



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

Canada Council for the Arts Official Languages Policy

December 2023

Official Languages Policy

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1. Preamble

I. Effective date

The Official Languages Policy is effective as of April 1, 2017.

II. Purpose

The Official Languages Policy of the Canada Council for the Arts (the Council) governs and supports the Council's activities related to official languages.

III. Objective

The objective of this policy is to outline and communicate the values, legislative context, instruments, administrative roles and processes related to official languages at the Council.

IV. Authority and responsibility

Authority for the Official Languages Policy resides with the Council's Director and CEO. The Director General, Strategy and Public Affairs, is responsible for the development and oversight of the Policy.

V. Approval and revisions to the Policy

The Council's Director and CEO approves the Official Languages Policy and any revisions or amendments to this policy.

VI. Definitions

Official languages

Canada's two official languages are English and French, as established by the Constitution of Canada.

Official language minority communities

Official language minority communities (OLMCs) are groups of people whose preferred official language is not the majority language in their province or territory; in other words, English speakers in Quebec and French speakers outside of Quebec.

For the purposes of its granting programs, the Council considers OLMC individuals, groups and arts organizations as those who identify as belonging to one of these groups.

2. Value statement

The Council strives to be a leader as a bilingual institution, both in terms of its internal functions and its public activities.

The Council recognizes the distinct contribution that Canada's two official languages and its OLMC artists and arts organizations make to the diversity and richness of the arts in Canada.

It also recognizes the important role the arts can play in promoting linguistic duality and the vitality of OLMCs.

The Council works to ensure its activities make tangible, ongoing contributions to both linguistic duality and the development of OLMC artists and arts organizations in all regions of the country.

In addition to its legislative obligations and commitment to Canada's two official languages, the Council acknowledges the fundamental role of Indigenous languages on this land. Indigenous languages are central to the identities, cultures, spirituality, relationships to the land, world views and self-determination of Indigenous peoples. The Council recognizes that the implementation of rights related to Indigenous languages are at the core of building right relations with Indigenous peoples and are fundamental to shaping the country, particularly in light of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

All of the Council's work is guided by its [core organizational values](#). These values are rooted in humility, openness, listening and empathy and include mutual trust, respect and reciprocity; shared leadership; curiosity and continuous learning; and the passion and care staff bring to their work to help build a more just, equitable and sustainable arts sector.

3. Legislative context

The Council's official languages activities are guided by its legal obligations as established in the *Official Languages Act* (OLA) and related federal policies and practices. As a federal institution, the Council has a legal obligation to take actions which support the commitments the federal government has made in the OLA.

The OLA affects the following areas of the Council's activities:

- ❖ Communications with and services to the public
 - Part IV of the OLA recognizes that Canadians have the right to communicate with and receive services from federal institutions in their language of choice.

- ❖ Language of work
 - Part V of the OLA recognizes English and French as the languages of work and states that employees in regions designated as bilingual – such as the National Capital Region, where the Council is located – have the right to work in their chosen official language in accordance with certain conditions.
- ❖ Participation of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians
 - Part VI of the OLA sets out a commitment to ensure that Canadians have equal opportunities for employment and advancement within federal institutions, and that the composition of the workforce of federal institutions tends to reflect the presence of both official language communities in the general population.
- ❖ Advancement of English and French
 - Part VII, section 41 of the OLA sets out a commitment to enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development; and to fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.
 - In addition, the OLA sets out the obligation that federal institutions take positive measures to implement the above commitment.

The Council takes the OLA into account in the development of its activities in all of the areas prescribed in the Act. Further, it monitors these activities and reports annually on their status as part of its *Review on Official Languages*, which is submitted to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the President of the Treasury Board, and published on the Council's website.

4. Tools, practices and mechanisms

The Council has implemented the following tools, practices and mechanisms in support of linguistic duality and OLMC individuals, arts groups and arts organizations. These represent positive measures in keeping with the Council's obligations under Part VII, section 41 of the OLA.

I. Respect for linguistic duality in the assessment of applications

In its granting activities, the Council provides equal treatment to applications in both official languages, including through its use of peer assessment procedures that enable participation by peers in the official language of their choice.

II. Peer assessment and OLMCs

Peer assessment is the basis for the majority of the Council's decisions as to which artists, artistic projects and arts organizations receive funding (see the Council's

Granting Policy). The Council is committed to ensuring that the composition of peer assessment committees reflects the diversity of Canada's population, including OLMCs. The number of peer assessors from OLMCs is monitored on an annual basis to ensure that there is appropriate participation from these groups.

The Council also has tools in place to ensure that committees assessing grant applications are equipped with information about the particular challenges facing OLMC applicants, to enable them to make informed decisions. For example, the Council uses [context briefs](#) on emerging, minoritized and less-understood arts communities and practices—including OLMCs—and disseminates these to assessment committees.

III. *Granting program assessment criteria*

The Council's granting programs are designed in part to increase the impact of the arts in Canada. In line with this goal, a number of the Council's granting programs for organizations include, as part of the assessment criteria, a commitment to reflecting the diversity of the organization's community or region, including OLMCs.

IV. *Regular dialogue with stakeholders*

The Council is committed to maintaining its awareness of the issues facing OLMCs in the arts through regular meetings and outreach with the groups that represent them.

The Council holds regular bilateral meetings with the representatives of Francophone and Anglophone OLMC arts service organizations. The Council is also a signatory to the *Collaboration Agreement for the Development of Arts and Culture in the Francophone Minority Communities of Canada*, which promotes collaboration among federal cultural institutions and the Francophone communities represented by the Fédération culturelle canadienne française.

Program directors and program officers maintain regular contact with artists, arts groups and arts organizations from OLMCs and, where needed, the Council organizes targeted outreach with these groups.

V. *Official languages provisions in grant acceptance forms*

The Council employs a tool that, in relevant cases, encourages grant recipients to consider adopting activities that promote the full use of English and French in Canadian society by reaching out across official languages. This tool takes the form of a clause that is included in grant acceptance forms for core-funded clients that encourages the recipient to identify participants or target publics in French or in English, as the case may be, and to take measures such as promotion, dialogue, signage and visits to engage these groups.

5. Funding mechanisms

In addition to the funding available through its regular suite of granting programs, the Council has two dedicated funding mechanisms for OLMCs—the Official Languages Fund and the Market Access Strategy for Official Language Minority Communities Fund. In order for an individual, group or organization to access these funds they must identify as belonging to an OLMC in their applicant profile.

I. Official Languages Fund

The Official Languages Fund is designed to counter the isolation experienced by OLMC artists and to assist the development of individuals and arts organizations working in these communities. This fund provides support to applications that meet the minimum threshold for funding but are not ranked highly enough to receive funding from the regular component budget.

II. Market Access Strategy for Official Language Minority Communities Fund

The Market Access Strategy for Official Language Minority Communities Fund (Market Access Strategy) aims to increase the access of artists and arts organizations from OLMCs to a diversity of markets and publics.

It supports Canadian artists, arts groups and arts organizations whose primary or chosen official language is the minority language in their province or territory. These grants fund a wide range of activities that:

- ❖ Expand national and international market access to high quality market-ready works created by OLMC artists, arts groups and/or arts organizations;
- ❖ Contribute to the development of new national and international markets for OLMC arts; and
- ❖ Strengthen the ability of OLMC artists, arts groups and/or arts organizations to succeed outside their local markets.

The Market Access Strategy was created as part of the federal government's *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities* and is funded by the federal government on an ongoing basis.

6. Internal mechanisms

The Council maintains a number of internal mechanisms that are meant to ensure compliance with the OLA as well as to support continuous improvement when it comes to its official languages activities.

I. Designated official languages roles

There are three dedicated official languages roles at the Council:

- ❖ The Official Languages Champion is a senior-level staff member responsible for leadership, advocacy and ensuring official language-related questions are considered within the Council's decision-making framework.
- ❖ The National Coordinator for the Implementation of Section 41 of the OLA is responsible for the Council's activities related to the implementation of this section of the *Act*. They must also do the following:
 - Perform any necessary follow-up and share information internally and with the OLMCs;
 - Ensure that OLMC issues are integrated, where appropriate, into all of the analyses and decision-making processes affecting the development and vitality of OLMCs;
 - Oversee the accountability process (action plan and reports) relating to the implementation of section 41 of the OLA.
- ❖ The Person Responsible for Official Languages is responsible for Council activities related to the implementation of sections IV, V and VI of the OLA.

II. *Committee on Official Languages*

The Committee on Official Languages (COL) monitors official languages for the Council. Its mandate covers the sections of the OLA that stipulate the specific responsibilities of federal institutions, as identified in section 3 above.

The COL may make recommendations to Senior Management Committee regarding the implementation of obligations under the OLA. Recommendations can relate to any sector of activity at the Council. The work of the COL supports Council's compliance with its OLA obligations as well as continuous improvement in its activities related to official languages.

The COL is co-chaired by the Official Languages Champion and the National Coordinator for the Implementation of Section 41, and is composed of staff with responsibilities related to official languages from all parts of the organization.

III. *Demographic data collection and monitoring*

The Council encourages applicants and peer assessors to complete a voluntary self-identification form to understand whether its programs are reaching a diverse range of artists. This form asks individuals for demographic information, including their first language and whether they identify as part of an official language minority community. In addition to this form, the Council asks individuals, groups and organizations to identify as belonging to one or more groups, including OLMCs, in their applicant profile. Groups and organizations are also asked to confirm that they meet relevant criteria using the strategic groups attestation tool.

The data collected through these mechanisms is used to monitor the impact of and identify gaps in funding to applicants from various groups. It is also used to track representation of both official languages and of individuals from OLMCs on peer assessment committees, as well as to identify applications for strategic funding after they have been assessed as having equal merit with other applications.

Approved by Executive Management Committee on November 8, 2016; updated by Senior Management Committee on December 19, 2023.