



3 Key Actions. One United Voice for the Future of Ottawa's Arts & Culture.

The arts don't just enrich cities; *they build them.*

The City of Ottawa recognizes culture as the fourth pillar of sustainability. Ottawa's Official Plan identifies culture as a required part of its ambition to be the "most livable midsize city in North America".

Arts and Culture Is How We Build the City We Planned. The Arts Are an Investment, Not an Expense

- Arts and culture generated **\$65 billion for the national GDP (2024)**; rising to \$131 billion with indirect/induced funds
- Ontario alone: **\$28 billion cultural GDP**, 43% of national sector, 458,000 jobs
- Arts/culture tourism delivers **3x economic impact** of other tourism types
- **\$29 in economic activity** is generated for every \$1 of funding for the arts



It's Time for Action

Arts Ottawa is calling on mayoral and council candidates to **commit to three key actions** the city can implement to deliver on existing commitments and build a flourishing Ottawa through a stronger arts and culture sector:

Action# 1: Establish a Cultural Infrastructure Reserve Fund

Outcome: Accessible, affordable, and appropriate space to create and present

Artists and organizations need stable, suitable places to produce and present work. As Ottawa develops, these are the spaces at risk of being priced or planned out of our reach.

What the City can do: Establish a Cultural Infrastructure Reserve Fund. This Fund would be a dedicated, recurring mechanism to fund the renovation, retrofit, and creation of cultural spaces, capitalized through Community Benefits Charges under Ontario's Planning Act. Treating cultural space as a civic asset the City invests in and operationalizes, not a one-off grant.

Action #2: Permanently Increase Cultural Funding

Outcome: Fair pay and scaled investment in the arts

A growing city cannot build its cultural life if creatives are underpaid and unpaid labour. Sustaining and scaling the sector means real operating stability and more room for artists and organizations to be properly compensated for the public value they create.

What the City can do: Commit to a permanent increase to the cultural funding envelope in the city's budget, with increases tied to inflation and population growth, so funding keeps pace with the city rather than eroding against it. A modernized, indexed envelope opens additional operating and project grant opportunities, underwriting fair-work models across the sector.

Action #3: Coordinate Arts and Culture Governance Across City Functions

Outcome: Aligned and helpful guidance for cultural activities

The sector is ready. It has ideas, relationships, and will. What we need is a unified City organized to move with it, instead of fragmented departmental strategies.

What the City can do: Include arts and culture in the 2027 Governance Review. Commit to coordination within and across departments, commit to data sharing and shared frameworks, and finish and release the Municipal Culture Plan. It's time.

Join Us as a United Voice for the Arts in Ottawa

You asked Arts Ottawa to be the coordinating body of the arts sector, so we will champion these asks for you at City Hall, but **we can get there faster if we're all voicing the same asks.**

Here are 3 ways you can help amplify these actions across the city:

1. Email Candidates to Commit to Supporting the Arts Through the 3 Key Actions

Ask mayoral and council candidates to pledge their support for:

- ☒ Action #1: Creating a Cultural Infrastructure Reserve Fund
- ☒ Action #2: Permanently increase cultural funding and attach it to inflation
- ☒ Action #3: Include arts and culture in the 2027 Governance Review.

A pre-written email is available and can be customized with your organization's story.

[SEND A MESSAGE TO CANDIDATES](#)

[Find your ward and Councillor here.](#)

2. Share The 3 Key Actions with Your Community – and spread the word on the impact of the arts!

Circulate this PDF and Share the 3 Key Actions:

- ☒ In your newsletter
- ☒ On social media
- ☒ With your members
- ☒ With your board
- ☒ With community partners



3. Join Ottawa's Arts & Culture Mayoral Debate – September 29th – Arts Court Theatre

Arts Ottawa and our partners are organizing a forum for the arts and cultural sector, to get answers about Ottawa's future from the people who want to lead it. Join us at the **Arts Court Theatre** to hear directly from mayoral candidates: Mayor Mark Sutcliffe, Councillor Jeff Leiper, Candidate Alex Lawson, and Candidate Neil Saravanamuttoo. Invite your staff, artists, volunteers, board members, and communities together to discuss the future of arts and culture in Ottawa.

[REGISTER FOR OTTAWA'S ARTS & CULTURE MAYORAL DEBATE](#)

[READ ARTS OTTAWA'S FULL REPORT AND SOURCES HERE](#)