

Topic	Collaboration Between Funders		
Date	September 29, 2010	Location	Online via Zoom
Host(s)	APAC		
Participants	<p>Sara Bateman, Calgary Arts Development Jeff Brinton, AFA Chris Carson, CARFAC Alberta Anne Davidson, Community Engagement Branch, Government of Alberta Bill Evans, Alberta Motion Picture Industry Association Carol Holmes, Writers Guild of Alberta David Folk, AFA Arts Branch Kennedy Jenson, Arts Touring Alliance Carly Klassen, Alberta Music Kieran Leblanc, Book Publishers Association of Alberta Simon Mallett, Rozsa Foundation Keri Mitchell, Theatre Alberta Allison Moore, Mass Culture Brigitte von Rothemburg, Calgary Foundation Jenna Stanton, Alberta Craft Council Sharon Stevens, Alberta Media Arts Alliance Society Craig Stumpf-Allen, Edmonton Community Foundation Sylvie Thériault, Le RAFA Suzanne Trudel, Alberta Magazine Publishers Bobbi Westman, Alberta Dance Alliance Stephen Williams, Edmonton Arts Council</p>		
Notetaker(s)	P. Hemminger		
Facilitator(s)	K. Ball		
Gathering Question	<p>How provincial arts and cultural service organizations can encourage greater collaboration between all orders of funders and work together to streamline the grant application and reporting processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is working well for the organizations you serve and for yourselves as PASOS ● Where are the pain points or areas for improvement for the organizations you serve and for yourselves as PASOS ● For Funders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do you decide what information to collect and how is it used? ○ What are concerns you may have in considering stream lining or aligning grant applications between funders? ○ What has been the history of collaboration and conversation between funders to align granting processes? 		
Perspectives and thoughts	<p>What's working well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Edmonton Arts Council's grant interface is terrific 		

- CADAC is well-liked for financial reporting, but its statistical reporting isn't as useful, in that its categories lump together activities that can be very different in scale for different types of organizations
- Edmonton Community Foundation uses a two-phase approach with a shorter preliminary application to pre-screen projects before moving onto the longer grants. This helps time management significantly.
- Agreed all around that multi-year operating funding is absolutely critical, in terms of strategic planning and freeing up Executive Directors to focus on more than just filling out grants — as long as funders ensure their multi-year applications aren't all on the same year
- Project grants can be useful in some situations, but it's important to allow the project to be flexible and respond to changing situations
- Consistency in granting schedules is also important, including application deadlines and expected payment dates

What are the pain points:

- The length, complexity and variety of grants can be overwhelming. Some EDs are spending more than half their time on grant writing, managing, and reporting
- Being limited in terms of character and word counts can be challenging, especially for those where English isn't a first language
- CADAC can be onerous to track and complete, particularly for provincial organizations with diverse programming and audiences; AFA's Gate is difficult to navigate
- Big-picture questions in grants can be helpful for planning and clarifying thoughts, but repetitive, short questions don't have much benefit
- There are too many grant opportunities and only limited time to fill them out
- Organizations feel the need to chase and hoard money, and this can present challenges in connecting with their communities, who are under the same pressure. We "need to break the obsession with asking for money non-stop" but don't know how to "have healthy conversations around...how to get out of what feels like a trap"

How do funders respond:

- Funders are also dependent on government funding; while they understand the importance of multi-year commitments, without predictability for themselves it's hard to provide predictability for others
- This is especially true as community foundations and other funders are expecting to have 70% or less of what they had last year for funds to distribute
- Multi-year funding also makes it harder to include new organizations in funding cycles, which presents a challenge as the non-profit arts sector is growing, with more organizations seeking operating funds
- Red tape reduction is a priority, but there is a tension between easing the burden on grant writers, providing enough information for assessors, and accountability for where funds are being allocated to governments with diverse and conflicting expectations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provincial Red Tape Reduction Panels, particularly for non-profit sector, can be applied to funder practices ● Much discussion of whether the funder/funded relationship should be more transactional or relational. Relational takes more time, but can help funders advocate for organizations to assessors, brings more history and knowledge to funding discussions without having to build that into applications, and builds trust for trying projects that may not 100% make sense on paper ● These advantages are enhanced by collaboration between funders, bringing multiple sets of knowledge to the discussion ● Relational also brings risks, as not all relationships are good—what do you do if you’re on the wrong side of a relationship? ● Granting is inherently more transactional, but other funder activities like conferences, advocacy, etc are more relational ● There is a need to understand whether the current system gives PASOs the capacity to properly support and build up their membership. If not, is this restricting the capacity of the sector? ● Acknowledgement that there are significant differences between PASOs and CISOs, as they are funded from different branches, with different processes ● Advocacy is increasingly important — advocating for governments to give funders multi-year commitments, ensuring arts are at the table for discussions like the Red Tape Reduction panels — and will require more understanding of how to communicate the value of the art
<p>What further research on the topic discussed would be useful?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do sport, recreation, and live experience sectors communicate the value they bring to Alberta, during a pandemic and otherwise — what metrics are involved? ● What lessons from Red Tape Reduction Panels can be applied to funders? ● Ways to break out of the “trap” of constantly seeking funding — especially when PASOs and their members are applying for similar programs at similar times ● Relative advantages and disadvantages of relational vs transactional approaches to grantmaking ● What is the relationship between an application process, a transaction, and a relationship, and how do those things interact with each other? ● What are the trade-off between grantmakers providing predictable funding to currently funded organizations vs making room for groups that haven’t been able to get into the funding cycle yet, particularly BIPOC, disability, and other traditionally excluded groups ● How does the level of detail in a grant application affect the time commitments of grant-writers, assessors, and grant-making staff, and how does it affect grant outcomes?
<p>Whose voices are missing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communities who aren’t already engaged in the funding landscape ● Groups who face additional barriers in filling out funding applications, such as communities where English is not a first language

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<p>around the table?</p>	
<p>Resources & Links (mentioned during discussion or shared afterwards)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alberta Creative Development Initiative was jointly run by Canada Council for the Arts and the AFA, in collaboration with CADA and EAC (https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/alberta-gets-a-culture-boost-with-6-million-fund/article4094796/) ● Researching the New Experience Economy (https://www.stone-olafson.com/thenewexperienceeconomy) involved multi-funder discussions; less formal tri-level funding meetings take place two or three times per year, and more recently have taken place weekly ● The one-off Alberta Culture Forum could be a model for this (https://open.alberta.ca/publications/6020457) ● Share New Mexico — granting platform connecting multiple funders and grantees (https://sharenm.org)
<p>What next steps were mentioned as a result of the Gathering?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular, recurring conversations between PASOs, CISOs and funders — the value of collective knowledge and engagement shouldn't be underestimated. Open up a channel for ongoing conversation that can address some of the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Removal of barriers to funding processes such as word counts that can create language barriers ○ Creation of streamlined processes that reduce the time required to complete applications by organizations ○ Creation of a shared calendar to ensure deadlines do not overlap ○ Development of relationships with APAC that can support and enable closer relationships between funders and organizations ● Importance of ongoing advocacy, for arts funders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Specific advocacy is needed at the Provincial level around support for multi-year funding or funding in a lump sum that can be delivered in Q1 of any given year. ● APAC to connect to the Provincial panel on red tape reduction to address issues related to application processes, single year funding and duplication in funding processes that create red tape.