Youth Cultural Incubators Stabilization Initiative (YCISI)
Program Guidelines

Objective: To strengthen the capacity of Toronto's youth-led/youth-serving arts and culture organizations; to build sustainability and encourage continued growth and leadership within the youth arts sector, fostering mentorships and collaboration between participating organizations.

Description: The Youth Cultural Incubators Stabilization Initiative (YCISI) focuses on enhancing the growth, capacity and long-term sustainability of Toronto's small/mid-sized youth-serving or youth-led arts organizations. YCISI was established in 2019 as a 3-year pilot, and provided support to six organizations: HXOUSE, Manifesto, Nia Centre for the Arts, RISE, The Remix Project and Unity. During the pilot, cohort organizations worked with consultants, Method Collective, to map Toronto's youth arts ecosystem, and to identify gaps and opportunities, thinking strategically about long-term sustainability. A comprehensive report entitled: *Youth Cultural Incubators Stabilization Initiative: Shifting from Resiliency to Sustainability,* June 2022, which included a series of recommendations, was developed by the Method Collective for the organizations and the City. This report will be used as a reference and resource for the incoming cohort of YCISI organizations to ensure the learning and findings are leveraged and advanced. The report will also provide the incoming cohort with a framework to help establish program objectives and capacity-building goals over three years. Ten mentee organizations will be supported by up to six mentor organizations to focus on capacity-building and sustainability, with a goal of fostering a robust youth arts ecosystem, collaboration and resource sharing.

Eligibility Requirements:

Mentee Organizations:
- Not-for-profit arts and culture organizations or collectives that are youth-led or youth-serving (primary focus of organization is youth engagement, youth programming, or youth skill-building) with a focus on providing programming/services to equity-deserving young people
- Organizations or collectives must be based in Toronto and provide programming/services to local residents
- Organizations have been in operation for 3 – 10 years
- Organizations with an operating budget in a range of $300k to $700k
- Organizations must have demonstrated ability to take on a three-year commitment to building capacity in a range of areas that may include: Board development and leadership, strategic planning, fundraising, grant writing, HR systems and processes, succession planning, evaluation, etc.
- Organizations must have the capacity to engage in a three consecutive year mentorship with an assigned mentor/mentors
- Organizational mandate helps to move forward City of Toronto's Economic Development and Culture's strategic priorities
- Must have a bank account in the organization/collective's name
- Organizations that are receiving operating funding from the City of Toronto are ineligible; past YCISI funding recipients are ineligible
- Organizations must be in good standing with the City to apply

Mentor Organizations:
- Not-for-profit arts and culture organizations that are youth-led or youth-serving
- Organization has been in operation for a minimum of 7 years
- Organizations must be based in Toronto and provide programming/services to local residents

- Organization must have demonstrated track record and capacity to provide mentorship for three consecutive years to mentee organizations in areas that may include: Board development and leadership, strategic planning, fundraising, grant writing, HR systems and processes, succession planning, evaluation, etc.
- Organizations that have received YCISI funding are eligible to apply as mentors
- Organizations must be in good standing with the City to apply

Mentee Organizations - Application Process:

- Applicants will fill in an online application via CheckMarket (alternate formats will be made available)
- Applicants will be provided with Method Collective's *Youth Cultural Incubators Stabilization Initiative: Shifting from Resiliency to Sustainability* report and executive summary in order to help align proposed program goals and objectives with the report's actions
- A peer advisory panel will be established to help determine which organizations will be funded
- EDC staff will finalize grant recipient list
- A total of 10 mentee organizations will be awarded funding for three consecutive years contingent upon completing interim and final reports and delivering on objectives that are set out each year

Mentor Organizations – Application Process:

- Application will complete online application via CheckMarket (alternate formats will be made available)
- Applicants will be provided with Method Collective's *Youth Cultural Incubators Stabilization Initiative: Shifting from Resiliency to Sustainability* report and executive summary in order to help align proposed program goals and objectives with the report's actions
- Mentor organizations will be asked to establish a mentorship plan, which will include facilitating one conversation/workshop with the cohort/year; commit to attending two to three meetings with whole cohort and EDC staff
- Organizations will also commit to one senior team member engaging in monthly one-hour mentoring sessions with 1-3 mentee organizations (this could look like individual one-on-one sessions, or may be focused on a particular subject matter and open to mentee organizations seeking to learn more about that subject)
- A peer advisory panel will be established to help determine which organizations will be funded
- EDC staff will finalize grant recipient list

Eligible Expenses
- Hiring external consultants/coaches to provide expertise on capacity-building/mentorship initiatives including organizational/administrative development, revenue development, strategic planning, Board development, evaluation methodologies, etc.
- Professional development fees to attend workshops or training sessions
- Staff time related to capacity-building/mentorship activities and initiatives
- Public consultations related to programs and services
- Software to enhance sustainability (i.e. accounting programs, evaluation, database software, etc.)

Ineligible Expenses
- Capital costs - Capital expenditures pay for items that will have value after a project is completed. Typically, these are relatively expensive items that can be used for several years,

such as: computers, printers and technology equipment, office equipment and furniture and facility and technical equipment, and site upgrades.

- Rent
- Support for ongoing programming

YCISI Budget 2023- 2025

	Year 1	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
Mentor organizations (up to 9 mentors each year)	108,000	90,000	90,000
Mentee/participating organizations	481,500	499,500	499,500
Professional development & cohort learning sessions	10,500	10,500	10,500