



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

Canada Council for the Arts Official Languages Policy

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Official Languages Policy

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1. Preamble

I. Effective Date

The *Official Languages Policy* is effective as of April 1, 2017.

II. Purpose

The Canada Council for the Arts' (Canada Council) *Official Languages Policy* governs and supports the Canada Council's activities related to official languages.

III. Objective

The objective of this policy is to outline and communicate the values, legislative context, instruments, administrative roles and processes related to official languages at the Canada Council.

IV. Authority and Responsibility

Authority for the Official Languages Policy resides with the Canada Council's Director and CEO. The Director General, Strategy and Public Affairs, is responsible for the development and oversight of the Official Language Policy.

V. Approval and Revisions to the Policy

The Canada Council's Director and CEO approves the policy and any revisions or amendments to this policy.

VI. Definitions

Official Languages

Canada's two official languages are English and French, as established by the Constitution of Canada.

Official Language Minority Communities

Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs) are groups of people whose maternal or chosen official language is not the majority language in their province or territory – in other words, Anglophones in Quebec and Francophones outside of Quebec.

For the purposes of its granting programs, the Canada Council defines OLMC individuals, groups and arts organizations as those who self-identify as belonging to one of these groups.

Linguistic and non-linguistic art forms

The Canada Council refers to art forms where language is essential to the work of art as *linguistic art forms*. This term typically refers to theatre and literature. Fields of practice in which language is not essential to the work of art are referred to as *non-linguistic art forms*. This is typically the case for dance, music and the visual arts.

2. Value Statement

Respect for Canada's official languages has long been a fundamental value of the Canada Council for the Arts.

The Canada Council strives to be a leader as a bilingual institution, both in terms of its internal functions as well as its public activities.

The Canada Council recognizes the distinct contribution that Canada's two official languages and its OLMC artists and arts organizations make to the diversity and richness of the arts in Canada.

It also recognizes the important role the arts can play in promoting linguistic duality and the vitality of OLMCs.

The Canada Council works to ensure its activities make tangible, ongoing contributions to both linguistic duality and the development of OLMC artists and arts organizations. This supports the Canada Council's strategic objective, which is "excellent, vibrant and diverse art that engages Canadians, enriches their communities, and reaches markets around the world."

3. Legislative Context

The Canada Council's official languages activities are guided by its legal obligations as established in the *Official Languages Act (OLA)* and related federal policies and practices. As a federal institution, the Canada Council has a legal obligation to take actions which support the commitments the federal government has made in the OLA.

The OLA affects the following areas of the Canada Council's activities:

- ❖ Communications with and Services to the Public
 - Part IV of the OLA recognizes that Canadians have the right to communicate with and receive services from federal institutions in their language of choice.

- ❖ Language of work
 - Part V of the OLA recognizes English and French as the languages of work and states that employees in regions designated as bilingual – such as the National Capital Region, where the Canada Council is located – have the right to work in their chosen official language in accordance with certain conditions.
- ❖ Participation of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians
 - Part VI of the OLA sets out a commitment to ensure that Canadians have equal opportunities for employment and advancement within federal institutions, and that the composition of the workforce of federal institutions tends to reflect the presence of both official language communities in the general population.
- ❖ Advancement of English and French
 - Part VII, section 41 of the OLA sets out a commitment to enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development; and to fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.
 - In addition, the OLA sets out the obligation that federal institutions take positive measures to implement the above commitment.

The Canada Council takes the OLA into account in the development of its activities in all of the areas prescribed in the act. Further, it monitors these activities and reports annually on their status as part of its [Review on Official Languages](#), which is submitted to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the President of the Treasury Board, and published on the Canada Council's web site.

4. Equity Considerations

In recognition of the significant challenges and systemic barriers faced by artists, groups and arts organizations from OLMCs, the Canada Council considers OLMC applicants among the groups for which it has developed specific support policies, as identified in the Council's *Equity Policy*. However, the Council's approach to OLMCs within the equity context also takes into consideration the measures that have evolved over time related to the Council's obligations under Part VII, section 41 of the OLA. The Council therefore has distinct tools, practices and mechanisms, described in more detail below, in support of OLMCs.

5. Tools and Practices

The Canada Council has implemented the following tools and practices in support of linguistic duality and OLMC individuals, groups and arts organizations. These represent

positive measures in keeping with the Canada Council's obligations under Part VII, section 41 of the OLA.

I. Respect for linguistic duality in the assessment of applications

In its granting activities, the Canada Council provides equal treatment to applications in both official languages, including through its use of peer assessment procedures that enable participation by peers in the official language of their choice.

II. Peer assessment and OLMCs

Peer assessment is the basis for the majority of the Canada Council's decisions as to which artists, artistic projects and arts organizations receive funding (see the Canada Council's Granting Policy). The Canada Council is committed to ensuring that the choice of peers reflects the diversity of Canada's population, including OLMCs. The number of peer assessors from OLMCs is monitored on an annual basis to ensure that there is appropriate participation from these groups.

The Canada Council also has tools in place to ensure that committees assessing granting applications – including both peer assessment committees and internal assessment committees composed of Council staff – are equipped with information about the particular challenges facing OLMC applicants, to enable them to make informed decisions. Where necessary, based on the applications submitted to a particular competition, assessment supports such as context briefs, attendance by experts or external assessments may be used.

III. Granting program assessment criteria

The Canada Council's granting programs are designed in part to increase the impact of the professional arts in Canada. In line with this goal, a number of the Canada Council's granting programs for organizations include, as part of the program's assessment criteria, a commitment to reflecting the diversity of the organization's community or region, including OLMCs.

IV. Regular dialogue with stakeholders

The Council is committed to maintaining its awareness of the issues facing OLMCs in the arts through regular meetings and outreach with the groups that represent them.

The Canada Council holds annual bilateral meetings with the representatives of Francophone and Anglophone OLMC arts service organizations – the Fédération culturelle canadienne-française (FCCF) and the English-Language Arts Network (ELAN). The Council is also a signatory to the "*Entente pour le développement des arts et de la culture de la francophonie canadienne,*" which promotes collaboration among federal cultural institutions and the francophone community represented by the FCCF.

Program directors and program officers maintain regular contact with artists, groups and arts organizations from OLMCs and, where needed, the Canada Council organizes targeted outreach with these groups.

V. Official languages provisions in grant acknowledgement forms

The Canada Council employs a tool that, in relevant cases, encourages grant recipients to consider adopting activities that promote the full use of English and French in Canadian society by reaching out across official languages. This tool takes the form of a clause that may be included in grant acknowledgement forms that encourages the recipient to identify participants or target publics in French or in English, as the case may be, and to take measures such as promotions, dialogues, signage and visits to engage these groups.

This tool assists the Canada Council in determining when such a clause is appropriate. It is used in the program *Engage and Sustain*, and primarily for the non-linguistic art forms.

6. Funding Mechanisms

In addition to the funding available through the Canada Council's suite of granting programs, the Council has two funding initiatives specifically for OLMCs, the Official Languages Fund and the Market Access Strategy for Official Language Community Artists. Beginning in April 2017, these two initiatives will be delivered as Strategic Funds.

I. Official Languages Fund

The Official Languages Fund is designed to counter the isolation experienced by OLMC artists and to assist the development of individuals and arts organizations working in OLMCs. This fund provides support to successful or highly recommended applications to Canada Council's granting programs. More information about the Official Languages Fund can be found [here](#).

II. Market Access Strategy for Official Language Community Artists

The Market Access Strategy for Official Language Minority Community Artists (Market Access Strategy) aims to increase access of professional artists and arts organizations from OLMCs to a diversity of markets and publics.

It provides supports Canadian professional artists, groups and arts organizations whose maternal or chosen official language is the minority language in their province or territory. Grants fund a wide range of activities that:

- ❖ Expand national and international market access to high quality market-ready works created OLMC artists or organizations;

- ❖ Contribute to the development of new national and international markets for OLMC arts; and
- ❖ Strengthen the ability of OLMC artists, groups and/or arts organizations to succeed outside their local markets.

The Market Access Strategy was created as part of the federal government's Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities.

More information about the Market Access Strategy can be found [here](#).

7. Internal Mechanisms

The Canada Council maintains a number of internal mechanisms that are meant not only to ensure compliance with the OLA but also to support continuous improvement when it comes to its official languages activities.

I. *Designated Official Languages Roles*

There are three dedicated official languages roles at the Canada Council:

- ❖ The *Official Languages Champion* is an executive-level staff member responsible for leadership, advocacy and ensuring official language-related questions are considered within the Council's decision-making framework.
- ❖ The *National Coordinator for the Implementation of Section 41 of the OLA* is responsible for the Canada Council's activities related to the implementation of this section of the act. They must also do the following:
 - perform any necessary follow-up and share information internally and with the OLMCs;
 - ensure that OLMC issues are integrated, where appropriate, into all of the analyses and decision-making processes affecting the development and vitality of OMLCs;
 - oversee the accountability process (action plan and reports) relating to the implementation of section 41 of the OLA;
- ❖ The *Person Responsible for Official Languages* is responsible for Canada Council activities related to the implementation of sections IV, V and VI of the OLA.

The Canada Council also has identified staff in the Arts Granting Programs Division who have responsibility for liaison with OLMC stakeholders and for the administration of granting activities for OLMCs.

II. Committee on Official Languages

The Committee on Official Languages (COL) monitors official languages for the Canada Council. Its mandate covers the sections of the OLA that stipulate the specific responsibilities of federal institutions, as identified in section 3 above.

The COL can make recommendations to Executive Management Committee regarding the implementation of obligations under the *OLA*. Recommendations can relate to any sector of activity at the Council. The work of the COL supports Council's compliance with its OLA obligations as well as continuous improvement in its activities related to official languages.

The COL is co-chaired by the Official Languages Champion and the National Coordinator for the Implementation of Section 41, and is composed of staff with responsibilities related to official languages from all part of the organization.

III. Voluntary Self-identification Form

The Council encourages applicants and peer assessors to complete a Voluntary Self-identification Form. This form asks individuals to indicate their First Language and whether they identify as either an Anglophone official-language minority or a Francophone official-language minority.

The data collected is used to monitor the impact of, and identify gaps in, funding to applicants from OLMCs. It is also used to track representation of both official languages and of individuals from OLMCs on peer assessment committees.

Approved by Executive Management Committee: November 8, 2016