

## **2023 Local Arts Service Organizations (LASOs) Grant Allocation and Renewal of Annual Contribution Agreements**

**Date:** April 11, 2023

**To:** Economic and Community Development Committee

**From:** General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

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Local Arts Service Organizations (LASOs) are independent, not-for-profit, community arts organizations that promote arts and culture at the local level, bringing cultural vibrancy and arts participation opportunities to neighbourhoods across Toronto. The programming and services that they offer are affordable, and customized to local needs with a focus on reconciliation, inclusion and equity. They help advance the City's Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy and the Youth Equity Strategy, operating in underserved communities and in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs).

The City of Toronto, through the Economic Development and Culture (EDC) division, provides financial support to six LASOs subject to annual contribution agreements. A total of \$1,817,400 is included in the Economic Development and Culture 2023 Approved Operating Budget to fund the six LASOs. The recommended funding allocation presented in this report is aligned with the City's strategic priority to invest in people and neighbourhoods, and is based on the LASOs' 2022 reports, reviewed by EDC staff with the support of an external peer advisory panel.

The recommended terms and conditions for annual agreements in this staff report will simplify the reporting process, and are also in recognition that grants are critical to the sustainability of organizations in the cultural sector and that efforts are needed to improve their accessibility, transparency and accountability. The recommendations made in this report reflect EDC's efforts at grant reform, as approved by City Council in February 2023 which aims to ensure that grants are equitable, transparent and in compliance with the City's Community Grants Policy, while advancing and supporting Toronto's cultural vibrancy.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The General Manager, Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to enter into annual agreements with the six LASOs (Arts Etobicoke, East End Arts, Lakeshore Arts, North York Arts, Scarborough Arts and UrbanArts Community Arts Council) subject to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture, the City Solicitor, the Deputy City Manager - Community & Social Services, and the Chief Financial Officer; and in accordance with the following terms and conditions:

- a. compliance with the City's grants policies as established by City Council, including the Community Grants Policy;
- b. that each organization submit its annual funding request to the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture, for recommendation to the Economic and Community Development Committee and City Council for approval;
- c. that each organization submit its annual report and financial audit to the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture, for review; and
- d. that the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

2. City Council approve the Economic Development and Culture Division's 2023 funding allocations, totalling \$1,817,400 to the six LASOs as follows:

Organization:	Funding Allocation:
Arts Etobicoke	\$407,936
Lakeshore Arts	\$293,057
Scarborough Arts	\$297,279
UrbanArts Community Arts Council	\$315,435
East End Arts	\$216,453
North York Arts	\$287,240
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,817,400</b>

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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Base funding of \$1,817,400 for LASO grants is included in the 2023 Council Approved Operating Budget for the Economic Development and Culture Division.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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At its meeting on February 7, 2023, Toronto City Council approved EDC's approach to a grant reform in order to make its grants more transparent and equitable while ensuring that they are aligned with the City of Toronto Community Grants Policy.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.EC1.4>

At its meeting on June 18 and 19, 2019, Toronto City Council approved the 2019 funding allocations for the Local Art Service Organizations.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2019.EC5.7>

At its meeting on May 22, 23 and 24, 2018, Toronto City Council approved the 2018 funding allocations for the Local Art Service Organizations.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2019.EC5.7>

At its meeting on January 31, 2018, City Council directed the General Manager Economic Development and Culture to enter into a one-year extension of Contribution Agreements for Cultural Grant Recipients with the 6 Local Arts Service Organizations.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2017.ED25.3>

At its meeting on February 17, 2016, City Council approved an increase of \$372,000 to the Local Arts Services Organizations grant budget, bringing it to a total of \$1,705,400.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2016.EX12.2>

At its meeting on July 16, 2013, City Council directed the General Manager Economic Development and Culture to enter into a multi-year agreement with the 6 Local Arts Service Organizations.  
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2013.ED23.4>

At its meeting on May 17, 2011, City Council approved Creative Capital Initiative: An Action Plan for Toronto which recommended founding two new Local Arts Service Organizations (LASO), North York Arts and East End Arts in order to broaden the LASOs' service area across the city outside of the downtown core and to support the mandate of the four original LASOs.  
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.ED3.3>

At its meeting held on April 29, 2009, City Council granted authority to enter into a five-year agreement with Toronto Artscape Incorporated as a recipient of City funding:  
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2009.ED20.1>

At its meeting on April 23 and 24, 2007, City Council directed the General Manager Economic Development and Culture to enter into a multi-year agreement with the four Local Arts Service Organizations.  
<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/ed/reports/2007-04-11-ed03-cr.pdf>

At its meeting held on July 22, 23 and 24, 2003, by adoption of Clause No. 9 of Report No. 6, the City was authorized to enter into funding agreements with Arts Etobicoke, Lakeshore Arts, Scarborough Arts Council and UrbanArts Community Arts Council (formerly Arts York). These four agreements were executed for a three-year period from January 1, 2004, to December 31, 2006. They have provided a valuable structured link between the City and the local arts service organizations.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2003/agendas/committees/edp/edp030707/agendain.pdf>

At its meeting held on February 13, 14 and 15, 2002 by its adoption of Clause 7 of the Economic Development and Parks Committee Report No. 1, City Council directed the Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism to report on establishing funding agreements with other significant /specialized City-funded arts and cultural organizations.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2002/agendas/council/cc020213/edp1rpt/cl014.pdf>

Through Clause No. 3, Report No. 24 of the Strategic Policies and Priorities Committee, adopted by City Council at its meeting held on November 25, 26 and 27, 1998, the City established the role of Toronto Culture in the delivery of funding in the Arts and Culture category for the LASOs, among other funding assigned to Toronto Culture.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/1998/agendas/council/cc/cc981125/agendain.htm>

## COMMENTS

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Local Arts Service Organizations provide community arts programs and services that encourage artistic growth for both emerging and established artists, contribute to the economy and local tourism, promote inclusion and equity, support social change and help create audiences for the future. LASO programs and services are:

- inclusive, with a focus on engaging Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving communities, with customized programming responsive to local needs; and,
- accessible to the public, with no or low admission fees, reducing residents' barriers to participation in arts and culture and increasing sense of belonging.

The LASOs have been successful in reaching out to populations that otherwise would not have participated, being hubs for community arts programs.

The City of Toronto has been providing support to these not-for-profit arts organizations since amalgamation in 1999. In 2021, the LASO grant application moved to a multi-year cycle, with an application every three years and yearly funding allocations being determined and issued based on the review of submitted annual reports. In addition, there have been annual contribution agreements since 2003. Moving forward, with the terms and conditions recommended in this report, the process will be simplified, with elements of the contribution agreement being included in the funding agreement.

Arts and Culture Services, part of EDC, manages the program and reviews the reports with due diligence and in compliance with the City of Toronto's Community Grants Policy. Allocation recommendations presented in this report are based on the review of the 2022 annual reports provided by the LASOs, also considering input from an external peer advisory panel that reviewed the LASOs' 2021 grant applications. Panel members were selected based on their experience and expertise in addition to their general knowledge of the cultural sector. Their review of applications is focused on cultural impact, public impact, organizational resiliency and financial management.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Patrick Tobin  
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