

2025 FEDERAL ELECTION CANDIDATE SURVEY RESULTS

As part of our efforts to ensure that the needs and perspectives of local artists, arts and culture workers, and the broader community are on the radar of Bay of Quinte candidates during and beyond the upcoming federal election, we provided them with important information about the local impact of artists and the arts (see end of document), and invited them to respond to a short survey.

Below we share their responses to help residents make an informed, pro-arts decision at the ballot box.

QUESTION 1 - ARTS FUNDING

If elected, will you and your party support the Canadian Arts Coalition's recommendation to allocate 1% of federal spending to arts, culture & heritage (an increase of 0.06%)? This would include a \$140 million increase for the Canada Council for the Arts and \$130 million increase for Canadian Heritage, two granting bodies that have supported the initiatives of several local arts organizations.

If not, how will you and your party support arts & culture nationally and in the Bay of Quinte?



Erica Charlton (Green Party) - The Green Party of Canada is calling attention to the urgent need to protect and invest in Canadian arts, culture, and media. To ensure a thriving arts sector, we are calling for the restoration of the Canada Council for the Arts' budget to its 2021 level of \$500 million.

We recognize that funding for the arts have long been distributed unfairly and have left many communities underfunded and overlooked. To address these regional disparities, Greens propose directing restored funds toward communities that have historically received less support by implementing the Regional Development Agency model for arts funding. That way we can ensure resources are distributed equitably and proportionately across the country.



Chris Malette (Liberal) – There were several grants and increases in last year’s federal budget. We support our Artists. They are vital and valued members of our community. We will advocate for your members in Ottawa.



Ryan Williams (PC) – I believe in the power of arts and culture to strengthen our communities, support local economies, and bring people together—especially in rural regions like the Bay of Quinte, where we are seeing an exciting wave of artists moving in from urban centres. While our party is committed to fiscal responsibility and prioritizing core services, we also recognize that strategic investments in arts and culture deliver significant economic and social returns.

Though I cannot commit today to a blanket increase to 1% of all federal spending, I will work to ensure that funding decisions—particularly for agencies like the Canada Council for the Arts and Canadian Heritage—are responsive to the needs of communities like ours. I will strongly advocate for local arts organizations and work with all levels of government to ensure that rural and emerging artistic communities receive fair and growing support. If elected, I will also push for grant reform and faster approvals to help small and mid-sized organizations thrive.



Kate Crothers (NDP) – As a floral artist and interior designer by trade, this is something I am always thinking about. Artists and creatives are my friends, colleagues, mentors, and community. They're the people at my kitchen table, and on job sites with me. I’m committed to being a strong voice for the arts community in Ottawa, and for ensuring Bay of Quinte is not just part of the conversation, but leading it. I firmly support the Canadian Arts Coalition’s recommendation to allocate 1% of federal spending to arts, culture, and heritage.

As more creatives choose to call rural places like the County home, we are certain to benefit in countless ways beyond the inherent value of a more vibrant and art-filled community – but also economic development that can enrich our schools, revitalize our main streets, and strengthen the fabric of our communities. The federal NDP has long believed that the arts are essential—not a luxury. If elected, I will advocate for increasing support to institutions like the Canada Council for the Arts and Canadian Heritage, which play a vital role in funding local initiatives. A \$140 million increase for the Canada Council and \$130 million for Canadian Heritage would go a long way in supporting the creative energy that’s taking root in places like Prince Edward County, Belleville, and Quinte West, I also recognize that rural artists face unique challenges—access to affordable housing, transportation, and dedicated creative spaces. That’s why our support will be part of a broader push for rural infrastructure investment, so creative communities can truly thrive in all facets of their lives.

QUESTION 2 - ARTS SUPPORTS

Artists and arts organizations are struggling to make ends meet. A 2022 [Canadian Artists and Content Creators Economic Survey](#) by Canadian Heritage found that income from creative work is volatile, with 60% of respondents indicating that their creative income fluctuates by 50-100% year to year, without taking the pandemic into consideration. This unfortunate reality has galvanized 3,000 artists, 30+ arts organizations, and several unions representing 75,000+ members, to sign a public letter calling for a Basic Income Guarantee in Canada. You can learn more about their proposed benefits and demands [here](#).

If elected, would you support joint provincial-federal efforts to implement a Basic Income Guarantee model?

If not, what measures would you take to address the financial obstacles faced by artists and arts organizations?



Kate Crothers (NDP) - Once again, this is not a theoretical or figurative discussion for me - those statistics are things I've seen in my design practice, with creatives and skilled trades people who are often booked years in advance having to go to social media to solicit contracts. This is not the norm. I unequivocally support joint federal-provincial efforts to implement a Basic Income Guarantee model in Canada.

The NDP has long championed basic income as a bold, forward-thinking solution to the instability and inequality that too many Canadians face—including artists and creators. The 2022 Canadian Heritage survey confirms what we hear every day from artists in our own community: creative work is deeply undervalued, income is unpredictable, and the current system is failing those who give so much to our culture, our economy, and our collective wellbeing.

If elected, I would push for a national pilot program (building on evidence already generated from previous provincial/municipal pilot programs), and work in partnership with the provinces to ensure a focus on rural and small-town regions where economic precarity can be especially severe. I'd also advocate for increased funding to arts councils and granting bodies to ensure that organizations—not just individuals—have the resources to thrive.



Ryan Williams (PC) - I deeply respect the contribution that artists make to Canada's cultural and creative identity. The economic challenges they face—especially the volatility in income and lack of financial stability—are real and must be addressed.

While our party does not currently support a universal Basic Income Guarantee, we are committed to making life more affordable for all Canadians, including artists and creators. That means reducing taxes, eliminating unnecessary red tape, and ensuring that artists can keep more of what they earn. We also support targeted supports for low-income and self-employed Canadians, and would explore new mechanisms to stabilize income for those in the gig and creative economies.

Furthermore, I will advocate for reforms to existing grant programs to ensure they are accessible, predictable, and timely—especially for rural and independent artists who often lack the administrative capacity to navigate complex systems.



Chris Malette (Liberal) - We have been and continue to be supporters of a Basic Income Guarantee program. It was unfortunate that a newly elected Ontario Conservative Government prematurely cancelled the pilot programs.



Erica Charlton (Green Party) - Yes, the Green Party of Canada supports a Guaranteed Livable Income for all Canadians. This initiative will not only help our artists, it will also support Canadians as we transition into a new Green Economy, mitigate the impact of job losses from AI implementation, and deal with the climate crisis.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

DID YOU KNOW THAT:

1. OVER 300 PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS RESIDE IN PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

- Prince Edward County is tied with Stratford and Niagara-on-the-Lake as having the highest concentration of artists in Ontario, and the 7th highest in all of Canada.
- County residents recognize that our vibrant arts sector is a major part of what makes our community unique. Through the 2025 Municipal Budget Consultation process, residents ranked the arts among the top 4 areas that deserved expanded government funding.

2. THE ARTS SECTOR CREATES JOBS

- National level: 850,000 Canadians are employed in cultural jobs - more than agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, or oil and gas COMBINED contributing \$60 billion annually to Canada's GDP.
- Local level: Prince Edward County has a very high concentration of cultural workers accounting for 6.6% of the 12,600 people in the local labour force, a percentage that is much higher than both the provincial average (4.7%) and the national average (4.4%). One in every 15 workers in the County has a cultural occupation.

3. ARTISTS MAKE HUGE ECONOMIC SACRIFICES TO PRACTICE THEIR CRAFT

- National level: Over 50% of Canadian artists have total income below the poverty line.
- Local level: In 2021, the median personal income of County artists was \$33,200, 30% lower than that of all workers in the County (\$47,600) and the median household income of County artists (\$82,000) is lower than that of other workers in the County (\$111,000) and all Ontario artists (\$92,000).

This income disparity should concern all Canadians. In 2021, 77% of Canadian artists had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 67% of all workers in Canada. In 2023, Hill Strategies outlined the warning signs of an affordability crisis among Canadian artists reporting that only 30% are satisfied with the affordability of their dwelling.

Given that more than half work from home, this is a particularly troubling statistic. The same study reported that financial stress among artists is very common (69%) and that 91% of responding artists tried to relieve their financial challenges by cutting back on expenses (67%) and/or drawing down savings or investments (53%). Neither scenario is positive for our economy.

4. THE ARTS SECTOR IS A SOUND INVESTMENT

- National level: For every \$1 invested by the federal government, the arts sector generates \$16.32 in economic activity.
- Local level: For every operating \$1 invested by the Ontario Arts Council, County Arts generates \$37.84 in economic activity, with an annual economic impact of \$1.6M in 2023 (Canadian Arts Sports Heritage Economic Impact Model calculator).

Sources:

Statistics Canada - <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1110023901>

Hill Strategies - [Profile of PEC Artists](#) (October 2024)

Hill Strategies - [Artists in Ontario in 2021](#) (July 2023)

Canadian Arts Coalition - [ArtsVote](#) (March 2025)