

16 July, 2020

A Public Letter from the Arts Community for a Basic Income Guarantee

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

The Honourable Bill Morneau, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Finance

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, M.P.
Minister of Canadian Heritage

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau, Deputy Minister Freeland, Minister Morneau and Minister Guilbeault:

We represent tens of thousands of artists, writers, technicians, and performers from many backgrounds and regions across Canada. Our voices are united; we call upon the Government of Canada to ensure the financial well-being of all residents by implementing a permanent Basic Income Guarantee.

The pandemic's wrath on lives has been swift. Millions are still out of work. Those whose financial situation was not previously precarious find themselves sinking into financial quicksand, their lives instantly upended through no fault of their own. The arts, culture, heritage, tourism, and creative industries have been deeply affected: productions have been canceled, venues shuttered, and livelihoods lost. In these unprecedented times, millions of Canadians, including those in the arts and culture sector, exist in a precarious reality. In this new reality, we are all vulnerable to unexpected changes in circumstances and unexpected hardships. Poverty can become a reality for all of us, abruptly, without warning.

Financial insecurity and the cracks in our health- and social-support systems have been highlighted by the pandemic, but they were always present. Structural inequalities disproportionately affect vulnerable and marginalized communities, making it more likely for people with disabilities, LGBTQ2+, Black, Indigenous, people of colour, refugees and immigrants, women, single mothers and others to slip into systemic cycles of poverty and poor health.

Many support programs have been eroded during the last few decades, with federal, provincial and territorial income assistance and disability support systems consistently failing to provide economic dignity or meet basic human needs. Furthermore, employment-insurance programs have not adapted to the realities of the gig economy or the self-employed, and a large proportion of workers do not meet their required criteria, which is often based on full-time work. If workers do qualify, they often face barriers to re-entering the labour force in the form of reduced support when short-term employment opportunities arise.

The gig economy is undermining decades of worker protections. As participants, many arts-and-culture-sector workers are subject to precarious short-term contracts, without access to benefits, paid sick leave, or even employment insurance. Today, the world of general labour is looking a lot like the way art labour has looked for decades. We write to express our collective concern regarding the precarious state of labour that is in urgent need of reform and redress.

Canada is at a crossroads. The government can continue to look the other way, allowing our most vulnerable to fall through the cracks of a systematically broken social safety net and perpetuate a history of economic insecurity, anxiety and fear. Or, we can take this opportunity to bring about much-needed change and make a meaningful difference that will lead to a brighter future. Establishing a Basic Income Guarantee will help to create a healthier, more equitable social safety system that provides financial support, elevating people and ensuring that no one is left behind.

We commend your leadership and the work of the Government of Canada in implementing and extending the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and other measures, including support for the arts, sports, and cultural sectors. However, too many are still being left behind, held back by barriers beyond their control. A Basic Income Guarantee would build on your existing programs, including CERB, and provide financial security to meet people's basic needs and allow them to participate in society, living with dignity regardless of their work status.

As stakeholders of the arts and culture sector, we ask you to give Canadians the chance not only to survive, but to live. Towards this:

We, the undersigned, are calling upon the Government of Canada to honour its commitment to poverty reduction and instate a Basic Income Guarantee to make a historic investment in a better tomorrow;

We call upon the Government of Canada to hereby reduce the inequities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic: to remove the financial obstacles faced by our most vulnerable, to alleviate gender-based poverty, and to address the economic inequality based in persistent racism and colonialism;

We call upon the Government of Canada to implement a universally accessible and unconditional basic income program that guarantees an income floor to anyone in need.

In the pandemic's wake, the arts communities, versatile and adaptable, are evolving in new and exciting ways. Artists, writers, technicians, and performers will continue to create and to inspire the world around them. Their creation of novel forms of digital culture, music and performance art, online entertainment, movies, literary works, arts and crafts will allow people to weather times of solitude, hardship, and ruptures in social behaviour and contribute to their overall well-being.

We envision a Basic Income Guarantee that ensures financial stability without eroding the existing federal support for arts and culture programs. Unconditional access to a

basic income will support the remarkable creative capacity of individuals and provide employment opportunities, bold visions and community inspiration.

Great challenges are often the catalyst to transform societies and our ways of being – the challenges we face today are no exception. We require a Basic Income Guarantee. The opportunity for change is here and now.

Sincerely,

Craig Berggold – Media artist / Team leader, *Case for Basic Income and the Arts*,
Ontario Basic Income Network

Zainub Verjee – Laureate 2020 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts for
Outstanding Contribution

Clayton Windatt – Independent artist / curator

With, and on behalf of:

Organizations

1. International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)
2. Canadian Federation of Musicians / Federation canadienne des musiciens
3. Canadian Actors' Equity Association (CAEA)
4. Fédération culturelle canadienne-française (FCCF)
5. Kehewin Native Dance Theatre
6. Canadian Artists' Representation / Le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC)
7. Regroupement des artistes en arts visuels du Québec (RAAV)
8. Conseil québécois du théâtre (CQT)
9. Artist-Run Centres and Collectives Conference / Conférence des collectifs et des centres d'artistes autogérés
10. Playwrights Guild of Canada (PGC)
11. Independent Media Arts Alliance / Alliance des arts médiatiques indépendants
12. Canadian Crafts Federation / Fédération canadienne des métiers d'art
13. Association acadienne des artistes professionnel.le.s du Nouveau-Brunswick
14. League of Canadian Poets
15. Canadian Dance Assembly/Assemblée canadienne de la danse (CDA-ACD)
16. The Writers' Union of Canada
17. Dancer Transition Resource Centre/Centre de ressources et transition pour danseurs
18. Union des écrivaines et écrivains québécois (UNEQ)
19. Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA)
20. Electric City Culture Council Peterborough
21. Canadian Federation of Musicians, Ottawa Local 180
22. CARFAC – Ontario

23. New Brunswick Crafts Council
24. Basic Income YYC Arts Collective, Calgary
25. Prospect Human Services, Studio C
26. Kingston Arts Council
27. CARFAC – Alberta
28. Media Arts Network of Ontario
29. Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts
30. Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists/West
31. Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists/East
32. Canadian Senior Artists' Resource Network
33. Associated Designers of Canada

Individuals

1. Moridja Kitenge Banza 2020 Sobey Art Award – Quebec / Multidisciplinary Artist
2. Ruth Cuthand 2020 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, Visual Artist
3. Jorge Lozano 2020 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, Filmmaker
4. Anna Torma 2020 Saidye Bronfman Award / 2020 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts
5. Marlene Creates 2019 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, Lifetime Artistic Achievement
6. Alison Duke 2019 ByBlacks People's Choice Award Winner, Best Film Director
7. Ali Kazimi 2019 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, Filmmaker and Media Artist
8. Gertrude Kearns, CM 2019 Member of the Order of Canada / Visual Artist
9. Andrew James Paterson, 2019 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts
10. Midi Onodera 2018 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, Media Artist
11. Adrian Stimson 2018 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, Visual and Performance Artist
12. Marcus Youssef 2017 Siminovitch Prize for Theatre Laureate, Playwright
13. George Elliot Clarke 2017-16 Canadian Parliamentary Poet Laureate
14. Mike Hoolboom 2017 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, Filmmaker
15. Christopher House, C.M., 2017 Member of the Order of Canada / Choreographer
16. Glenn Lewis 2017 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, Visual Artist
17. Colleen Murphy 2016 & 2007 Governor General's Award for Literary Merit, Drama

18. Emma Donoghue 2016 Nominated for Academy Award - Best Adapted Screenplay /
2010 Finalist, Man Booker Prize
19. Jayce Salloum 2014 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts,
Media Artist
20. Peggy Baker CM, O.Ont, LLD, Dlitt, 2009 Governor General's Award for Lifetime
Achievement in Dance
21. Lata Pada 2008 Member of the Order of Canada / Choreographer / Dancer
22. Adrienne Pieczonka, OC, FRSC, 2008 Officer of the Order of Canada / Opera Singer /
Chair in Voice, Glenn Gould School, Royal Conservatory of Music
23. Eric Metcalfe, RCA, LL, lit, 2008 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts,
Interdisciplinary Artist
24. Vera Frenkel 2006 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts,
Multidisciplinary Artist
25. Paul Wong 2005 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts,
Video Artist
26. Vern Thiessen 2003 Governor General's Award for Literary Merit, Drama
27. Jamelie Hassan 2001 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts,
Visual Artist
28. Djanet Sears 1998 Governor General's Award for Literary Merit, Drama
29. Colleen Wagner 1996 Governor General's Award for Literary Merit, Drama
30. Judy Rebick Writer
31. Lillian Allen Poet / Writer / Performer
32. Rosa John Artistic Director, Kehewin Native Dance Theatre
33. John Greyson Video / Film Artist
34. Richard Fung Professor Emeritus, Ontario College of Art & Design Univ.
35. Carole Conde Independent Artist
36. Karl Beveridge Independent Artist
37. Min Sook Lee Filmmaker / Teacher
38. Indu Vashist Director, South Asian Visual Arts Centre
39. Peter Morin Faculty of Art, Ontario College of Art & Design University
40. Giovanna Riccio Poet
41. Krisztina Szabo Opera Singer
42. Carol Podedworny Director, McMaster Museum of Art
43. Devyani Saltzman Director of Programming, Art Gallery of Ontario
44. Gerald Beaulieu Visual Artist / Former President CARFAC National
45. Peter McGillivray Baritone / Opera Singer / Council Member, Canadian Actor's
Equity Association
46. Sylvie Meste Directrice générale, Conseil Québécois du Théâtre
47. Anne Bertrand Director, Artist-Run Centres and Collectives Conference
48. April Britski National Executive Director, CARFAC

49.	Maegen Black	Director, Canadian Crafts Federation / Freelance Author
50.	Scott McLeod	Editor, Prefix Magazine
51.	Sarindar Dhaliwal	Visual Artist
52.	Florence MacDonald	Playwright
53.	Andrea Fatona	Assoc. Professor, Ontario College of Art & Design University
54.	Peter Flemming	Actor
55.	Pierre-André Doucet	Pianist / Co-directeur artistique, Été musical de Barachois
56.	Julien LeBlanc	Concert Pianist / Co-Artistic Director, Barachois Summer Music
57.	Chris Tolley	Playwright / Artistic Director, Expect Theatre
58.	Narendra Pachkhede	Writer / Artist
59.	Clive Robertson	Artist / retired Art History Professor, Queens University
60.	Judith Marcuse, LL.D.(Hon.),	International Centre of Art for Social Change
61.	Marie Magistry	Singer
62.	Dot Tuer	Writer / Cultural Historian
63.	Brenda Longfellow	Independent Artist
64.	Glen Richards	Independent Artist
65.	Lisa Myers	Artist / Curator / Ass. Professor, York University
66.	Chantal Dionne	Soprano / Voice Teacher
67.	Kyo Maclear	Writer
68.	Lee Williams	Interdisciplinary Artist
69.	John Farah	Musician
70.	Stéphanie Pothier	Mezzo-Soprano / Classical Singer
71.	Elisa Paloschi	Filmmaker
72.	Jennifer Dysart	Filmmaker
73.	Sky Gilbert	Writer
74.	Catherine Hahn	Designer
75.	Paul Kirby	Caravan Stage Society
76.	Adriana Kelder	Caravan Stage Society
77.	Susan Lord	Professor, Queens University, Cultural Studies
78.	Dr. Ron Burnett	Writer / Media Practitioner
79.	Hank Bull	Independent Artist
80.	Penny Joy	Documentary Video Producer
81.	Ron Benner	Film / Design
82.	Velcrow Ripper	Filmmaker
83.	Nova Ami	Filmmaker
84.	Marcia Johnson	Playwright / Actor / Dramaturge / Audiobook director / Activist
85.	Alexis O'Hara	Interdisciplinary Artist
86.	Sydney Lancaster	Artist
87.	Dennis Day	Artist/ Editor/ Educator
88.	b.h. Yael	Media / Visual Artist, Ontario College of Art & Design University

89. Antoine Bourges Film Director, University of British Columbia
90. Jessie Golem Photographer
91. Pam Patterson Performance / Visual Artist, Ontario College of Art & Design Univ.
92. Andrea Cohen-B Director, Meta4films
93. Dirk Van Stralen Independent Artist / Theatre Practitioner
94. Atefeh Khademolreza Video Artist
95. Sally Lee Musician / Arts Manager / Board Member, Wavelength, and CONTACT Photography Festival
96. Elaine Brière Filmmaker / Photographer
97. Jude Griebel Visual Artist
98. Henry Tsang Artist / Assoc. Professor, Emily Carr University of Art + Design
99. Reid Shier Director / Curator, Polygon Gallery
100. Cornelia Wyngaarden Independent Artist
101. Mark Parlett Independent Artist / Musician
102. Liz Park Curator, UB Buffalo Art Galleries
103. Tazeen Qayyum Independent Visual Artist
104. Marc Glassman Writer / Editor
105. Judy Wolfe Writer
106. Demetra Christakos Director / Curator
107. Rina Fraticelli Director
108. Stefan St-Laurent Artist / Curator / Adjunct Professor, University of Ottawa
109. Bryan Mulvihill Independent Artist / Curator
110. Julia Hutchings Filmmaker
111. Joanne Tod Independent Artist
112. Scott Marsden Independent Curator
113. Phinder Dulai Author / Editor
114. Nadia Myre Independent Artist
115. Shawna Dempsey Independent Artist
116. Lorri Millan Independent Artist
117. Bogdan Luca Painter
118. Rafael Goldchain Photographer / Professor, Sheridan College, Faculty of Animation Arts and Design
119. Gary Kibbins Video Artist / Teacher, Queens University, Film & Media
120. Brian Kelly Independent Artist
121. Barbara Evans Filmmaker / Professor
122. Catherine Osborne Writer / Editor
123. Ananya Ohri Independent Cultural Worker / Producer
124. Aaron Rotenberg Media Artist / Spiritual Leader
125. Faisal Anwar New Media / Interactive Artist
126. Rosemary Heather Arts Journalist

127.	Lynne Fernie	Artist / Filmmaker / Programmer
128.	Makiko Hara	Independent Curator
129.	Gary Varro	Artistic Director, Q City Cinema and Performatorium
130.	Sue Donaldson	Arts Administrator
131.	Christian Bernard Singer,	Independent Artist
132.	Scott Miller Berry	Filmmaker / Cultural Worker
133.	Frances Loeffler	Curator
134.	Ann MacDonald	Director / Curator
135.	Peggy Gale	Independent Curator / Arts Writer
136.	Penelope Stewart	Visual Artist
137.	Bruce Barber	Independent Artist
138.	David Lester	Graphic Novelist
139.	Taien Ng-Chan	Independent Artist
140.	Flavio Belli	Independent Artist / Curator / Collector
141.	Jason St-Laurent	Curator
142.	Lisa Deanne Smith	Curator, Onsite Gallery
143.	Milly Ristvedt	Self-employed Visual Artist
144.	Michelle Gay	Independent Artist / Educator
145.	Shannon Coates, DMA	Voice Educator
146.	Sharlene Bamboat	Artist / Cultural Worker
147.	Su Ditta	Curator / Arts Administrator
148.	Don Bouzek	2014 City of Edmonton Award of Excellence / 2005 Alberta Centennial Medal, Artist
149.	Elia Kirby	Great Northern Way Scene Shop and Arts Factory Society
150.	Vincenzo Pietropaolo	Photographer / Writer
151.	Pam Harris	Documentary Photographer / Writer
152.	Shirley Yanover	Visual Artist
153.	Steve Stober	Photographer
154.	Karen Knights	Archive Manager, VIVO Media Arts Centre
155.	Rahul Verma	Playwright / Theatre Director, Teesri Duniya
156.	Betty Julian	Independent Curator / Adjunct Curator, Prefix ICA
157.	Ashes Withyman	Visual Artist
158.	Susan Crean	Writer
159.	Hamal Docter	Arts Policy Consultant
160.	Gita Hashemi	Independent Artist / Curator / Writer
161.	Francesca Vivenza	Mixed-media Artist
162.	Gary Magwood	Belleville Downtown Documentary Film Festival
163.	Michael Mirolla	Writer / Publisher, Guernica Editions
164.	Bryant Didier	Evolutionary Music Cooperative - EvMc
165.	Meg MacKay	Screenwriter

166. Jennifer Smith	Distribution, Video Pool Media Arts Centre / Independent Curator
167. Michael Trommer	Sound Artist, Ontario College of Art & Design University
168. Camille Turner	Media and Performance Artist / Curator
169. Erin Ball	Circus Artist, Owner, Kingston Circus Arts
170. Jason Britski	Filmmaker
171. Christine Swintak	Artist / Educator / Creative Consultant
172. Kevin Barrett	Musician, CFM Toronto Local 149
173. Robin Moir	President, CFM, Local 518
174. Susie Moore	Kingston Musicians' Union, Local 518
175. Claudia Leduc	Multi-media Coordinator
176. Sky Goodden	Publisher of Momus, Editor / Critic
177. Norm Foster	Playwright / Actor
178. Anna Chatterton	Playwright
179. Sunny Drake	2019 Stratford Festival Playwright in-residence
180. Pierre-Luc Landry	Writer
181. Colin Miner	Artist / Educator
182. Steve Bates	Artist / Musician
183. Denise Young	Picture this...Film Festival, Calgary
184. Jeffrey Stonehouse	Flutist / Artistic Director, Ensemble Paramirabo
185. Kristina Lemieux	Executive Director, Generator
186. Carmen Gibbs	Directrice générale, Association acadienne des artistes professionnel.le.s du Nouveau-Brunswick
187. Eleanor King	Independent Artist / Teacher
188. Catherine Ballachey	President, LMDA Canada Board
189. Matt McGeachy	Company Dramaturge, Factory Theatre
190. Megan Johnson	Performance Scholar / Dramaturg
191. Marie Barlizo	Playwright
192. David Geary	Playwright / Dramaturg / Educator, Capilano University
193. Joanna Garfinkel	Freelance Dramaturg
194. Dr. Lindsay Lachance	Artistic Associate, National Arts Centre, Indigenous Theatre
195. Pearl Van Geest	Independent Artist / Teacher
196. Paula Murray	Independent Artist
197. Alexandra Gelis	Independent Media Artist
198. Judy Radul	Artist /Professor, School of Contemporary Arts, Simon Fraser Univ.
199. Tam-Ca Vo-Van	Director, SAW Gallery
200. Karen Kaeja	2019 Dance Ontario's Lifetime Achievement Award
201. Allen Kaeja	2019 Dance Ontario's Lifetime Achievement Award
202. Andrea Donaldson	Artistic Director, Nightwood Theatre
203. Melissa R Knive	Artist, Wolf Ears Art
204. A Allison Cushing	Music Yukon / Yukon Arts Foundation

205.	Andrea Clark	Caravan Stage Company
206.	Dave Babcock	Musician
207.	Maria Dunn	2017 Juno-nominated Songwriter, Edmonton Music Prize Artist
208.	Bob Tildesley	Musician
209.	Dana Wylie	2018 Canadian Folk Music Award-nominated Musician
210.	Patricia Darbasie	Actor
211.	Jane Heather	Theatre Artist
212.	Brooke Leifso	Theatre Artist
213.	Mieko Ouchi	Theatre Artist / Writer
214.	Kate Ryan	Actor / Theatre Director
215.	Brian Deedrick	Opera and Theatre Director
216.	Tim Yakimec	Artistic Director, Edmonton Opera
217.	Karen Bishop	Visual Artist / Alberta Arts Action
218.	Jill Thomson	Visual Artist / Co-founder Alberta Arts Action
219.	Trisia Eddy	Visual Artist / Writer / Alberta Arts Action
220.	Mary Joyce	Visual Artist
221.	Jannie Edwards	Writer / Editor/ Teacher
222.	Paula E. Kirman	Writer / Photographer / Musician
223.	Myrna Kostash	Writer
224.	Alice Major	First Poet Laureate City of Edmonton / Founder, Edmonton Poetry Festival
225.	Lorna Thomas	Chair, Documentary Organization of Canada-Alberta / Filmmaker
226.	Ava Karvonon	Filmmaker
227.	Conni Massing	Playwright / Screenwriter
228.	Kenneth T. Williams	Playwright / Dramaturg
229.	Denise Roy	Arts Manager, Alberta Arts Action
230.	Debbie Houle	2005 Juno Nominee for Aboriginal Recording of the Year as a member of Asani
231.	Anna Marie Sewell	2011 Poet Laureate City of Edmonton
232.	Marek Tyler	2020 Juno Nominee Indigenous Music Album of the Year as a member of nêhiyawak
233.	Sophy Romvari	Film / Design
234.	Justine A. Chambers	Contemporary Dance Artist
235.	Daniel Akira Stadnicki	Musician
236.	Yvonne Ng	2016 Jacqueline Lemieux Award, Canada Council for the Arts
237.	Belinda Cornish	Actor / Writer
238.	Collette "Coco" Murray	2019 Toronto Arts Foundation Community Arts Award / Dance
239.	Johanna Householder	Artist / Professor Emerita, OCAD University
240.	Pamela Tzeng	Independent Artist / Dancers' Studio West
241.	Kristi Hanson	Actor

242.	P. Megan Andrews	Dance Artist
243.	Jason Hardwick	Actor
244.	Ame Henderson	Choreographer
245.	Robert Binet	Creative Producer of CreativAction, The National Ballet of Canada
246.	Kevin Ormsby	Dance Artist / Choreographer / Artistic Director, KasheDance
247.	Sheldon Elter	Actor
248.	Mary Jo Major	Writer
249.	Christine Hanson	Cellist / Composer
250.	Caterina Edwards	Writer
251.	Colleen Huston	Visual Artist
252.	Marce Merrell	Writer
253.	Sydney Lancaster	Visual Artist
254.	Miriam Dunn	Poet
255.	Maurice Mierau	Poet
256.	Lana St-Louis	
257.	Valentin Brown	Independent Artist
258.	Mitchell Ellam	Executive Director, White Water Gallery, North Bay
259.	Ayumi Goto	Independent Artist
260.	Cari Green	Film Producer
261.	Michelle van Beusekom,	Executive Director, Documentary Organization of Canada
262.	Anna Mae Alexander	Producer / Actor
263.	Maggie MacKenzie	Actor
264.	Kurt Archer	Playwright / Director / Actor
265.	Aurora Borin	Musician
266.	Ariella Pahlke	Video Artist / Curator
267.	Jessica Hallenbeck	Lantern Films
268.	Lesley Fletcher	Executive Director, League of Canadian Poets
269.	Rajinderpal S. Pal	Poet
270.	Colin Wolf	Artistic Director, Gwaandak Theatre, Whitehorse

cc.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, PC, MP, President of the Treasury Board

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, PC, MP, Minister of National Revenue

Hon. Carla Qualtrough, PC, MP Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion

Hon. Filomena Tassi, PC, MP, Minister of Labour

Hon. Mélanie Joly, PC, MP, Minister of Economic Development

Hon. Wayne Easter, PC, MP for Malpeque, Prince Edward Island

Hon. Senator Patricia Bovey, FRSA, FCMA

Hon. Senator René Cormier

Hon. Senator Lankin, PC, CM

Hon. Senator Kim Pate, CM

Hon. Andrew Scheer, Leader, Conservative Party of Canada, PC, MP

Hon. Yves-François Blanchet, Leader, Bloc Québécois, MP

Hon. Jagmeet Singh, Leader, New Democratic Party, MP

Jo-Ann Roberts, Green Party of Canada, Interim Leader