



Voluntary Self-Identification Framework and Equity Priority Policy

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Introduction

The Prince Edward County Arts Council (County Arts) is committed to integrating principles of diversity, equity, inclusiveness, and responsiveness into our policies, programs, partnerships and services; addressing systemic barriers and challenges; and engaging with community members representing the diversity of our community, as stated in our [Inclusivity, Diversity & Equity \(IDE\) Policy](#).

Since 2021, our biennial Artist Survey has included a voluntary Self-Identification section, the responses to which offer a general sense of the demographics of Prince Edward County's artistic community, and guide our efforts to ensure that the composition of our Artist Advisory Committee adequately reflects this.

Beginning in July 2023, we are adding a voluntary Self-Identification section to our Artist Fund and other application processes. This will enable County Arts to take concrete action towards fulfilling several relevant commitments from our [2022-27 Strategic Plan](#) and IDE Policy, including:

- Promoting fair conditions for all persons to fully participate in society (IDE Policy)
- Recognizing that while all people have the right to be treated equally, not all experience equal access to resources, opportunities or benefits (IDE Policy)
- Achieving equality does not necessarily mean treating individuals or groups in the same way, but may require the use of specific measures to ensure fairness (IDE Policy)
- Including and providing equal access to opportunities and resources to people who might otherwise be traditionally under-represented, excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of minority groups (IDE Policy)
- Fostering a welcoming, barrier-free environment and building relationships with communities who may have faced historical and/or systemic barriers (IDE Policy)
- Connecting with and supporting a greater diversity of arts, artists, and community (Strategic Plan)

Equity Priority Groups

County Arts acknowledges that there are a number of historically disadvantaged groups that face barriers to full participation in Canadian society and the arts sector. In order to address the most underserved communities and largest service gaps, County Arts' efforts will focus on the following equity-denied groups who, because of systemic discrimination, face barriers that prevent them from having the same access to the resources and opportunities that are available to other members of society, and that are necessary for them to attain just outcomes:

1. Person with a disability/disabilities - i.e. a person who has a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric and/or learning disability and considers themselves to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that disability, or believes that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider them to be disadvantaged in employment by reason of that disability. A person with a disability may also be someone whose functional limitations owing to their disability have been accommodated in their current job or workplace. (Reference - Employment Equity Act / [CAUT Toolkit](#)).

2. Indigenous person - i.e. a person who self-defines as a First Nations (Status or Non-status), Inuit, or Métis person. (Reference - [Toronto Arts Council](#)).

3. Racialized person - i.e. a person, other than an Indigenous person, who is non-white in colour and/or non-Caucasian in race, regardless of place of birth or citizenship (sometimes referred to as "racially visible" or "visible minority"). (Reference - Employment Equity Act / [CAUT Toolkit](#)).

4. LGBTQ2S+ - This includes anyone who identifies as 1) a non-cis gender identity, e.g. Trans, Two-Spirit, Genderqueer/Non-binary, and/or 2) a sexual orientation other than Heterosexual/Straight (e.g. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer, Questioning, Two-Spirit, etc.). (Reference - [CAUT Toolkit](#)).

New Generation Artists - County Arts recognizes that many young artists face barriers to gaining experience as a professional artist and securing support for their work in competitive and established arts environments. While New Generation Artists - as defined by the [Ontario Arts Council](#), e.g. between the ages of 18 and 30 - are not an official Equity Priority Group, we will continue to ask whether applicants fall into this category to track this information, and continue to facilitate access for New Generation artists to our opportunities, for example by waiving membership fees.

Self-Identification

Collecting Information

Applicants will be invited to respond to a Voluntary Self-Identification section in the respective Application form. Respondents may identify with more than one of the equity priority groups. Artists self-identifying as Indigenous will be asked to provide an Attestation of Self-Identification (see Appendix below).

Peer Assessment / Employing Equity Measures

County Arts ascribes to the principle that artists and arts professionals are the most qualified individuals to assess, adjudicate, and make funding recommendations on the work of other artists.

Peer Assessment Committee

Since 2022 and going forward, our competitive Artist Fund applications and most other application processes (e.g. Artist Residency, etc.) are assessed by a Peer Assessment committee composed of members of our Artist Advisory Committee - which comprises residents who self-identify as Indigenous artists, artists of colour, LGBTQ2S+ artists, and youth artists, and reflect a diversity of artistic disciplines and practices - and/or artists with specific expertise as needed, who are compensated for their time.

County Arts acknowledges the varying degree of equity-related challenges or barriers that equity-deserving individuals experience, and will ensure each application receives appropriate contextual consideration.

Equity Priority Policy

If there are multiple well-assessed applications of equal merit but insufficient funds to support all deserving candidates, the applications of artists who self-identify as belonging to one or more of the Equity Priority groups in the Application Form will be prioritized.

Use of Information

This information will be stored safely and confidentially, and used solely for the above-mentioned purpose, and in the aggregate (i.e. anonymously, as a whole) to help us assess progress in and continue to improve our equity practices, and our programs and services more generally.

Date: July 2023

Important Notes:

- Since launching the Artist Fund, we have offered applicants one-on-one consultation with County Arts staff. To further reduce barriers to our application processes, as of July 2023 we will invite applicants to provide an audio/video response to longer application questions and offer assistance with responding to all parts of the application (including document requirements, budget, etc.).
- This Framework may be applied to other County Arts programs and services going forward.
- This Framework was prepared in consultation with our Artist Advisory Committee. It is a living document that will be adapted as needed to ensure its relevance and responsiveness to our community.

For questions about this Policy, please contact County Arts Executive Director Janna Smith at janna@countyarts.ca.

Appendix - Attestation of Self-Identification for Indigenous applicants

In order to safeguard the cultures and integrity of Indigenous peoples, applicants who self-identify as Indigenous will additionally be asked to respond to the following request for an Attestation of Self-Identification:

Please describe your relation to your Indigenous community/culture/identity, whether from a physical place (urban, a First Nation, Inuit homeland or Métis settlement), ancestral territory, clan, lineage, or as affected by displacement/disconnection. If applicable, feel free to share information about any contributions to or involvement with your Indigenous community.

This proposed approach/definition/language was developed in consultation with Indigenous members of the County Arts team, and is inspired by [Toronto Arts Council's Indigenous Arts Projects Grants Program](#) and excerpts from the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#):

Preamble: Recognizing and reaffirming that Indigenous individuals are entitled without discrimination to all human rights recognized in international law, and that Indigenous peoples possess collective rights which are indispensable for their existence, well-being and integral development as peoples

Preamble: Recognizing that the situation of Indigenous peoples varies from region to region and from country to country and that the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical and cultural backgrounds should be taken into consideration

Article 9: Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right to belong to an Indigenous community or nation, in accordance with the traditions and customs of the community or nation concerned. No discrimination of any kind may arise from the exercise of such a right.

Article 33: 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions. This does not impair the right of Indigenous individuals to obtain citizenship of the States in which they live. 2. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine the structures and to select the membership of their institutions in accordance with their own procedures.