



City of Kingston
Information Report to Arts and Culture Advisory Committee
Report Number AAC-24-002

To:	Chair and Members of the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee
From:	Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services
Resource Staff:	Danika Lochhead, Director, Arts & Culture Services
Date of Meeting:	June 13, 2024
Subject:	Update on the City of Kingston Arts Fund Review

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 3. Build an Active and Connected Community

Goal: 5.7 Foster culture, history, education, arts and recreation (CHEAR).

Executive Summary:

This report is to provide an update on the review of the City of Kingston Arts Fund (CKAF), which since 2007 has been providing key Operating Grants and Project Grants to arts organizations, collectives and artists, nurturing cultural vitality and access to arts and culture in Kingston. The review is being led by Saffy, a consulting firm made up of strategists working at the intersections of city-building, culture, design and research. An initial background report on the review was brought to the Arts, Recreation & Community Policies Committee (ARCP) on October 19, 2023 ([Report Number ARCP 23-011](#)).

The review launched in November 2023 and includes three phases of work - Phase 1: Preparation and Project Vision, Phase 2: Consultation and Public Engagement and Phase 3: Analysis and Reporting. Phase 1 is now complete and in May 2024, the City and Saffy launched Phase 2 with a call for applications to create a community advisory group that reflects the demographic and diverse population of Kingston, with a focus on participants who represent equity-deserving, historically marginalized and vulnerable groups. The members were selected through an adapted civic lottery process and this group will function as project champions who will support the City and Saffy with facilitating certain engagement opportunities.

The review is now in Phase 2: Consultation and Public Engagement, and the various engagement opportunities were announced on June 6, 2024 on the City's [Get Involved Kingston](#)

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[website](#). These opportunities include a survey, pop-up engagement opportunities, community focus groups, one-on-one interviews and an open house where the emerging findings of the engagement will be shared for feedback.

Phase 2 will end in July 2024, and it's expected that Phase 3 will take place in August – September 2024, with results and recommendations on the proposed changes to the CKAF being presented to City Council in October 2024.

Recommendation:

This report is for information only.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Jennifer Campbell,
Commissioner, Community
Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Major Projects & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Transportation & Emergency Services	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

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Options/Discussion:

Background

The CKAF, established in 2007, exists as a mechanism for direct municipal investment in the arts and culture at a local level. It provides consistent and critical funding to local arts organizations, arts groups, and artist-led collectives that allows them to fulfill their mandates and pursue their creative work in ways that enriches how residents experience and engage with the arts. The program includes two funding streams, Operating Grants and Project Grants and investment in CKAF has grown over the years, mostly by inflationary amounts, with \$9.4 million directly invested to date. Over the last completed award cycle, in 2023, the total City investment was \$597,844.

The Kingston Arts Council (KAC) is contracted by the City of Kingston to administer the CKAF. They implement a peer jury system to assess applications, a process that is commonly used to review funding applications to provincial and federal arts funding bodies, and by many municipal arts fund programs. The objectives of CKAF are to nurture the capacity and quality of the arts in Kingston while fostering artistic excellence, stimulating economic development related to the arts, and enhancing Kingston's quality of life for its citizens and attractiveness as a community.

The CKAF is reviewed by the KAC on an annual basis, though no major changes have been made to the program since its implementation in 2007. The arts and culture community continues to change and grow, and so in order to ensure CKAF remains as responsive and impactful as it has been over the last 17 years, the City has initiated a large-scale review of CKAF.

Analysis

The review of the CKAF includes an assessment of the existing program, including consideration of the program in the context of other municipal funding programs as well as assessing CKAF's specific administration, granting streams, eligibility, impacts and relevance, and to identify gaps in service and opportunities for growth. The review also considers the program mandate, objectives and outputs as well as the reporting and evaluation mechanisms alongside other potential changes such as an expansion beyond the current focus on Operating and Project Grants.

To complete this work, the City issued an Invitational Request for Quotations (RFQ) on July 19, 2023 and has subsequently hired Saffy, a consulting firm of strategists working at the intersection of city-building, culture, design and research. Saffy brings a human-centred and equity-informed approach with a focus on alternative methods, community engagement and collaborative research and processes to create meaningful change and develop impactful solutions.

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The review got underway in November 2024 and has three phases of work including Phase 1: Preparation and Project Vision; Phase 2: Consultation and Public Engagement; and Phase 3: Analysis and Reporting. Phase 1 has been completed and included discovery sessions with KAC staff and Board of Directors, CKAF's administrator and the City's key partners, as well as with key City leadership and staff who oversee other municipal funding programs including the City of Kingston Heritage Fund and the Community Investment Fund. Phase 2: Consultation and Public Engagement is currently underway.

Public Engagement

The review of CKAF is now in Phase 2: Consultation and Public Engagement, and opportunities for engagement are now available through the City's Get Involved Kingston page. In May 2024, the public engagement started with a call for applications to create a community advisory group, made up of project champions, who will work alongside City staff and Saffy to reach diverse communities across Kingston. The project champions were identified through an innovative new process called an adapted civic lottery process that uses baseline demographics for the City of Kingston derived from census and Environics Analytics data to prioritize membership. The process prioritizes historically underrepresented perspectives to determine the number of people and identities to be included. An honorarium of \$400 will be provided to each project champion in the community advisory group. A similar Civic Lottery process, also led by Saffy, is being used in the Official Plan work which is also now underway.

On June 6th, Phase 2 engagement opportunities were shared online, starting most immediately with a survey, while City staff, Saffy staff, and project champions will also initiate/host various pop-up engagement events, community focus groups, one-on-one interviews and a community open house where the emerging findings of the engagement will be shared for feedback.

Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) Considerations

One of the key goals of the review is to ensure municipal arts funding benefits a wide range of arts and cultural groups and residents, particularly those who have faced barriers to participation or access to funding.

The review is also rooted in feedback sought through broad public consultation and the various engagement tools will prioritize equity, diversity and inclusion. The City and Saffy will apply the City's IIDEA lens to all phases of the work and especially as it relates to any recommendations that are made. The implementation of the adapted civic lottery process was also a new mechanism that incorporates IIDEA considerations, working with community members as project champions and who reflect the demographics of Kingston with a focus on equity-deserving, historically marginalized and vulnerable groups to enhance access to the review process and ensures diversity of perspectives.

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Notice Provisions:

Ongoing investment in CKAF aligns with several recommendations identified in the Kingston Culture Plan, approved by Council in September 2010. It also helps to fulfill various City approved strategies and plans, including the investment in creative industries, Council's Strategic Priorities as it relates to fostering culture, history, education, arts and recreation (CHEAR).

Contacts:

Danika Lochhead, Director, Arts & Culture Services, 613-546-4291 extension 1277