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Mr. Éric Girard,

Ministre des Finances

Ministre responsable des Relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise

Subject: 2024-2025 Pre-Budget Consultations

The English-Language Arts Network (ELAN) is a not-for-profit organization that connects, supports, and creates opportunities for English-speaking artists and cultural workers of all disciplines from every region of Quebec. We share expertise and resources for career advancement, funding opportunities, employment opportunities, and calls for participation in the arts. We advocate for our members' interests, and make common cause with the Francophone arts community.

English-speaking artists represent a dynamic and skilled segment of the English-speaking community and of Quebec's workforce. They make important contributions to Quebec's thriving artistic landscape and the province's cultural economy. According to an [analysis of 2020 census data](#), there are 13,800 artists within Quebec's English-language arts community, representing an impressive 32% of all of the province's professional artists. They also make up a higher proportion of the province's English-speaking workforce than the percentage of artists in Quebec or Canada overall – 1 in every 74 English-speaking workers in Quebec is an artist. So too do a higher percentage of English-speaking artists hold a bachelor's degree or higher than the overall English-speaking workforce.

Despite their qualifications and significant presence within Quebec's cultural sector, English-speaking artists find themselves facing higher levels of precarity and financial insecurity than either their Francophone counterparts or the English-speaking workforce in general. Census data shows that the 2020 median employment income of English-speaking artists was only \$13,100, which represents just one-third of the median employment income of all English-speaking workers in Quebec. Their median employment income was also 21% lower than the median of Quebec's French-speaking artists.

Furthermore, the 2020 median personal income of English-speaking artists (\$31,000) was 33% lower than the figure for English-speaking workers in Quebec overall (\$46,400) and 17% below the median of the province's French-speaking artists (\$37,200). Viewed globally, the income gap between artists and workers in other sectors is wider in the English-speaking community (-33%) than among Francophones in Quebec (-24%).

Yet income is not the only worrying factor. Precarious working conditions are widespread in the arts in general, and documents such as Compétence Culture's [Plan d'action pour les ressources humaines en culture 2023-2028](#) demonstrate that the lack of a social safety net in the sector is a major issue in its

ongoing sustainability. English-speaking artists find themselves particularly vulnerable, as census data reveals that 66% of them are self-employed, which is slightly higher than their Francophone colleagues and five times higher than the rate within the overall English-speaking workforce.

In order to sustain their artistic work, Quebec's English-speaking artists find themselves increasingly reliant on key institutions within the sector. Public funding bodies in Quebec, such as the Conseil des arts et lettres du Québec, have long played a vital role in supporting the arts and culture ecosystem and upholding fair compensation standards for professional artistic work. Important investments by the Government of Quebec during and since the Covid-19 pandemic have allowed them to provide considerable support to the community, but their budgets are increasingly under strain from unprecedented inflation rates and increased demands. For example, statistics we have received from the Conseil show that the total number of artist applications has increased by 22% since 2018-2019, rising by 9% between 2021-22 and 2022-23 alone.

In the English-speaking community, the increase from 2021-22 to 2022-23 is even more significant at 13%. And while its support for the English-language arts community has been laudable, the Conseil's funding for English-speaking artists has remained locked between 10 and 12% of its program budget over the last five years. Clearly, more diverse funding opportunities are essential for the English-language arts community to make any progress in addressing the income disparity highlighted above.

Within this context, arts service organizations such as ELAN, the Quebec Drama Federation, the Quebec Writers' Federation and our many colleagues in the Francophone sector, are increasingly called upon to provide key resources to artists in need. These can include professional development, capacity-building workshops and networking activities, all of which are crucial to help artists build and sustain professional careers. These kinds of organizations are themselves subject to rising costs due to inflation, which have exacerbated longstanding structural issues such as the inability to offer competitive salaries, difficulties retaining staff and high levels of burnout, all of which risks talented individuals leaving Quebec to be able to sustain their career elsewhere. The sector as a whole finds itself at a tipping point, and as we have demonstrated, the English-speaking arts community is in a particularly vulnerable position within that overall context.

With this in mind, ELAN wishes to propose the following considerations for Quebec's 2024-2025 budget:

1) Increased support for the cultural sector in general

Increases in the number of requests for funding, combined with rising costs, mean that larger investments are needed to prevent the sector from declining, which would undermine the long-term value of the significant investments that the Government of Quebec has already made. More funding for institutions like the Conseil des arts et lettres du Québec would go a long way to mitigating the increased demands on the system, which in turn would help accommodate the rising number of English-speaking applicants.

2) Increased targeted support for the English-language arts community

As stated above, the percentage of funding from bodies such as the Conseil des arts et lettres du Québec that is available to English-speaking artists has remained stable and shows little potential for significant growth. Consequently, funding sources specifically catering to the English-language community will become ever more important to support our artistic and cultural activities, particularly in regional communities outside of Montreal where local cultural infrastructure and professional opportunities can sometimes be more limited.

The Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise is undoubtedly the most well placed institution to fulfill that role, based on its critical support for the community in general and its proven track record of valuing projects with a cultural impact. To that end, community organizations like ELAN also have the potential to play a significant intermediary role in distributing any new sources of funding on the SRQEA's behalf, as we demonstrated in our collaboration on the *Fonds de relance COVID-19* project in 2021. Our knowledge of the community, ability to assess the quality of projects and experience serving as a fiduciary can be an asset in distributing smaller envelopes of funding that can nevertheless be career changing for talented arts companies and artists in the English-speaking community.

In conclusion, the English-language arts community is proud to contribute to the diversity and vitality of Quebec culture, whether at home, in the rest of Canada or internationally. Indeed, the international success of countless English-speaking artists generates new opportunities for artists from both linguistic communities and reinforces Quebec's reputation as a society where the arts are deeply valued and where talented professionals can build a successful career. The recommendations stated above will go a long way to helping English-speaking artists join their Francophone colleagues in continuing to produce excellent work that maintains Quebec's place at the forefront of arts and culture.



Nick Maturo

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