screened in, they face a significantly higher rate of over qualification than Canadian educated professionals

# Additional Challenges 5



Many immigrants work two or more part-time jobs, with substandard protection and frequent exploitation, in order to meet the needs of their families.



Women and single-parent workers also experience added barriers due to a lack of affordable and culturally appropriate child care or elder care.



They also juggle the stress of migration and settlement in a new country.



Being a low-income immigrant artist reduce the possibility to practice our discipline because lack of time and resources.

Lack of access  
to resources  
(information,  
spaces, grants,  
materials,  
tools,  
knowledge,  
etc.)

- ▶ Adding to what has been already said, there is a deficiency in the organization and distribution of information. All information need to be centralized in one data-base and de-centralize in terms of distribution.

Lack of understanding between City of Ottawa, partners, artists, and audiences.

- ▶ There is a lack of trust from all the stakeholders of Ottawa's Art Sector.
- ▶ City's Cultural Plan still transitioning from 1st Generation to 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation

## RESPONDING TO THE CHANGING CONTEXT 6

FOCUS	1 <sup>st</sup> Generation Culture Plans	2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation Culture Plans
Civic Role	Economic Driver	City and Community Builder
Geographic	Downtown	Neighbourhoods
Organizational	Large mainstream Anchor organizations	Emerging informal organizations
Organizational level	Provincial/National	Local organizations
Cultural	Eurocentric	Diverse cultures/Indigenous
Equity	Elitist	Democratic/Inclusive
Creative	Replicate Discipline based Environment	Create/innovate Interdisciplinary Ecological
Economic	Affluent	Underserved communities
Financing Strategy	Revenue/Operating/Mis-capitalization Grants/Donations	Change Capital Social Impact investing
Funding	Major traditional arts organizations Project funding	Equitable funding strategy Flexible funding
Organizational board & staff	Largely white, male, affluent, socially connected and influential	Culturally diverse, financially diverse, representative of the community
Access	For those who can afford it	For all
Space	Major performing & visual arts centres & museums	Community based flexible & inexpensive to use
Heritage	Built Heritage	Intangible Heritage

# Culture as an Element of Sustainability<sup>6</sup>



UNESCO conventions,



UNDP reports, the work of the United Nations  
Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights,



AGENDA 21 for Culture



the agreements of the Global Taskforce of Local and  
Regional Governments,



the drafts of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development  
Goals,

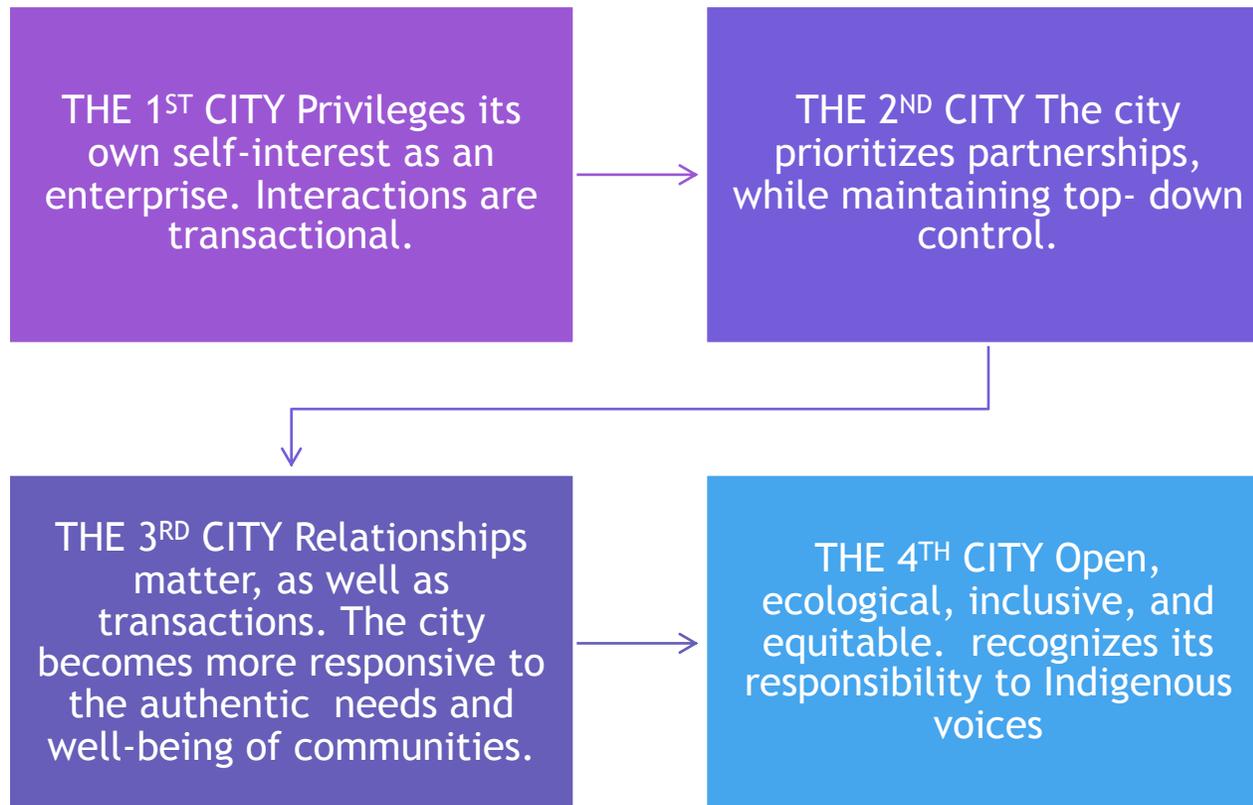


#culture2015goal global campaign.

# *The Changing Context Influences is a Matter of When, Not if* <sup>6</sup>

- Information and communication technologies
- Local and regional Indigenous Knowledges embedded in how intangible heritage, land management, neighborhood regeneration, and cultural contributions are interpreted
- New migration
- The economic uncertainty
- Globalization
- Environmental challenges
- Challenge for cities is how to **maintain a sense of the local and specific** in a rapidly globalizing world

# Following the Continuum of a City Planning Model <sup>6</sup>



Note: Although the Cultural Funding Support Section values represent a second generation cultural plan, this is not reflected in the distribution of the annual envelope.

The city still funding mainly large mainstream anchor institutions instead of emerging informal organizations.

The majority of these institutions don't represent the ethnographic fabric of Ottawa. Their staff still largely white, affluent, male, socially connected, and influential.

The assessment criteria for grant applications still based the following criteria:

- replicate Eurocentric modes of art
- discipline based categories

The alternative could the following criteria:

- diverse and indigenous modes of art and
- interdisciplinary categories with ecology, community, and innovation as core values

# 2018 Summary Report Cultural Funding

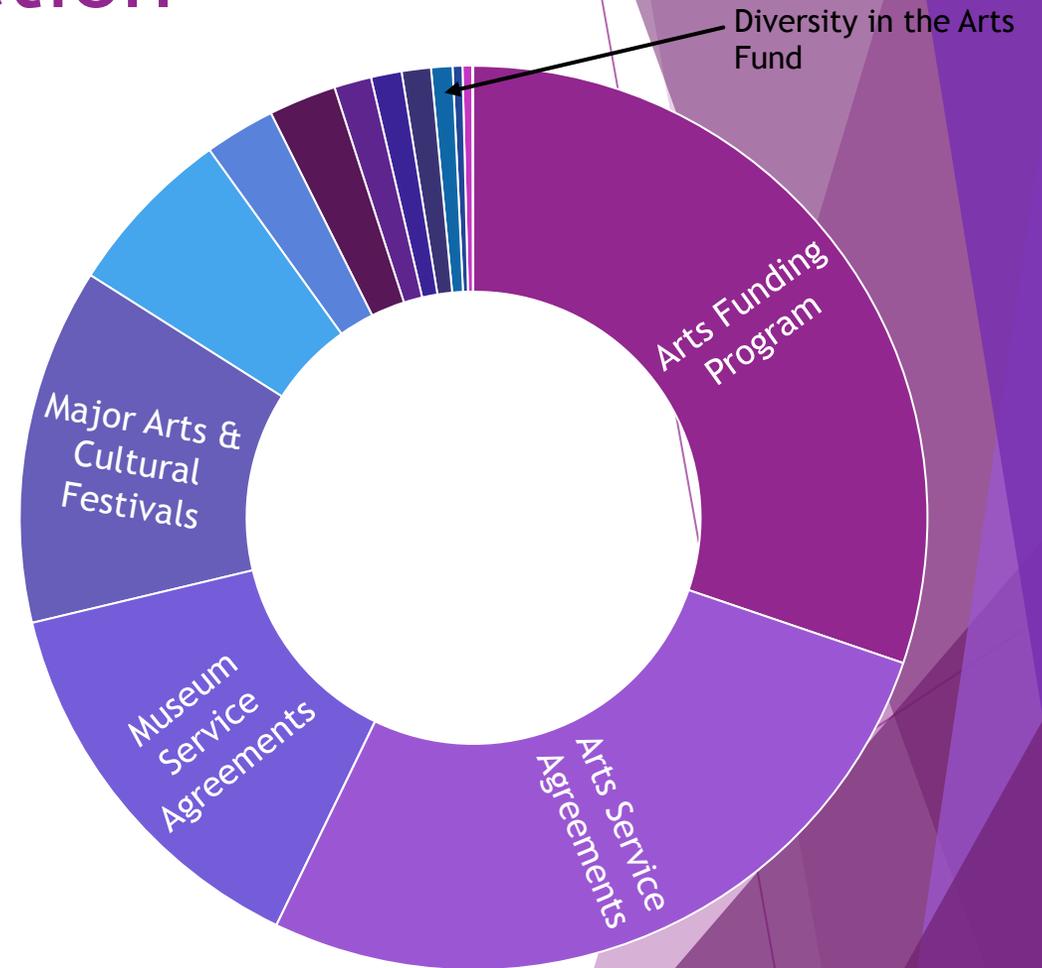
- ▶ 2018 Cultural Funding Support Section Values
- ▶ The Cultural Funding Support Section (CFSS) assists independent, local, not-forprofit organizations, as well as professional artists and heritage professionals in the presentation of arts and heritage events and activities that reflect a broad representation of communities within Ottawa. •
- ▶ The City of Ottawa supports cultural activity that is inclusive of Ottawa's diverse community, including people from a diversity of ancestries, abilities, ages, countries of origin, cultures, genders, incomes, languages, races and sexual orientations.
- ▶ The City of Ottawa is built on unceded Algonquin Anishinabe territory. The Cultural Funding Support Section honours the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation as host nation.
- ▶ Submissions from applicants reflecting Ottawa's diversity, as well as First Nations, Inuit and Métis are welcome and encouraged.
- ▶ The City of Ottawa recognizes both official languages as having the same rights, status and privileges, and therefore accepts applications in both English and French.

# Cultural Funding Support Section <sup>7</sup>

The CFSS manages 18 separate funding and awards programs.

The funding envelope for these programs is approved by City Council

2018 = \$10.7M  
2017 = \$10.4M  
2016 = \$9.8M  
2015 = \$9.2M



There is a need to develop a plan for  
an equitable funding strategy.

# List of recommendations

Developing a mentorship program where an established/local artist mentors an emerging/immigrant artist.

Permanent Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Hiring immigrant art administrators in full-time position.

Being included in the decision-making processes (policy making, juries, committees, etc.)

Increasing participation and visibility.

Need of decolonization of knowledge at individual, institutional, and societal level. (Educating staffs, artists, and audiences to raise awareness) (Diverse cultures vs Eurocentric)

Simplify grant application language.

# List of recommendations

Review grant assessment criteria

Centralized data-base of art resources and opportunities.

Decentralize distribution of information.

Allocating funding for emerging informal organization.

Redistribute funding envelop to improve accessibility, participation, and visibility of equity seeking groups.

Prioritize neighborhood vs downtown.

Prioritize community-based inexpensive spaces.

Prioritize intangible heritage (Storytelling, memories, relationships, wellness, knowledges, skills, ceremonies, etc.)

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- ▶ 7. CFSS Equity and Inclusion Committee presentation by The Cultural Funding Support Section, City of Ottawa. November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018

# THANK YOU

The Multicultural Artists' Coalition

2019

[www.MAC-CAM.ca](http://www.MAC-CAM.ca)