



Jennifer Harrison and David Hudson - Hamilton

Why We're Here

- Share how arts and culture support local economic development
- Highlight success stories from across Ontario
- Inspire partnerships between arts leaders, municipalities, and planners
- Advocate for culture as core to sustainable community growth

Arts & Culture Are Essential – To Ontario, To Everyone

- Arts are infrastructure
- Central to identity, connections, economy, equity, and well-being
- A public good with lasting social and economic return

The Economic Case

- **Direct Economic Contribution:** Ontario's culture sector contributed \$26.4 billion to provincial GDP and supported over 270,000 jobs in 2022.
- **Job Creation:** The sector is a major employer, surpassing industries like forestry, mining, and auto manufacturing.
- **ROI on Investment:** For every **\$1 invested** in OAC-funded organizations, **\$25** in total revenues are generated.

The Social Return

- Builds belonging, inclusion, and mental well-being
- Engages youth and underserved communities
- Connects people across generations and cultures
- Strengthens community resilience and civic pride

Local Impact in Action

- *Quinte Region*: Belleville Arts Therapy, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, Creative Economy
- *Temiskaming*: Murals and youth-engaged arts revitalization

Local Impact in Action

- *Haliburton Highlands*: Studio tours and creative tourism -
- *Sudbury*: Cultural planning integrated into regional development

Local Impact in Action

- *Stratford Festival*: Global cultural tourism driver that significantly impacts the local economy.
- *Ottawa*: the National Arts Centre, the Canadian Museum of History, and festivals like Winterlude, boosts local spending

Local Impact in Action

- *Kingston*: Use of arts to revitalize downtown, attract visitors, and benefit local businesses.
- *Toronto*: Cultural festivals and events like TIFF, Luminato, and local galleries increasing tourism and local spending.

What Municipalities Can Do

- **Embed culture** in municipal planning, zoning, and community development
- Fund **arts councils** and local cultural infrastructure
- Support **multi-sector partnerships** (health, tourism, education)
- Adopt a “**culture-first**” lens for downtown revitalization and housing
- Celebrate local creativity as part of municipal identity

Call to Action

- Let's build cultural partnerships for economic resilience
- Let's ensure all regions—rural, northern, urban—benefit equitably
- Let's recognize culture not just as impact, but as infrastructure

The Ask

- How can we work together to make cultural investment a priority in every Ontario community?
- Let's co-create sustainable policy and funding tools
- Let's shift the narrative together—arts are essential

Thank You

- Alliance of Arts Councils of Ontario
- Let's connect **aacontario.ca**
- Let's continue the conversation.

The logo for the Alliance of Arts Councils of Ontario (AAACO) features the acronym "AAACO" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The text is centered within a circular arrangement of twelve colorful triangles. The triangles are in various colors: blue, red, orange, yellow, light green, dark green, light blue, dark blue, purple, pink, grey, and light green. The triangles are arranged in a ring, with some overlapping, creating a vibrant and dynamic background for the text.

AAACO

- The Arts Are Essential – To Ontario, To Everyone.