

Impact of the Sector Innovation and Development
Component 2022-25
August 2025
Prepared by Hill & Knowlton



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Summary



Summary

Introduction

The Sector Innovation and Development component of the Supporting Artistic Practice program funds projects by Canadian and First Nations, Inuit and Métis arts professionals, cultural connectors, groups, and organizations. Grants encourage initiatives that strengthen and develop support for artists in Canada. Analysis focused on activities funded, benefits for the sector and diverse communities, and strategies for inclusion and accessibility.

Methodology

All 454 successful grant applications from 2022-2025 were analyzed.

Activity Purpose, Objective and Outcomes

Recipients planned to undertake activities that would foster collaboration (80%) and allow artists to acquire new skills (82%).

Projects supported events, mentorships, and professional development. Recipients focused on knowledge sharing, with applicants aiming to build capacity within the arts sector.

Summary

Benefiting a Diversity of Communities

Recipients spoke about the diverse groups that would benefit from their work, particularly racialized communities, new or emerging artists, and First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities.

Recipients shared that they would reflect diverse perspectives and voices in their projects and undertake measures to ensure the accessibility of their work.

Addressing Diversity and Accessibility

Most projects aimed to address diversity and accessibility (84%). Often, recipients plan to engage communities that they were a part of (67%).

To ensure they would engage communities in a respectful way, recipients indicated that they would work with individuals who had experience working with these communities and would collaborate with the communities to establish proper protocols.

Recipients noted that communities would see themselves represented in the work, that they would partner with community groups on promotion, and that they would ensure that their work was accessible.

Objectives & Methodology



Objectives and Methodology

The Sector Innovation and Development component of the Supporting Artistic Practice program funds projects by Canadian and First Nations, Inuit and Métis arts professionals, cultural connectors, groups, and organizations. These projects must grow and improve the arts sector. The Canada Council for the Arts expects this component to achieve the following immediate outcomes: 1) artistic practice is supported through a sustained and interconnected arts ecosystem, 2) artists and arts professionals benefit from activities that advance learning and strengthen networks, and 3) arts organizations and specialists assist artists in developing and producing work, as well as reaching audiences.

Activities may include the planning, development and/or implementation of projects that support, strengthen and/or improve the arts sector.

A total of 454 grants from 2022-2025 were awarded totalling \$24,615,260, an average grant of \$54,219.

Analysis focused on activities funded, benefits for the sector and diverse communities, and strategies for inclusion and accessibility.

Objectives and Methodology

The results are based on analyses of the following five grant application questions:

1. Provide a one-sentence summary of your proposed project. If possible, use the format ACTIVITY and DATES.
2. Describe your proposed activities or services (including timeline) and explain why you wish to undertake them. What needs or gaps are being filled? Who will be the primary beneficiaries? Refer to any research or reports that support undertaking these activities or services.
3. How does your project propose to strengthen and develop practices in the arts sector? For projects proposing organizational development activities, how does your project propose to strengthen and develop the organization itself and how will this be shared with the arts sector?
4. How does your project propose to benefit a broad and inclusive representation of your artistic community, particularly with regards to the engagement and inclusion of Indigenous communities, culturally diverse groups, people who are Deaf or have disabilities, and official language minority communities?
5. If your proposed activity addresses challenges or opportunities related to accessibility, equity, diversity, social justice, or decolonization, describe your relationship to these communities. How will you ensure that appropriate cultural protocols are being observed? How will you ensure that you have the active participation, collaboration, involvement, and empowerment of the specific community/communities impacted by the project?

Objectives and Methodology

The grants were analyzed using the following process:

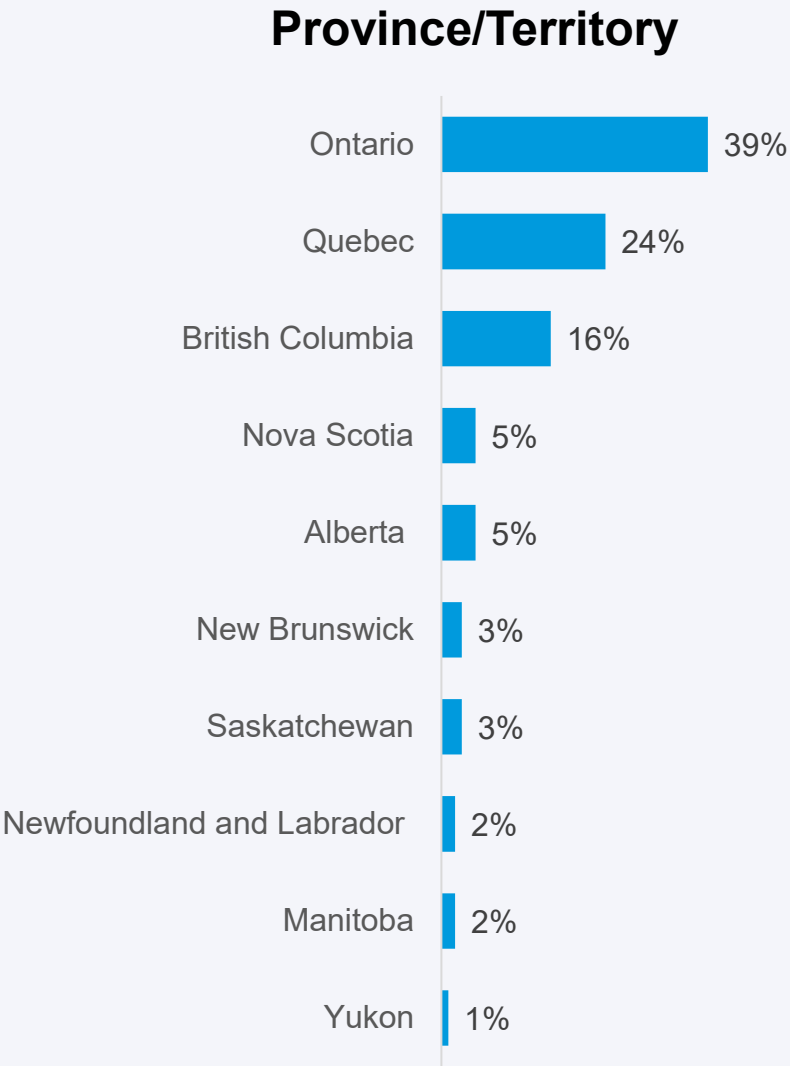
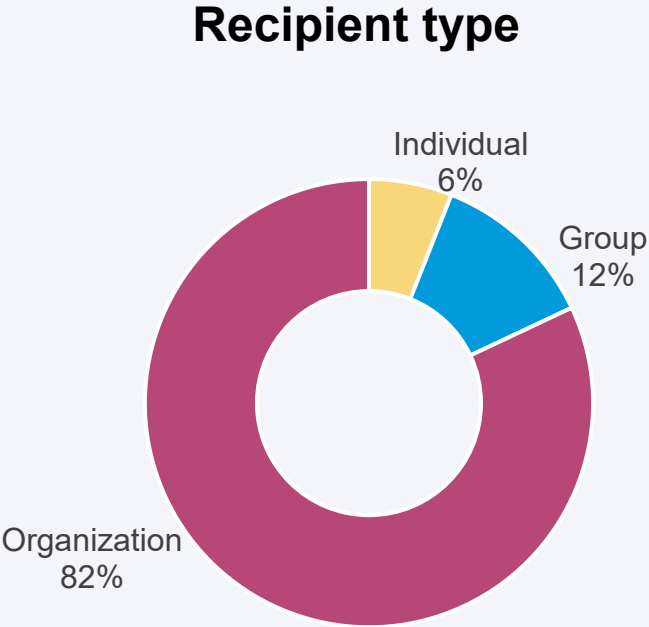
1. A sample of 50 applications were analyzed to develop a coding scheme for each question. Minor adjustments were made to the coding scheme in consultation with Canada Council Staff. Certain questions contained multiple elements, which were broken out for the analysis with individual coding frameworks created for each component.
2. Once the codes were finalized and coding resumed, each response was assigned one or more categories/codes. Multiple codes could be used to analyze responses to grant application questions.
3. The recipient profiling information contained in the applications (e.g., program component, recipient type and field of practice and strategic group) was linked to the analyzed responses to allow crosstabulations.

Note: In a few instances grant recipients did not provide relevant responses to some of the questions or parts of questions. The results presented in this report are based on an analysis of relevant responses only.

Detailed Findings

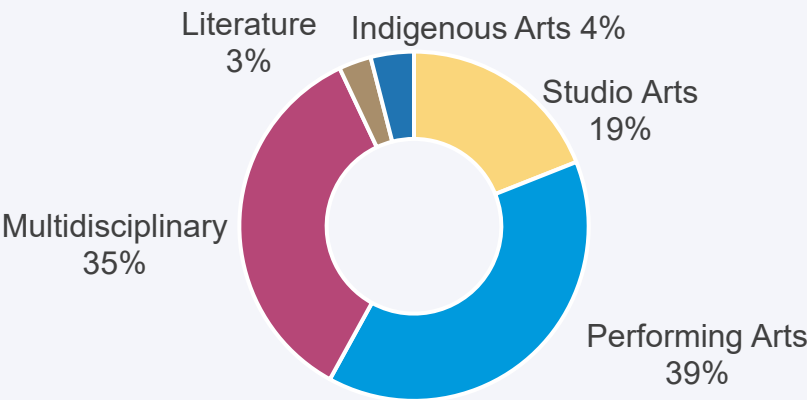


Respondent Profile



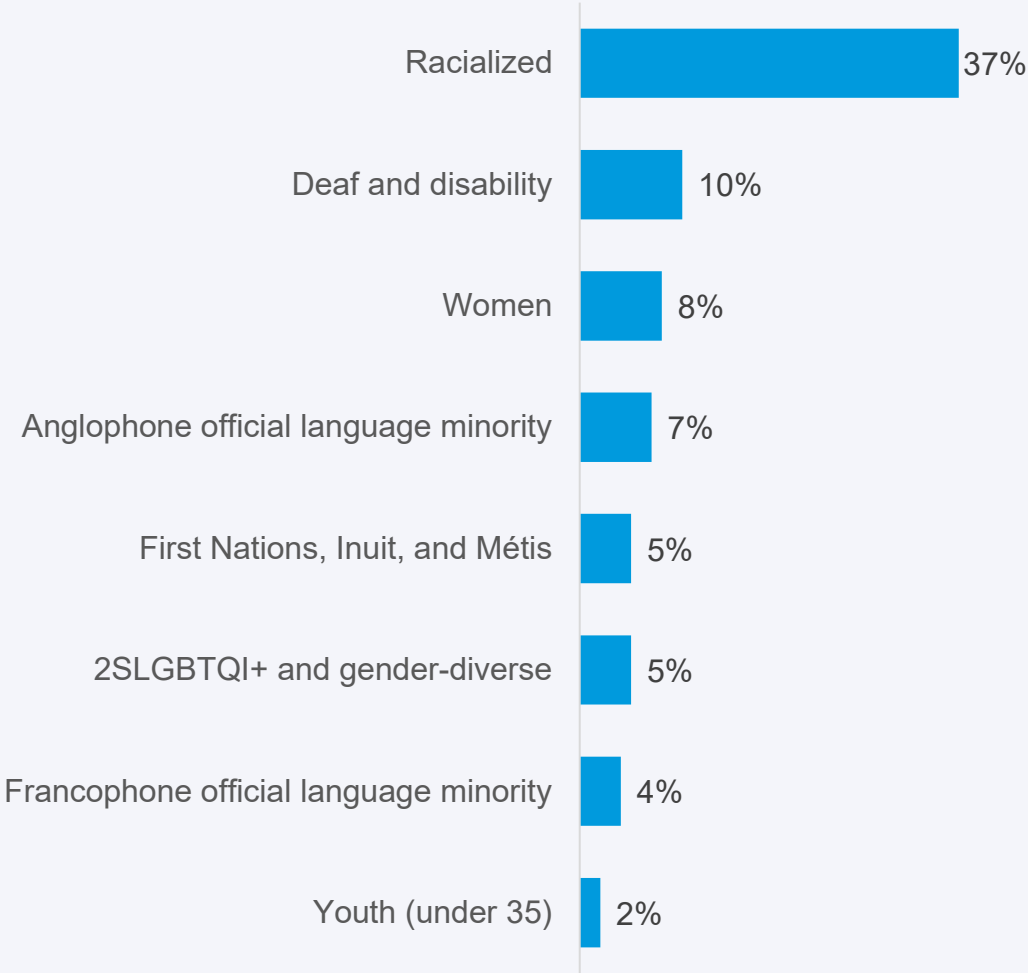
Respondent Profile

Field of Practice



Circus Arts	Performing Arts
Dance	
Music and sound	
Theatre	
Media Arts	Studio Arts
Visual Arts	
Inter-Arts	Multidisciplinary Arts
Multidisciplinary activities	
Deaf and disability Arts	
Digital Arts	

Strategic Group



Average Grant

The average size of grants awarded was \$54,219.

By Recipient Type



Activity Format and timeline

Provide a one-sentence summary of your proposed project. If possible, use the format **ACTIVITY** and **DATES**.

For the analysis, this question was divided into two parts:

1. The Activity
2. The Dates

Activity Format and Timeline: Findings

Recipients were largely focused on activities that promote knowledge sharing in the sector, foster increased collaboration, as well as market development and capacity building. Activities include events (25%), mentorship programs (19%), and professional development (17%). Some educational opportunities focused on supporting digital transformation, including developing art in the digital space.

These activities are being conducted over a number of years, starting in 2022 and extending beyond 2026.

Activity Format and Timeline: Results

Activity



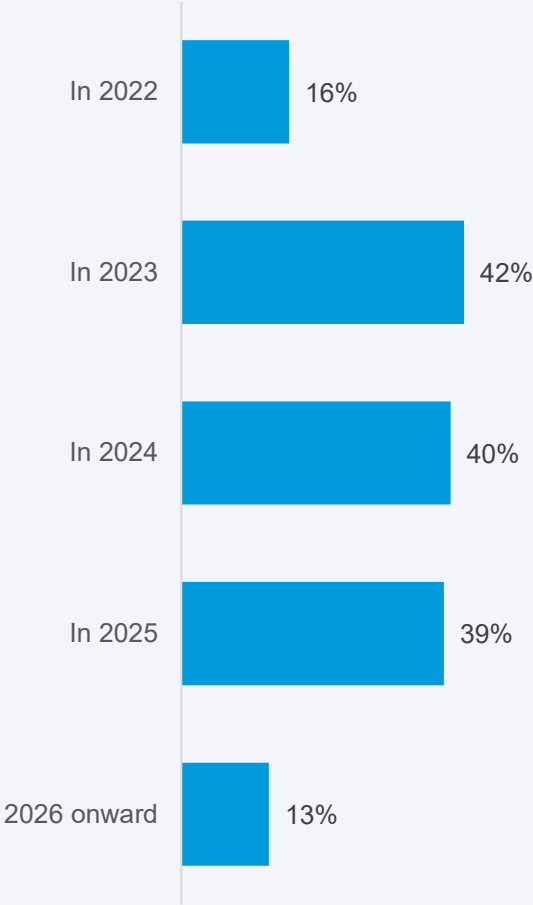
n = 454 Recipients' responses may apply to more than one category.

Subgroup Analysis

- Those in British Columbia are most likely to be providing mentorship opportunities (35%).
- Those in Anglophone official language minority communities are most likely to be providing networking opportunities (29%).
- Those in Francophone official language minority communities are most likely to focus on professional development activities (50%).
- Those in literature are most likely to focus on providing networking opportunities (50%).

Activity Format and Timeline: Examples

Project Timeline



Examples of activities that grant recipients will be undertaking include:

“To offer platform development opportunities for emerging digital artists to pilot concepts in [an] immersive digital gallery.”

“Launch targeted career support network for 2SLGBTQIA+ arts and culture professionals that offers mentorship and resources.”
-BC Museums Association

“Offer career development workshops and a residency program for early-career artists and arts workers.”
-Suitcase in Point Arts Performances

“To nurture Black disabled creative community, archive & expanding our curatorial facilitation practice through a 2-week inter-arts residency.”
-Black August Residency

Project Purpose

Referring to the Overview section, describe your proposed activities or services and explain why you wish to undertake them, including the project's goals and expected outcomes. What needs or gaps are being filled and how are these being addressed in a way that is either innovative or that fosters increased sectoral support and collaboration? Who will be the primary beneficiaries? Refer to any research, reports, or prior experience that support undertaking these activities or services.

For analysis, this question was divided into five parts:

1. The reason for undertaking the activity
2. The activity's goal and expected outcome
3. What needs or gaps are being filled
4. How the gaps are being addressed in an innovative way
5. Who the beneficiaries are

Project Purpose: Findings

In this question, grant recipients described their activities, sharing their motivations, goals, and the gaps in the sector they intended to address.

Recipients were primarily motivated by the desire to help artists acquire new knowledge or skills (82%). Other motivations included an interest in developing larger or more collaborative networks and communities (80%) and increasing diversity and inclusivity in the arts (65%).

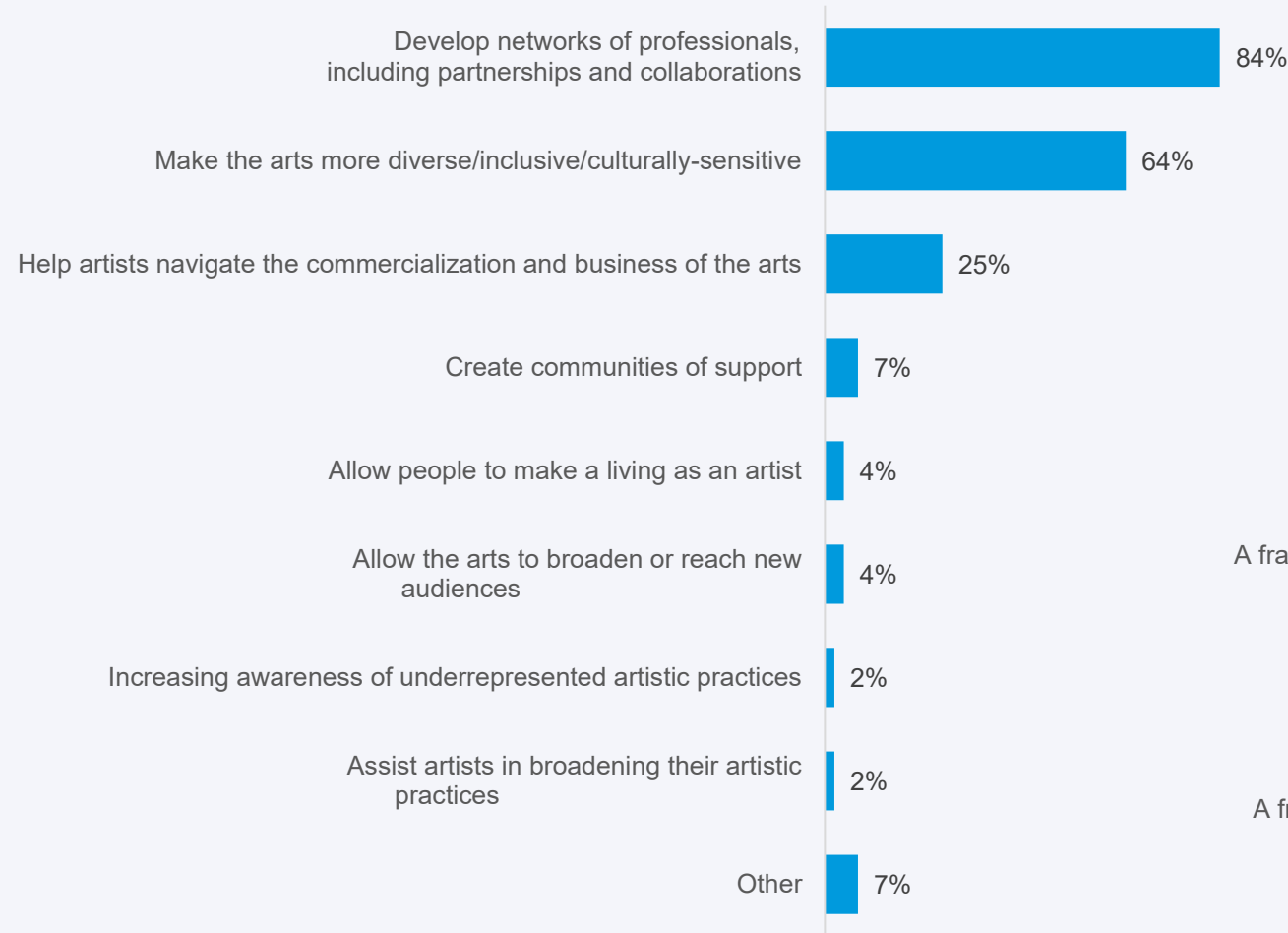
Recognizing these as gaps within the sector, recipients planned activities to expand their professional networks (84%) and to make the arts more diverse, inclusive, and culturally sensitive (64%).

A quarter of recipients (25%) expressed that they would use the funding to help artists navigate the commercialization and business side of the arts sector. Additionally, recipients intended to help build capacity within the sector and work on market development to reach communities nationally and internationally.

The desire to increase diversity and inclusion in the arts encouraged many recipients to centre specific groups within their activities (65%). Recipients anticipated that their activities would support a wide range of communities, including racialized communities (40%) and new or emerging artists (32%).

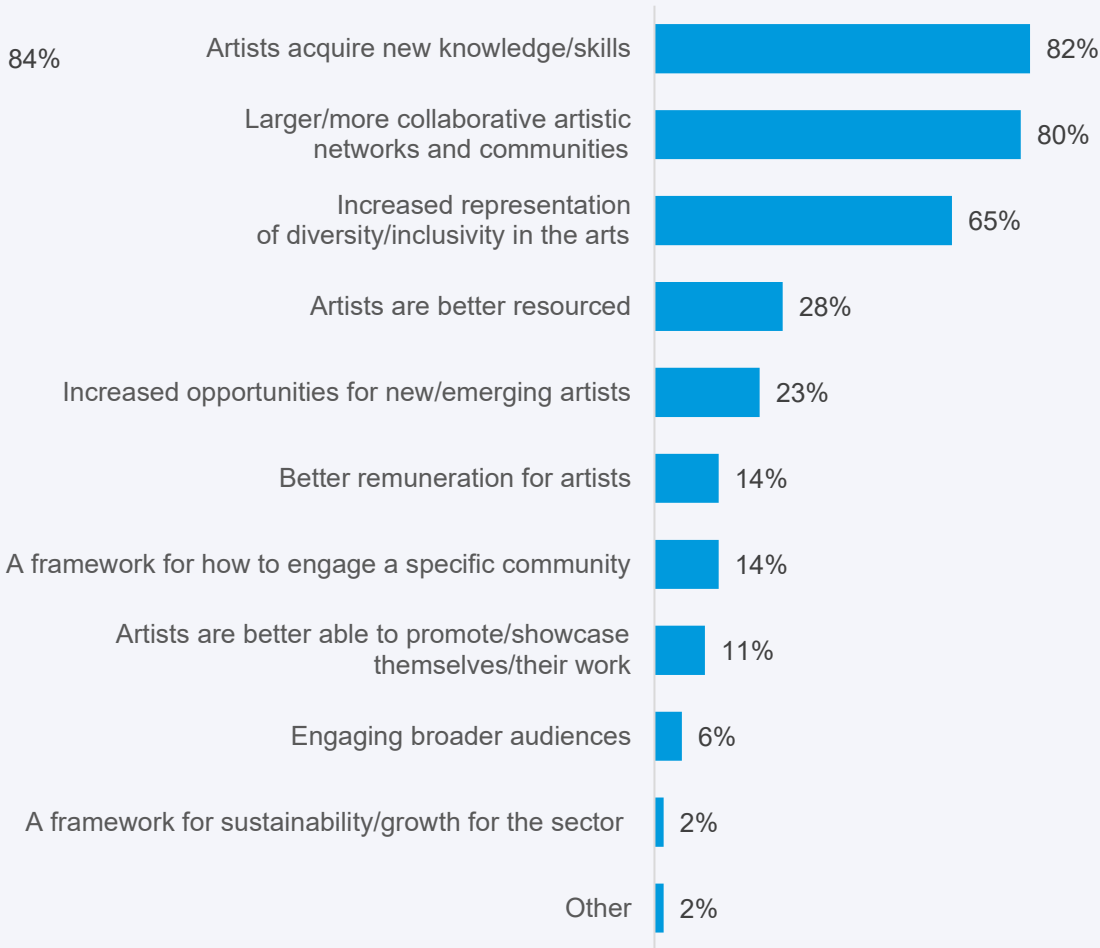
Project Purpose: Results

Reason for Undertaking Activity



n = 454

Expected Outcomes/Goals

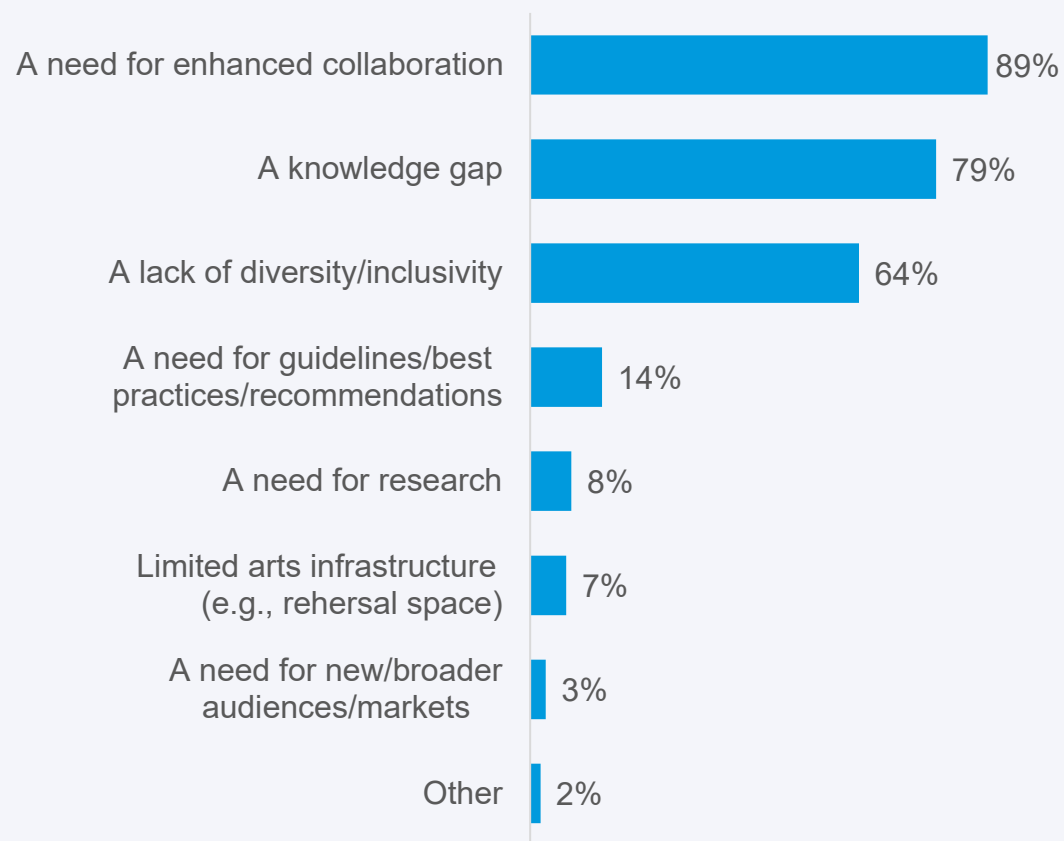


n = 454

Recipients' responses may apply to more than one category.

Project Purpose: Results

Gaps being Addressed



n = 454

Approach to Addressing Gaps

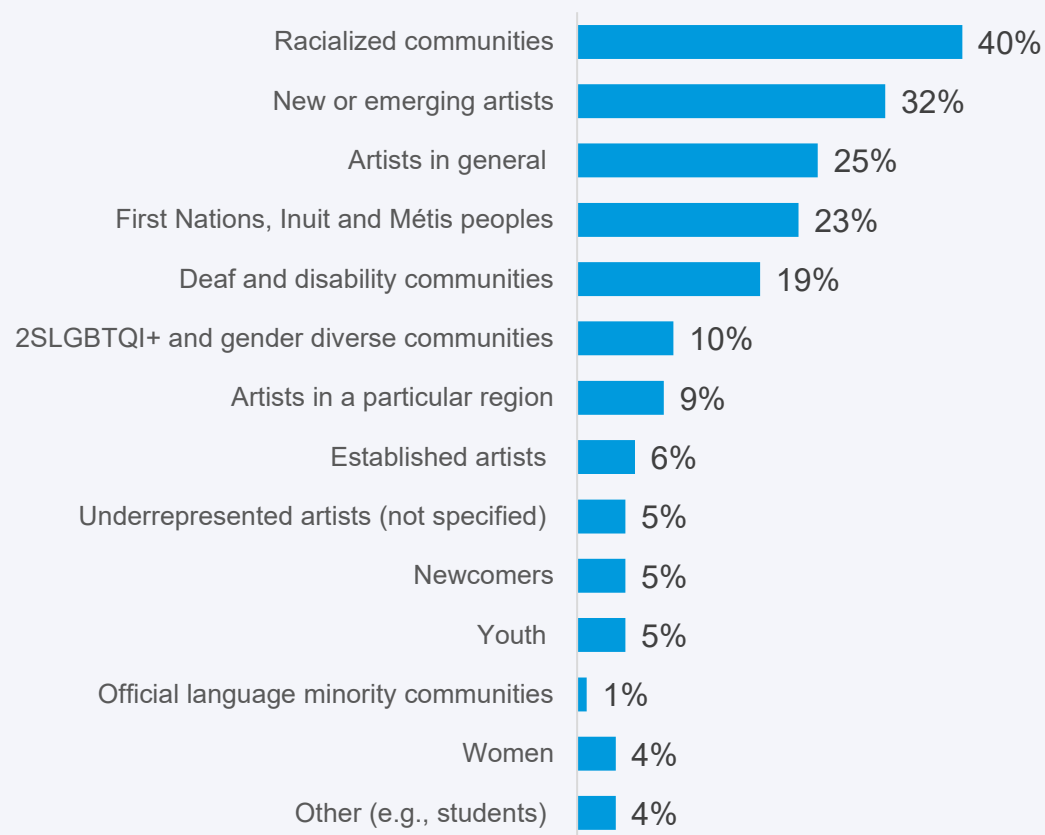


n = 389

Recipients' responses may apply to more than one category.

Project Purpose: Results

Beneficiaries



“There is an urgent need for professional development and wrap-around support for emerging 2SLGBTQIA+ musicians.”
-So Fierce Music on behalf of You Do You Foundation

“[This program] enables Black and racialized young people... to explore VR development as a vehicle for self-expression and professional growth.”
-RISE Arts and Community Services

Project Purpose: Subgroup Analysis

Reason for Undertaking Activity

- Those in Manitoba (33%) were the most likely to report that their project would allow people to make a living as artists.
- Those from First Nations, Inuit and Métis (95%), racialized (82%), or Deaf and disability communities (93%) were the most likely to report that their project would be focused on making the arts more diverse.
- Youth recipients were the most likely to report that their project would allow the arts to broaden or reach new audiences (27%).

Expected Outcomes/Goals

- Those from First Nations, Inuit and Métis (100%), racialized (84%), Deaf and disability (96%) and 2SLGBTQI+ and gender-diverse communities (95%) were the most likely to report that their project would promote diversity and inclusivity in the arts.
- Youth recipients were the most likely to report that their project would assist in engaging artists (27%).
- First Nations, Inuit and Métis recipients were the most likely to report that their project would create a framework/methodology/roadmap on how to engage with a specific community (14%).

Addressing Gaps

- Those from First Nations, Inuit and Métis (95%), racialized (83%), Deaf and disability (93%) and 2SLGBTQI+ and gender-diverse communities (95%) were the most likely to report that their project would address a lack of diversity/inclusivity.
- Those from First Nations, Inuit and Métis (95%), racialized (80%), Deaf and disability (91%) and 2SLGBTQI+ and gender-diverse communities (95%) were the most likely to report that their project would place diverse groups at the centre of the activity.

Beneficiaries

- Those in British Columbia were the most likely to identify First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities as beneficiaries (40%).
- Those in Saskatoon were the most likely to identify new or emerging artists as the beneficiaries of their activity (71%).
- Those in multidisciplinary arts were the most likely to report that their project would benefit people who are Deaf or have disabilities and mental health conditions (30%).

Strengthening and Developing the Arts Sector

How does your project propose to strengthen and develop practices in the arts sector? For projects proposing organizational development activities, how does your project propose to strengthen and develop the organization itself and how will this be shared with the arts sector?

For analysis, this question was divided into three parts:

1. How does your project propose to strengthen and develop practices in the arts sector?

If recipients identified organizational development activities the application was also analyzed for:

2. How the project would strengthen the organization itself.
3. How the project would be shared with the arts sector.

Strengthening and Developing the Arts Sector: Findings

Recipients spoke about their desire to expand the arts sector to include a more diverse range of perspectives and voices (39%). They also described a variety of educational activities, such as offering learning opportunities (36%), offering mentorships (27%), and developing resources (e.g., toolkits, databases) (16%).

A quarter of recipients (25%) reported that they would use funding to undertake organizational development projects, allowing them to expand their organization's network and partnerships (37%) and improve the amount and quality of resources available to their members (36%).

Recipients reported that they would share their project learnings with the arts sector (39%), promote recognition for underrepresented artists (28%), and establish new best practices for the arts sector (23%).

Strengthening and Developing the Arts Sector: Organizational Development

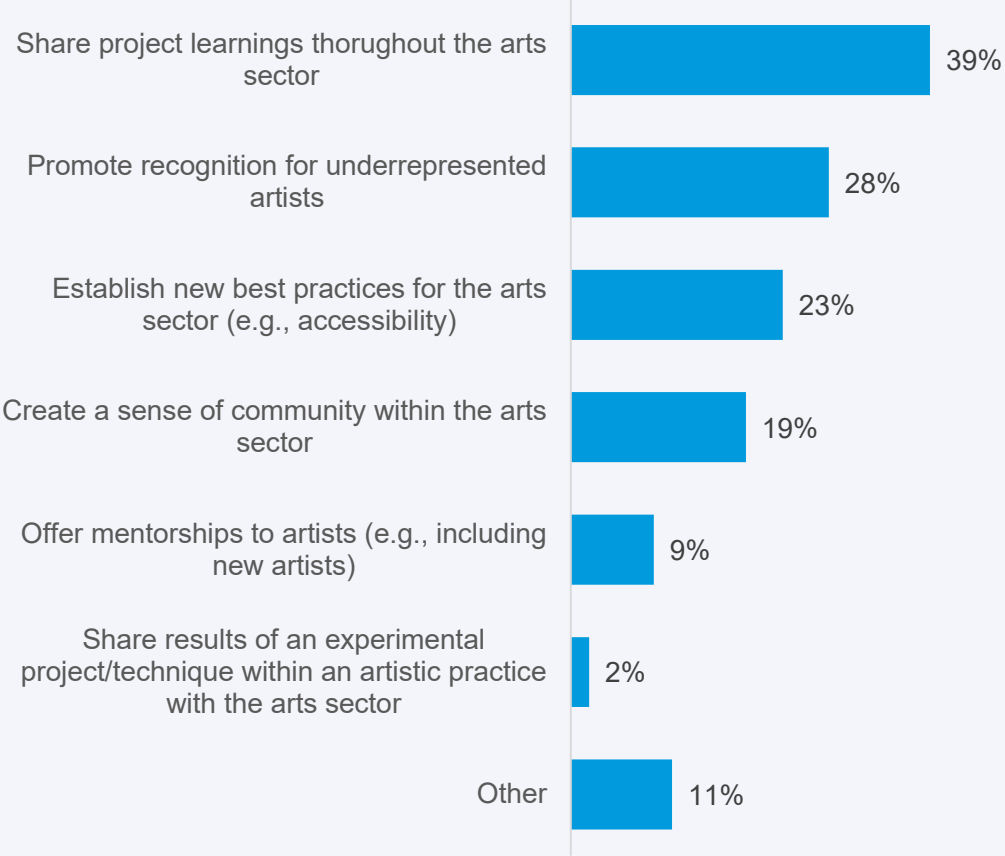
Strengthening the Organization



n = 112

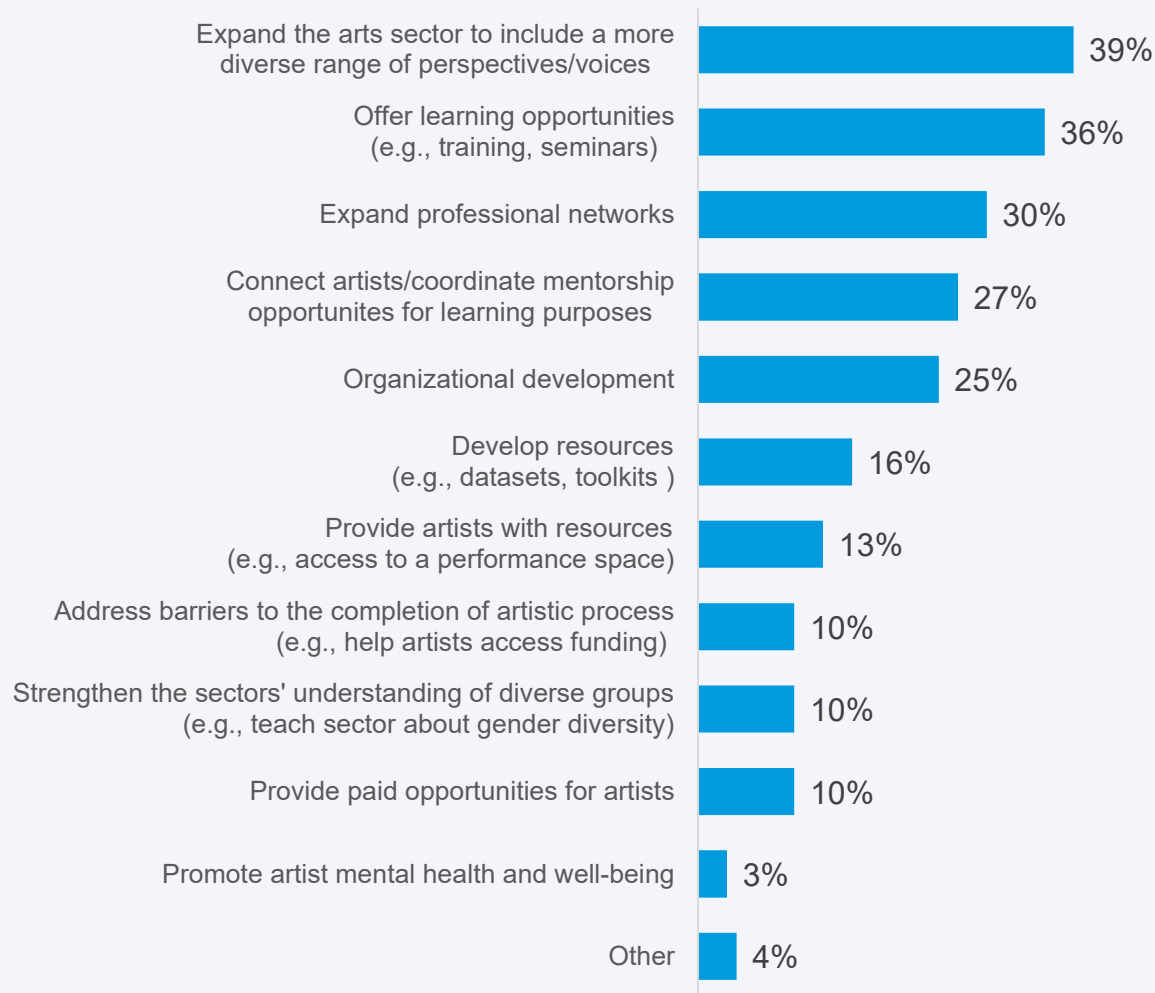
Recipients' responses may apply to more than one category.

Sharing with the Sector



n = 112

Strengthening and Developing the Arts Sector: Results



Subgroup Analysis

Those from strategic groups were the most likely to say they would expand the arts sector to include a more diverse range of perspectives/voices:

- *First Nations, Inuit, and Métis* (73%)
- *Racialized* (60%)
- *Deaf and disability* (83%)
- *2SLGBTQI+ and gender-diverse* (86%)

Strengthening and Developing the Arts Sector: Examples

“We are seeking to learn more about, experiment with solutions, and share knowledge... regarding an ongoing systemic issue...: an inability to engage... with diverse audiences, specifically those who have traditionally not had access or inclusion in the arts.”

-Presentation House Theatre

“This project will... [build] cross-sector connections that enhance collaboration and innovation within the wider arts and science community. By bringing together artists, scientists, and researchers, we will create a dynamic environment that fosters new ideas and practices in the arts.”

-Centre[3] for Artistic and Social Practice

“This project involves the establishment of strong partnerships, centered around community input and endorsement, as an effort to encourage respectful and healthy relationships between creators and producers that are beneficial for everyone.”

-CARFAC

“Much of the music we present has its origins in regions that are currently suffering war, repression, and/or impoverishment, and have been regularly subjected to often vicious stereotyping in the media and general culture. The education we provide work against these stereotypes by providing counter-knowledge...”

-Labyrinth Ontario

How does your project propose to benefit a broad and inclusive representation of your artistic community, particularly with regards to the engagement and inclusion of Indigenous communities, culturally diverse groups, people who are Deaf or have disabilities, and official language minority communities?

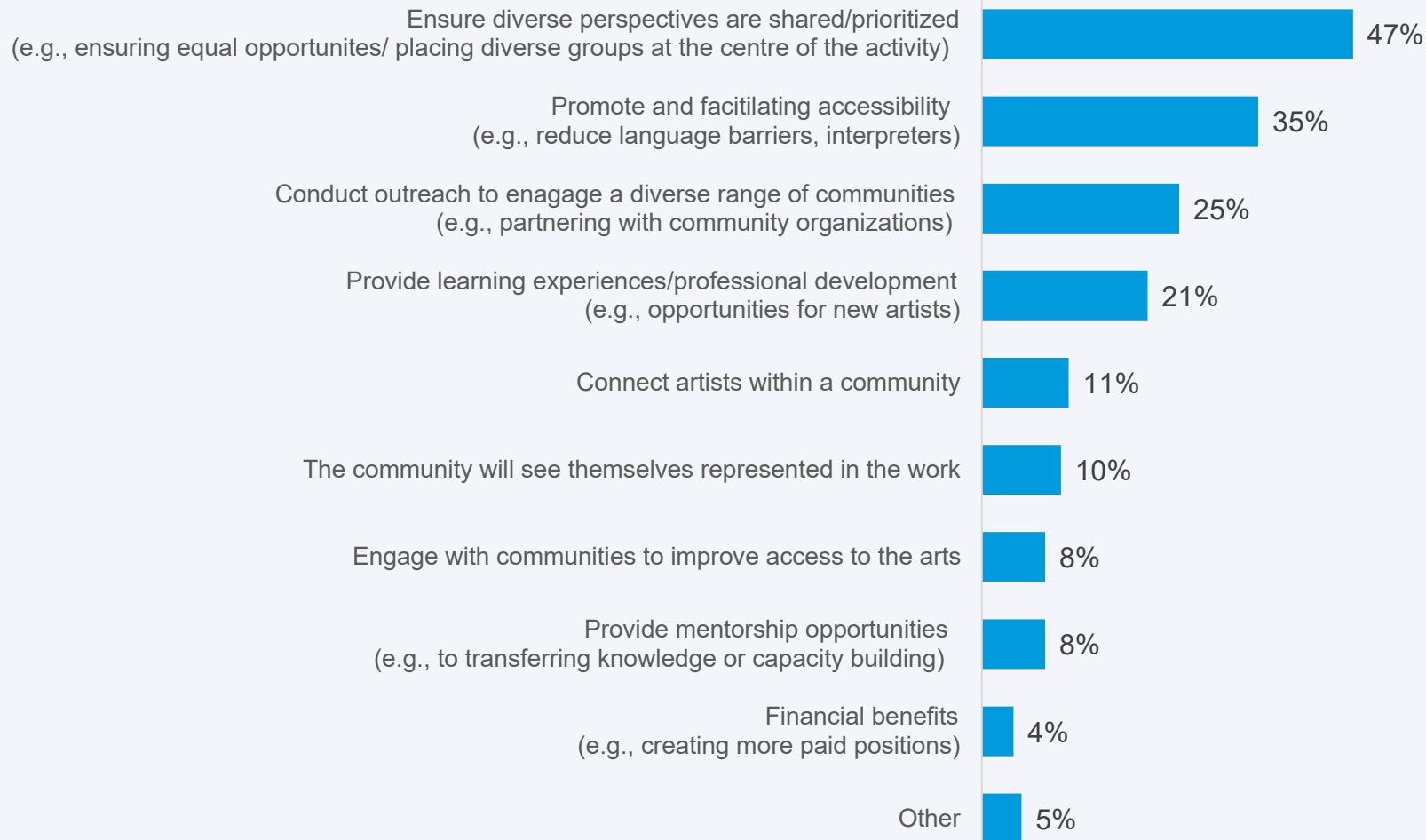
This question was analyzed to identify how the project proposed to benefit a broad and inclusive representation of the artistic community.

Findings

When asked how recipients would benefit a broad and inclusive representation of their artistic community:

- Half (47%) spoke about how they would ensure diverse perspectives were shared and prioritized in their project.
- A third (35%) shared how they would promote and facilitate accessibility (e.g., having interpreters available).
- A quarter (25%) shared how they would conduct outreach to engage a diverse range of communities (e.g., partnering with community organizations).

Artistic Community: Results



“This project is designed to support the implementation of anti-racist organizational systems on a sector-wide scale.”

-The CanDance Network

“This program will be designed by Black artists for Black artists.”

-VIBE Arts

Artistic Community: Subgroup Analysis

- Organizations (50%) were more likely than individuals (44%) and groups (25%) to report that their project would ensure diverse perspectives are shared/prioritized.
- Those in Manitoba (33%) were the most likely to report that their project would focus on connecting artists within a community.
- Those in Alberta (32%) and Manitoba (33%) were the most likely to report that their project would provide learning experiences/professional development.
- Those in Saskatchewan (29%) and Manitoba (22%) were the most likely to report that their project would ensure that the community would see themselves represented in the work.
- Those from Francophone official language minority communities (69%) were the most likely to report that their project would ensure diverse perspectives are shared/prioritized.
- Those from Francophone official language minority communities (31%) and women (31%) were the most likely to report providing learning experiences/professional development.
- Those from 2SLGBTQI+ and gender-diverse communities (36%) were the most likely to report that their project would involve outreach to engage a diverse range of communities.
- Those from Anglophone official language minority communities (58%) were the most likely to report that their project would focus on promoting and facilitating accessibility.
- Youth (27%) and First Nations, Inuit and Métis recipients (23%) were the most likely to report that their project would focus on providing mentorship opportunities.

Accessibility and Equity

If your proposed activity addresses challenges or opportunities related to accessibility, equity, diversity, social justice, or decolonization, describe your relationship to these communities. How will you ensure that appropriate cultural protocols are being observed? How will you ensure that you have the active participation, collaboration, involvement, and empowerment of the specific community/communities impacted by the project?

For analysis, this question was divided into four parts:

1. Does the proposed activity address challenges or opportunities related to accessibility, equity, diversity, social justice, or decolonization?

For recipients who are addressing challenges or opportunities, applications were also analyzed for:

2. What is their relationship to the community?
3. How are proper cultural protocols being observed?
4. How will the active participation, collaboration and involvement of the community be ensured?

Accessibility and Equity: Findings

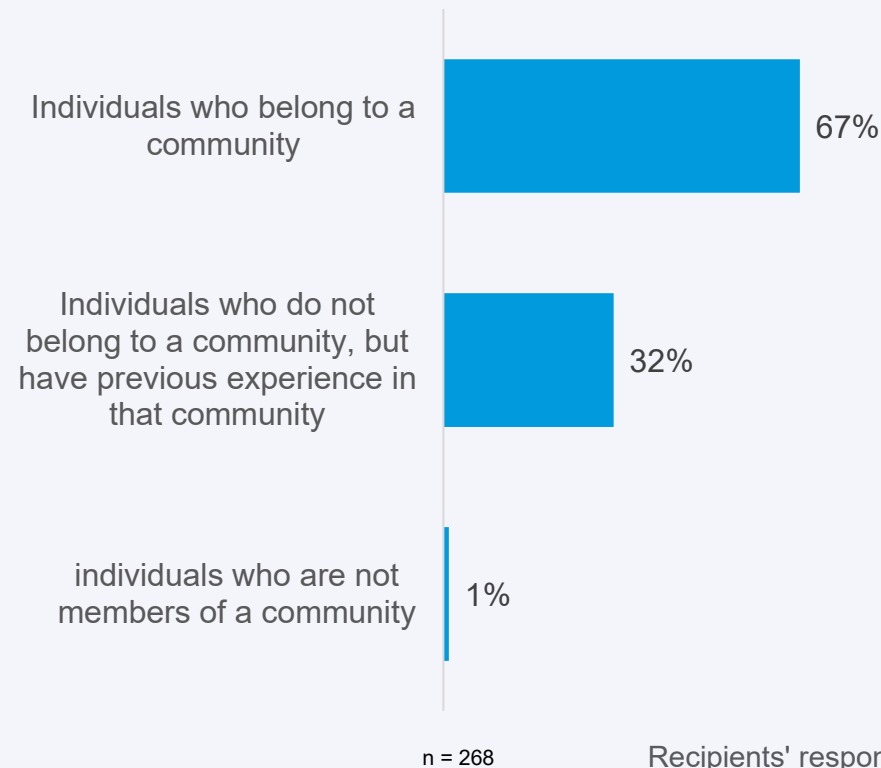
The majority of recipients (84%) reported that their projects would address challenges or opportunities related to accessibility, equity, diversity, social justice or decolonization. Those who would address these were generally either members of the communities (65%) or were working with individuals who were (32%).

Recipients reported that they would strive for communities to see themselves represented in the work (38%), form partnerships with community groups and organizations (26%), and ensure that the work was accessible to diverse groups (23%).

Accessibility and Equity: Results

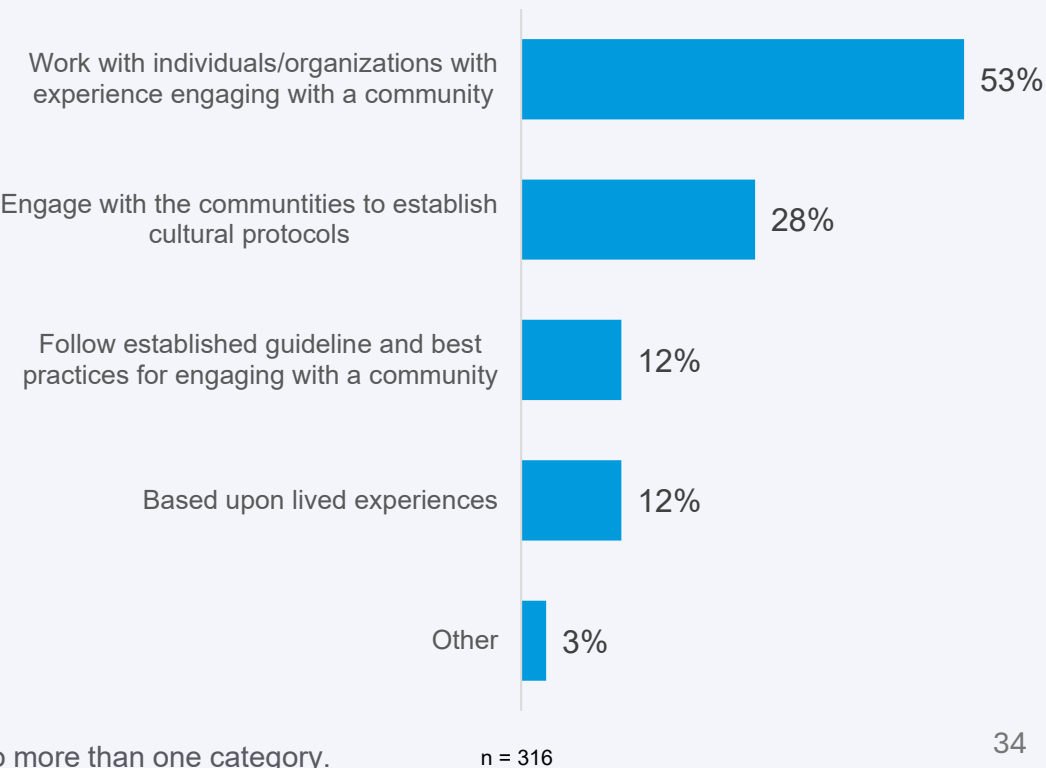
Of the 454 grant applications analyzed, 381 (84%) identified that their proposed activity would address challenges or opportunities related to accessibility, equity, diversity, social justice or decolonization.

Relationship to Community



Recipients' responses may apply to more than one category.

Cultural Protocols



Accessibility and Equity: Subgroup Analysis

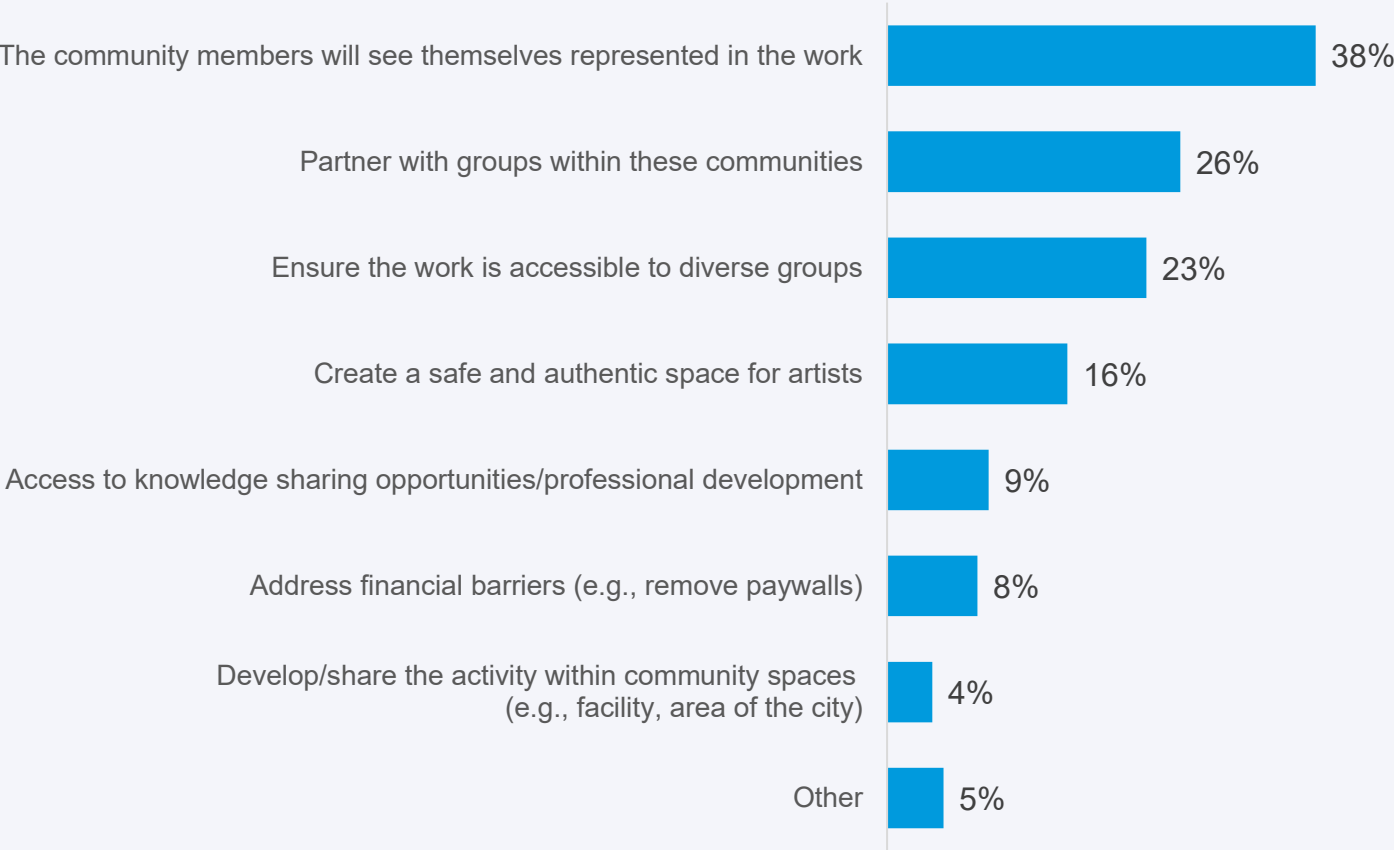
Active Participation and Collaboration

- Individuals were the most likely to report belonging to the community they seek to engage (76%).
- Those in Alberta were the most likely to report belonging to the community they seek to engage (80%).
- Those in studio arts were the most likely to report belonging to the community they seek to engage (80%).
- Those from racialized (78%), Deaf and disability (77%), 2SLGBTQI+ and gender-diverse communities (84%), and women (83%) were the most likely to report belonging to the community they seek to engage.

Cultural Protocols

- Those in Alberta (22%) and Manitoba (20%) were the most likely to report following established guidelines and best practices for engaging with a community.
- Those in Saskatchewan (43%) were the most likely to report engaging with communities to establish cultural protocols.
- Those in Manitoba (80%) were the most likely to be working with individuals/organizations with experience engaging with a community.
- First Nations, Inuit and Métis recipients (65%) were the most likely to be engaging with the communities to establish cultural protocols.

Active Participation and Collaboration



Subgroup Analysis

Relationship to Community

- First Nations, Inuit and Métis recipients (59%) were the most likely to report that the community would see themselves represented in the work.
- Those in Manitoba (67%) were the most likely to report partnering with groups within communities.

Accessibility and Equity: Examples

“We have brought together an all-Indigenous team... Our community consultation is key, we need to hear from the Indigenous media art community about what their questions are, where they are having difficulties and then do the research and implementation to fill those needs.”

-National Indigenous Media Arts Coalition

“Our project [seeks] to provide mentorship for... women of colour to help them build connections, provide professional development workshops, overall mentorship for them in their arts careers. All participants, mentors and project organizers will be reflective of the community we are working in.”

-Kristin Cheung

“The project will be driven by francophone artists and community... Details of our planning are purposely left blank, as we need to create space for the voices of the community.”

-Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design, Cape Breton School of Crafts

“Our events are designed to be culturally safe spaces where Indigenous traditions and storytelling are respected and honoured... This deeply resonates with our participants and audiences, instilling a profound sense of belonging, cultural pride, and a strengthened connection to their heritage.”

-IndigE-girl Comedy

Conclusions



Conclusions

Working to Fill Gaps in the Sector

Recipients of the Sector Innovation and Development component noted that their projects seek to increase collaboration as well as learning opportunities. Their activities would support artists in acquiring new skills (including digital arts techniques) and develop artistic networks to build capacity within the sector and provide support for new and emerging artists.

Working to Expand Diversity in the Arts

Recipients recognize a need for inclusivity and diversity in the arts. By centering diverse perspectives in their work, their projects would engage a broad representation of their artistic community. In particular, they would work to benefit racialized, First Nations, Inuit and Métis, Deaf and disability and 2SLGBTQI+ and gender-diverse communities.

Organizational Development, Strengthening the Sector

Recipients anticipate using the funding to further develop their organizations, allowing them to expand their networks and develop resources. These organizations would share knowledge and promote diversity in the sector.



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