

January 22nd, 2021

**LASO 2021 City of Toronto Budget Deputation:**  
**The Value of Community Arts in the City of Toronto and**  
**For the People Who Call it Home**

Good afternoon, honourable members of the Budget Committee. I am Laurie-Shawn Borzovoy, Communications Strategist, Creative Director, Writer and Chair of the Board of UrbanArts. And, I am here today speaking on behalf of the six **Local Arts Service Organizations (LASOs) of Toronto - Arts Etobicoke, East End Arts, Lakeshore Arts, North York Arts, Scarborough Arts and UrbanArts.**

- The LASOs have a shared mission to provide free, accessible and quality programming to the communities we serve.
- We continue to provide programming in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic that responds to the increased needs of our constituencies.
- The Neighbourhood Improvement Areas in our communities have the highest COVID-19 infection rates in the city.
- For the LASOs, this has meant building and delivering new immediate needs-based projects (from food and art supply delivery to online programs addressing isolation and mental health) and adapting our current roster of community arts programs.
- As we focus on community arts sectoral recovery, we are experiencing an increased need and demand for programming that prioritizes:
  - Community building
  - Equity and social justice
  - Mental health and wellness
  - Youth and seniors
  - Neighbourhood pride
  - And, artist and facilitator employment
- We deliver our programs within high needs, hard hit communities **every day**.

**What we will do:**

- As we move into 2021, we reflect on a year of immense change and learning.
- There has been a steep increase in mental health crises, social isolation, the escalation of racism and gender-based violence, all of which has been a direct result of the global pandemic. And, there is an imperative to develop a just recovery plan that means Investments and Opportunities for a more equitable and holistic COVID-19 recovery.

For 2021, the six LASOs will support the rebuilding and recovery efforts by:

- Cultivating increased strategic partnerships
- Expanding community and peer-led initiatives in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas
- Continuing to address issues of access and barriers to participation for equity-seeking groups
- Acting as connectors and catalyzers in our neighbourhoods
- Increasing support and opportunities for artists and culture workers, and
- Addressing precarious employment in the sector

## Why Us? Why Now?:

- The LASOs hold a unique position in the arts and cultural sector in Toronto;
- We serve key regions outside the downtown core with the prime function of delivering arts, cultural, advocacy and economic development opportunities to equity-seeking groups in regions where arts and cultural funding is **not** concentrated.
- Because of this, we have a major impact on the livability factor in our communities.
- The 5 downtown Wards receive double the TAC funding than the other 20 Wards do combined.
  - **For Reference: 5 Downtown Ward breakdown:**
    - 4 - Parkdale-High Park
    - 7 - Humber River-Black Creek
    - 10 - Spadina-Fort York
    - 11 - University-Rosedale
    - 13 - Toronto Centre
- As per the **2016 Census Data**, the LASOs serve **83%** of the population of Toronto or a total of **2.7M people**, while funding remains concentrated on the **17%** in the downtown core
- And, as per the TAC 2020 Stats, that per capita amount of funded artists and projects across the City is far from equitable. **In mid-2020, per capita population investment in Toronto's downtown Wards was \$15.61, while investment outside the downtown core was \$2.49.**
- In terms of pay equity for artists, downtown artists are paid, on a per capita basis, **\$299.48**, according to TAC, while artists in the suburbs earn **\$105.97** per capita - **a variance of \$193.51 on average** per capita.
- This reflects an incommensurate and inequitable allocation, as **83%** of Toronto's population lives outside the core.

## The Ask:

- An increased **investment** of **15%**, or **\$273K**, will result in an immediate increased investment in the health of communities outside the downtown core.
- In 2020, the LASO's received **\$1.8M** from the City of Toronto and collectively generated gross revenue totalling **\$3.7M**.
- The LASOs continue to **double** all investments by the City.
- These funds are directly invested into free and accessible programming outside the core, and support and deliver on the City's goals of:
  - [Economic Development and Culture Divisional Strategy](#);
  - [Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild](#);
  - [10-Year Public Art Strategy](#), among others.
- The LASOs funding from the City of Toronto represents merely **3.9%** of the total Arts Services budget. This increase would represent a **0.5%** increase (**bringing us to 4.4% of the total Arts Services budget**).
- The LASOs deliver a significant volume of City-supported arts offerings outside of the core, reaching over **301,000** Torontonians.
- Presently, the LASO's serve **21 of Toronto's 25 Wards** and work within **27 of the City's 31 Neighbourhood Improvement Areas**, all which have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

## In Summation:



- Over the past 3 years, the LASOs have seen new requests from various City departments, greater demands on our time and resources, and reliance on the LASOs in acting as a critical anchor in fulfilling City objectives. With this increased demand there is an increased need for additional investment from the city.
- An increased investment from the City will result in:
  - Greater funding equity in the community arts sector and more equitable dispersion of funds across **all City Wards**
  - Increased investment in Human Resources at the LASOs
  - Greater pay-equity for artists and culture workers, given the pandemic's impact of fiscal austerity
  - More meaningful community and peer-led programs that benefit the overall health and well-being of Toronto's communities

We look forward to working together with you all on an equitable and just recovery.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Wendy Rading, Executive Director Arts Etobicoke  
Michelle Gauci, Vice-Chair, Board of Directors, Arts Etobicoke  
Shana Hillman, Executive Director, East End Arts  
Dave Carey, Chair, Board of Directors, East End Arts  
Ashley Watson, Executive Director, Lakeshore Arts  
Robyn Small, President, Board of Directors, Lakeshore Arts  
Lila Karim, Executive Director, North York Arts  
Joe Boroweic, Chair, Board of Directors, North York Arts  
Derek Spooner, Executive Director, Scarborough Arts  
Suman Roy, Chair, Board of Directors, Scarborough Arts  
Marlene McKintosh, Executive Director, UrbanArts  
Laurie-Shawn Borzovoy, Chair, Board of Directors, UrbanArts



# BRINGING THE ARTS TO YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

## WHO WE ARE

The Local Arts Service Organizations (LASOs) Program supports the City of Toronto's Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy in underserved geographic areas as well as the Economic Development and Culture Divisional Strategy of inclusion and equity in areas outside the downtown core. With the City's investment, we leverage partnerships and other funding sources to provide inclusive and affordable opportunities for local residents, artists, and arts organizations. As anchor community arts organizations in Toronto, we promote the arts at the local level, making culture a part of the daily fabric of community life.

## WHO WE SERVE

Our free arts programs offer something for all ages, skill levels, abilities, and interests. We engage children, youth, families, seniors, members, volunteers and artists of all disciplines. We support under-served communities through arts programming, activities and events in 20 wards across the City of Toronto.

## OUR ANNUAL IMPACT 2018 - 2019

300,708

ATTENDED LASO  
PROGRAMS & EVENTS

13,250

CHILDREN & YOUTH  
PARTICIPANTS

1,125

ARTISTS  
EMPLOYED

376

DONORS

430

COMMUNITY  
PARTNERS

519

PROGRAMS  
& EVENTS





# CONTRIBUTIONS WE MAKE TO OUR COMMUNITIES

## ARTS EDUCATION IN TORONTO'S NEIGHBOURHOODS

Engaging community members to explore their creative talents and develop new skills, providing opportunities to meet and connect, supporting emerging and established artists, and promoting volunteerism.

## COMMUNITY BUILDING

Providing spaces of belonging to all Torontonians through local arts, cultural, economic development, and advocacy activities.

## SERVICES & RESOURCES

Providing direct services such as networking opportunities, workshops, free resources, meeting spaces, promotion and communication to residents as well as professional development opportunities for artists.

## BRINGING TOGETHER ARTS & BUSINESS

Partnering with local businesses to support arts initiatives and festivals, and contributing to local cultural tourism.

## CREATING CONNECTIONS

Forging new partnerships and collaborating with diverse stakeholders (e.g., schools, social service agencies, and libraries) using the arts as a means to build and strengthen community.

# WHERE TO FIND US

 **ARTS**  
ETOBICOKE  
[artsetobicoke.com](http://artsetobicoke.com)

 **EAST  
END  
ARTS**  
[eastendarts.ca](http://eastendarts.ca)

 **LSA**  
LAKESHORE ARTS  
[lakeshorearts.ca](http://lakeshorearts.ca)

 **nY A**  
NORTH YORK ARTS  
[northyorkarts.org](http://northyorkarts.org)

 **arts**  
SCARBOROUGH  
[scarborougharts.com](http://scarborougharts.com)

 **URBANARTS**  
[urbanartstoronto.org](http://urbanartstoronto.org)



Search for Local Art Service Organizations at [www.toronto.ca](http://www.toronto.ca)

