

ArtWorksTO Sustainability Planning

Recommendations Report

Overview

In 2020, a two-year funding investment from the Future Skills Centre enabled ArtWorksTO to enhance its original program model and formalize the youth social development intervention it first established in 2015. During this time it sought to evolve from a youth employment to a workforce development initiative.

When it became clear in late 2021 that the FSC funding was unlikely to be renewed, research was commissioned to explore ways to sustain the program. This review of the program and exploration of sustainability planning resulted in the following summary and report.

Recommendations in Brief

1. **Strengthen ArtWorksTO's profile as a singular organization.**
2. **Diversify program funding** sources to include operational and project grants from government (all levels) as well as investments from foundations and corporate philanthropy, from both restricted and unrestricted streams.
3. Identify prospective corporate partners and refine a **corporate engagement strategy** / business case for cultivating partners and champions.
4. **Amplify Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion** program features to align with emerging funding and partnership opportunities.
5. **Strengthen partnerships within the City of Toronto's corporate structure** in order to solidify an integrated request to Council for base operational funding.

The Context for ArtWorksTO

ArtWorksTO supports Indigenous, Black, or Persons of Colour (IBPOC) and/or 2SLGBTQ+ youth who aspire to careers as creative industries professionals. It is an employment program consisting of paid creative contract work opportunities, industry-specific mentorship, and skills training.

In a Nutshell

ArtWorksTO offers an innovative solution to creative sector labour market challenges:

- It offers **targeted support** for IBPOC and/or 2SLGBTQ+ youth creatives to not only **find jobs**, but also **develop sustainable careers** by cultivating critical capacities to build **employment pathways** through the creative sector, and in any sector where **creative talent** is needed
- It works with a variety of **cross-sector stakeholders** to respond both to the **unique needs of equity-deserving creatives** and to the **recurring creative challenges experienced by sector employers**

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FSC is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. We believe Canadians should feel confident about the skills they have to succeed in a changing workforce. As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead. The Future Skills Centre was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint ADE, and The Conference Board of Canada

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- It has adopted and begun to implement, locally, a **workforce development model** and model for developing a **creative sector talent pipeline** that has been shown to have promise elsewhere (BC) and in other countries (the US, the UK)

Fall			Winter			Spring			Summer			Fall		
SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
SKILLS TRAINING WITH A CERTIFICATE OPTION - COHORT 1 →									COHORT 2 BEGINS →					
			PAID CREATIVE CONTRACT →											
			INDUSTRY ADVISORY SESSIONS →											
ONGOING YOUTH LIAISING →														
									ALUMNI SUPPORT →					

Annual Program Timeline for ArtWorksTO: Year One (Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer) into Year Two (Fall)

The ArtWorksTO program model consists of the following:

- Advanced skills training with an optional continuing studies certificate**
 Courses in professional skills extend or complement participants' pre-existing disciplinary or media-specific technical training. Courses include a range of practical and professional electives (such as writing skills, finances, design thinking, web analytics, social media marketing, project management, and more), led by a foundational course in Professional Practice for Emerging Artists and Designers. Participants are provided with a stipend to cover course expenses (materials, textbooks or software).
- Paid creative contracts with employer partners**
 An experiential learning / work-integrated learning opportunity: responding to an RFP with a fixed \$4000 total budget, participants manage project milestones and produce fixed deliverables for a digital communications contract for host partners. Deliverables vary between projects but may include digital video assets, logos and branding materials, posters or pamphlets, social media campaign assets, digital photographs, and so on. Host partners currently include Divisions of the City of Toronto (including City Planning, the City Clerk's Office, or Toronto Community Housing Corporation), core partners and their affiliates (such as OCAD U, the Toronto Arts Foundation, or Mass Culture), and local creative small business (such as Corex Creative, LOOP: Design for Social Good, and Xvxy Photo).
- Industry advising**
 IBPOC and/or 2SLGTBQ+ industry professionals provide one-on-one and group coaching support over the duration of participants' creative contracts, helping to engage with participants in order to troubleshoot contract issues, improve client relations, and build professional skills.
- Ongoing support**
 A Youth Liaison helps maintain connections between the program and its participants,

anticipating and responding to emerging issues with contracts and certificate completion, and providing information and access to resources and referrals as needed.

5. **Alumni support**

Upon completion, an Alumni Pathways Manager helps participants establish and maintain their professional profiles, and shares additional and emerging opportunities through the ArtWorksTO partnership network.

Gaps Addressed by ArtWorksTO

ArtWorksTO differs from other local and regional community arts and community media initiatives in several key ways—namely, by:

1. **Focusing on building sustainable employment into culture sector opportunities** for youth, specifically equity-deserving, early career creatives. ArtWorksTO does not offer pre-employment engagement and programming, but instead works to extend and amplify the mandate of other organizations in the employment and training and arts and culture ecosystems. ArtWorksTO does this in several ways:
 - a. by supporting early career professionals who demonstrate existing craft and technical proficiency (whether self-taught or gained through formal education) with access to work experience, learning opportunities, and supportive resources;
 - b. by specifically recruiting early career professionals who are underrepresented in both creative and technical roles across industry subsectors in order to test and demonstrate practical strategies for improving sector representation, sector access, and the diversity of specific workplaces; and
 - c. by working with other community arts and media organizations already engaging and supporting these early career professionals in order to provide a “next level” pathway to learning and work experiences that these organizations may have limited capacity or the mandate to provide.
2. **Facilitating (creative sector) occupational skill development in (a) business and professional competencies and (b) cognitive and transferable skills.** ArtWorksTO does not provide foundational disciplinary training, focusing instead on (1) upskilling via in-demand technical, transferable, and employability skills, and (2) providing access to integrative work-integrated learning opportunities for those out-of-school and with inconsistent access to industry-specific professional development support and resources.
3. **Seeking to coordinate training expertise and improve access to inclusive creative sector opportunities.** By cultivating a core administrative and delivery partnership, and by developing a stakeholder advisory committee, ArtWorksTO has sought to fulfill its core mandate of enhancing access to opportunities while prioritizing ecosystem capacity building needed to enhance greater collaboration and cooperation across a fragmented economic sector.

	Engagement with Equity Deserving Creative Workers	Access to Paid Work Experience	Access to Creative Sector Professionals	Access to Public Sector Contracts	Access to Culturally Responsive Career Coaching	Industry-Recognized Training Credentials
Employment Service Agencies						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JVS • YES • Woodgreen • Tropicana 	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★
Community Arts / Community Media Organizations						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sketch • JAYU • Remix • Eva's Initiatives 	★★★	★★★	Varies	★★★	★★★	Varies
Secondary School	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★
Postsecondary Education	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★
Trade Unions / Associations	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★
Creative Sector Employers	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★
ArtWorksTO	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★

Comparison of Organization and/or Program Features

The ArtWorksTO Partnership Model

ArtWorksTO is a partnership between several divisions of the City of Toronto, the Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD U), and the Remix Project. Specifically:

- the **Youth Development Unit** of the City of Toronto is a co-lead on project management, providing policy and operational expertise and working alongside
- the **Neighbourhood Arts Network** (a project of the **Toronto Arts Foundation**), which provides administrative, staffing, and technological support;
- **Continuing Studies at OCAD U** facilitates a professional development **Certificate in Business Skills for Creative Professionals**, including a version of their [CSBU-N103 Professional Practice for Emerging Artists and Designers](#) customized for ArtWorksTO participants;
- **The Remix Project** coordinates coaching and professional development support with early- and mid-career professionals who identify as IBPOC and/or 2SLGBTQ+; and

- **Admissions and Advancement at OCAD U** supports program development, outreach, and recruitment.

ArtWorksTO also partners with a number of Toronto-area community arts and media organizations whose missions are to enhance access to artistic and media production opportunities for their communities. Most of these organizations engage with diverse audiences of equity-deserving youth, and are viewed by ArtWorksTO as community outreach partners. They include:

- Eva's Initiatives / Eva's Print Shop
- FilmStars
- ImagineNATIVE
- JAYU
- POV Film
- SKETCH Working Arts
- Street Voices

Current Funding Climate

As a final note about context, we have observed that the funding climate in 2022 seems mixed. A provincial election has meant a slowdown in opportunities with uncertainty about the funding climate until the Fall—at which point a municipal election will affect policy implementation and partnerships at and across the City through to 2023. Coupled with changes in senior leadership at both the Youth Development Unit and the Toronto Arts Foundation, options seem limited and internal champions to help lead through this uncertainty may be difficult to engage with for the foreseeable future.

ArtWorksTO's Sustainability Challenge

The context in which ArtWorksTO exists is no simple one. As a workforce development partnership the program seeks to address the cultural industries' labour market by leveraging education and training to support more systematic social inclusion for equity-deserving persons who are Indigenous, Black, Persons of Colour and/or 2SLGBTQ+. There are many sustainability priorities that such a complex, cross-sector, multi-stakeholder initiative could pursue, some of which might benefit the short term, others the policy context, but all of which come at a cost of resources, time, and expertise.

The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis tries to objectively summarize some of the key challenges faced by the program.

- **Strengths and Weaknesses** in this analysis characterize review assets and challenges faced *internally*, within the program structure;
- **Opportunities and Threats**, by contrast, characterize features of the *external* policy and funding context within which ArtWorksTO exists.

<p>Strengths <i>Internal / program-facing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ArtWorksTO funding demonstrates public, governmental interest in workforce development of arts and culture sector / creative industries (federal government, FSC innovation stream, two-year project funding) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$1,000,000+ in project funding ○ Funding has helped internal organizational cross-partnership capacity building ○ \$244,000 in contract funding to work-integrated learning projects to 61 youth who identify as Indigenous, Black, Persons of Colour, and/or 2SLGBTQ+ ○ 75+ media deliverables and creative assets produced in digital illustration, digital video, graphic design, photography, social media marketing genres since 2020 ○ \$50,000+ provided by project partners in in-kind resources, services from 2020 to date ○ \$25,000+ disbursed to equity-deserving professional artists for industry advising and career coaching services ● ArtWorksTO has fostered broad external and internal partnerships with training through to employment service organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaboratively authored mission, vision, and values statements for the ArtWorksTO partnership ○ Evolving and deepening partner relationships amongst City of Toronto, the Toronto Arts Foundation, and OCAD U ○ Has leveraged partnership resources and funding to support complex, multi-component program implementation ○ Has focused public funds and public resources from multiple partners (municipal, arts service, postsecondary) towards complex public employment challenges ○ 22 partnering organizations and/or City divisions submitting expressions of interest for 103 projects since 2020 ○ 19 contract partners facilitating 61 contracts since 2020 ○ 4 core delivery partners 	<p>Weaknesses <i>Internal / program-facing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does not have sustained operational or time-limited project/program funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FSC funding concludes Summer 2022 ○ Funding and resourcing pipeline relies heavily on in-kind investments and matching ○ Corporate and social impact investments, in general but from cultural industries stakeholders in particular, are minimal ● Has struggled to clarify the scope of its impact (youth social development; on the arts and culture sector; on workforce systems and practices, such as employer engagement, local economic development, education and training) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has yet to consolidate an integrated program marketing, partnership development, and knowledge mobilization (or strategy and sustainability) plan ● Limited connections with employment and training stakeholders (colleges, other universities, Employment Ontario Service Providers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limited understanding of available participant/client-facing supports and resources that such stakeholders could provide ○ Limited understanding of benefits to partnering organizations for leveraging such resources for ArtWorksTO participants (e.g., meeting targets, meeting strategic goals, etc.) ● Program infrastructure (initial development, sustained programming, responsive growth) exceeds core project team (3.5 FTE) capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organizational start-up needs continue (policy, data systems, HR processes, etc.) ● The delivery of ArtWorksTO is resource intensive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Several cases of participant burnout/near burnout in which ArtWorksTO may have been one factor ○ Dedicated staffing is elusive in the absence of funding commitments
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 10+ advisory partners○ 9 outreach and recruitment partners supporting community engagement, program marketing and promotions, and applicant coaching● Has cultivated relationships with and leveraged local sector and industry-connected stakeholders<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Corex Creative - founding advisory, creative contracts, application review○ Creative Niche - founding advisory, applicant review○ Desjardins - \$34,000 in funding to support alumni pathways model implementation○ Director's Guild of Canada - Ontario - advisory, supporting alumni pathways entry into Guild Apprenticeships Programs○ Loop: Design for Social Good - founding advisory, creative contracts, application review○ Xvxy Photo - founding advisory, creative contracts○ 100+ total hours of professional services donated in-kind to ArtWorksTO direct program delivery and support● Has identified, and responded to, a persistent need for creative communications intended for specific identity-based and geographic audiences<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 22 organizations and/or City divisions submitting expressions of interest for 103 projects since 2020○ Over 200 OCAD U Continuing Studies course registrations with 12 Business Skills for Creative Professionals Certificates awarded to support technical, professional, and transferable upskilling○ 600+ hours of group, one-on-one participant advising, coaching, and check-in support● Is committed to providing holistic and responsive support to beneficiaries (participants) directed toward sustainable outcomes<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ focused on providing training and employment pathways○ exclusively available to marginalized youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reliant on partners for funding requests instead of using ArtWorksTO as the lead requesting organization
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<p>Opportunities <i>External / contextual</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The value ArtWorksTO does and could continue to contribute to the labour market is becoming clear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employment or talent pipeline initiatives connecting early-career talent with cultural industries and subsector opportunities are in their infancy, but developing in multiple contexts (e.g., ScreenSkills UK; Arts2Work US; Creative Pathways/CreativeBC); including locally (Ontario Specialist High Skills Major - Arts and Culture) ○ Community media initiatives engaging youth are generally keen to partner, share knowledge, and address competition over resources ○ Very recent models emerging in other jurisdictions (US, UK, BC) demonstrate enthusiasm, and offer models to emulate and justify the investment (e.g., the NYC Inclusive Creative Economy Fund) ● There is a consistent and widespread/cross-sector need by organizations (for-profit, nonprofit, government) for creative communications that address particular identity-based and geographic communities for engagement purposes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Several City of Toronto Divisions are particularly dependent on the relationship and community partnership building outcomes that such communications can play ○ Other stakeholders' needs vary, but the labour market in general is increasingly interested in inclusive hiring and fostering equity amongst their workforces ● Nimble and responsive programming seems key to success in achieving youth employment outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focused and customized support for equity deserving participants is key to helping disproportionate underrepresentation in 	<p>Threats <i>External / contextual</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IBPOC and/or 2SLGBTQ+ early-career and emerging creatives are connecting with and supporting creative needs for diverse expression haphazardly, and at rates, wages, and working conditions that may fall below industry standards for decent work and intellectual property <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equitable, non-exploitative working conditions and access to inclusive sector opportunities requires education for <u>both</u> early-career professionals <i>and</i> for creative sector leaders with hiring and decision-making power within their organizations ● Options for funding are unclear, fragmented, and sometimes non-committal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workforce funding faces difficulties understanding ArtWorksTO as a cultural industries workforce initiative, seeing the labour market as largely consisting of contracts and freelancing (rather than full or part time opportunities) ○ Youth employment initiatives tend to favour current policy priorities (e.g., IT, skilled trades, hospitality to a lesser extent) ○ Youth social development and culture and heritage initiatives have not recognized alignment between and amongst expressivity of IBPOC and/or 2SLGBTQ+ youth, social engagement, and early-career development ● At the bleeding edge of arts and culture and workforce development in Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Direction and control" limits innovative funding and financing options available to partners, ArtWorksTO core ○ Impact investing for an inclusive creative economy is nascent/non-existent in Canada at present ○ ArtWorksTO is helping shape pre-apprenticeship for regional/federal apprenticeship pathways/programs that do
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<p>employment, and particularly within decision-making and leadership roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has initiated multiple partnerships to explore a sector convenor role 	<p>not yet exist in Canada (DGC-O GAP excepted)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other organisations fulfill a similar role to that of ArtWorksTO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resource competition is a reality amongst other youth-engaged community media initiatives ○ Resource competition amongst other youth employment initiatives ○ Resource competition amongst diverse employment initiatives
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Additional Context: Impact Outcomes

Although relatively new as a program, ArtWorksTO has been collecting data to build evidence towards medium- and long-term program impact. Some of this is in the Future Skills Centre’s Common Outcomes Framework, but the majority is in the City of Toronto’s Youth Outcomes Framework.

<p>ArtWorksTO, 2020–2021: By the Numbers</p> <hr/> <p>100% of Participants are self-identified as Indigenous, Black, Persons of Colour, and/or 2SLGBTQ+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 26 in Cohort 1 (2020–21); 35 in Cohort 2 (2021–22) ➤ 23 of 26 successfully completing Cohort 1 ➤ 0 Indigenous participants in Cohort 1; 3 in Cohort 2 ➤ 6 Black participants in Cohort 1; 12 in Cohort 2 ➤ 10 Persons of Colour in Cohort 1; 24 in Cohort 2 ➤ 10 IBPOC participants who also identify as 2SLGBTQ+ in Cohort 1; 21 in Cohort 2 <hr/> <p>\$1,250,000+ in project funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ \$1,000,000 from federal funding (Future Skills Centre) ➤ \$250,000 from the City of Toronto ➤ \$50,000 in-kind investments from municipal, for-profit, and creative sector leaders generously providing resources, expertise, and time <hr/> <p>\$244,000 in contract funding to work-integrated learning projects directly to 61 youth who identify as Indigenous, Black, Persons of Colour, and/or 2SLGBTQ+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ \$4000 contracts for a hands-on, work-integrated learning experience for each participant <hr/> <p>\$25,000+ disbursed to equity-deserving professional artists for industry advising, facilitation, and career coaching services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 600+ hours of group, one-on-one participant advising, coaching, and check-in support <hr/> <p>75+ media assets, deliverables, and creative campaigns produced by program participants in digital illustration, digital video, graphic design, photography, social media marketing genres</p>
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Partnerships

- **22** partnering organizations and/or City divisions submitting expressions of interest for **103** potential projects
- **19** contract partners facilitating **61** contracts
- **4** core delivery partners
- **10+** advisory partners
- **9** outreach and recruitment partners supporting community engagement, program marketing and promotions, and applicant coaching
- **22** organizations and/or City divisions submitting expressions of interest for **103** potential projects since 2020

200+ OCAD U Continuing Studies course completions leading towards certification

- **12 Business Skills for Creative Professionals Certificates** awarded to support technical, professional, and transferable upskilling
- Up to **25** additional certificates pending Cohort 2 completion

ArtWorksTO is collecting participant feedback on the following Youth Outcomes questions:

- A. *Did the program help you make progress towards your employment / career goals?*
- B. *Did the program help you get connected to people in the sector / a sector of career interest?*
- C. *Did you meet anyone through the program who you can ask for career advice, career information, or job leads if you need it?*
- D. *Did the program help you to become more confident in your technical skills?*
- E. *What is your current employment status (post-program)?*

Exit interviews were conducted with 23 of 26 participants from the program's 2020–21 cohort, who responded affirmatively to questions A–D.

- Participants are nearly unanimous in their agreement with question A, that the program had a positive impact, whether direct or indirect, on progress towards their individual employment and/or career goals.
- Participants cited the practical limitations of remote program delivery and the inability to meet face-to-face as factors affecting their responses to questions B and C, but were otherwise in agreement that, yes, they were in fact still able to get connected and engage with industry and sector professionals, and/or that they perceive an ability to further engage with them.
- Most were also in agreement with question D, though the interpretation of “technical skills” meant, for some, that the program helped develop confidence in the exercise of narrowly disciplinary media production skills and competencies, while for others it also meant confidence over small and independent business processes.
- Question E spurred a program review of alumni pathways opportunities, and the capacity of the program to practically and reliably collect this information in the months and years following program completion. This review has resulted in plans to develop better infrastructure in order to more effectively observe and track post-program employment status going forward.

Anecdotally, however, many participants are known to have gained employment post-program,

including in additional creative contracts with project host partners, with local nonprofit organizations and for-profit companies, and in other freelance opportunities.

Overhead: Costs Associated with Program Delivery and Management

Program administration—including management and operations—represents a significant expense and is often, however indefensibly, taken by funders as a criteria for making funding decisions. High overhead, despite the justification for its need and attempts to insist on outcomes-based decision-making, may nevertheless act as a strike against funding a program, particularly in a competitive call. This is true with ArtWorksTO as much as it is with any other program.

Many funders continue to budget for a fixed percentage (approximately 10–15%) or a cap on what can be put towards program delivery, management, and administration, including staffing costs. Certain funding streams recognize the necessity for higher overhead costs, particularly where engagement is a recurring challenge or where the consequences of poor delivery are perceived to be overly harmful (whether socially, economically, politically, or otherwise). Youth justice diversion or harm reduction interventions, for instance, may be expected to incur higher overhead because the expertise and staffing needs are greater as the stakeholder context and client needs get more complex. Skills training, by contrast, may be seen as needing more modest overhead because the programs, while possibly *complicated* to implement and manage, are not believed to be nearly as *complex*, and accordingly not in need of such additional overhead support.

Overhead and ArtWorksTO's Feasibility

ArtWorksTO, situated as it is at the intersection of arts and culture, skills development and workforce development, and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, may suffer from being miscast as merely a *complicated*, and not a sufficiently *complex*, program. Coupled with seemingly high overhead costs, this interpretation is tantamount to being perceived as overengineering a solution rather than effectively addressing complex and demonstrated need. It is crucial to recast ArtWorksTO as both complex and valuable, deserving of greater overhead investment (and investment overall). Some considerations of this recasting may include:

1. *Amplifying evidence of high-needs and high-complexity performance amongst outcomes.* Although ArtWorksTO began in response to youth equity and youth social justice initiatives, the population it engages today may not always present as such. A cohort of mostly postsecondary-educated youth creatives, for example, will remain difficult to frame as vulnerable, despite postsecondary debt loads, systemic and intergenerational experiences of racism and discrimination, and limited access to “entry-level” creative sector work, and so on. Accordingly, the case will need to be made and refined, and “champion” funders will need to be sought.
2. *Ensure alignment between program performance and outcomes that matter for funders.* Building evidence that prioritize funder objectives risks pushing any program away from the central scope of its mission—particularly if funding sought is from diverse, cross-sector sources. Sustaining evidence that helps inform internal organizational learning and

accountability while also capturing and disseminating evidence that speaks to funder priorities is difficult and complex, but may be required to enable organizational autonomy.

3. *Refine lines of evidence to clarify the value of program impact on a complex context.* The creative sector economy remains misunderstood, despite having significant economic value and demonstrable sociocultural impact, including beyond and across other realms of human activity.

Scenario Planning: Worst Case to Blue Sky

While these organizational strategies are important, they require a longer timeline than is necessarily available. Coupled with such strategic planning is the need to make difficult decisions—indeed cuts—to allow some version of the program to proceed.

Regardless of whether or not funders using overhead costs as meaningful criteria is appropriate, applicants must take the possibility seriously. Mapping out contingencies based on a realist lens also becomes important.

Based on the current partnership model, ArtWorksTO overhead includes three and a half staffing positions, not including those assumed under direct service lines:

- 1 part-time (0.5 FTE) Program Manager position through Neighbourhood Arts Network
- 1 full-time (1.0 FTE) Project Manager position through Youth Development Unit
- 1 full-time (1.0 FTE) Case Manager (Youth Liaison) position through Neighbourhood Arts Network
- 1 full-time (1.0 FTE) Alumni Manager position through Neighbourhood Arts Network

Under service lines to OCAD U and the Remix Project, there are additional staffing costs budgeted. Administrative funding is provided to OCAD:

- To offer a Portfolio Development and Training program to 125+ potential applicants.
- To enroll 25 students in the OCAD Continuing Studies Non-Credit Certificate in Business Skills for Emerging Artists and Designers.

Administrative funding is provided to the Remix Project:

- To offer participants focused technical advice on their paid contracts as well as general career advice and support.

In order to demonstrate to funders that ArtWorksTO is a feasible program model, one to be continued and one worth investing in, a combination of strategic decisions must be made. The following table lays out three general scenarios for pursuing funding that highlights where and how trade offs might be made, depending on the funding plan, and the potential costs associated with such belt-tightening. [The linked Funding Matrix spreadsheet](#) will help ArtWorksTO leadership decide on ways to target funding, sponsorship, subsidies, and other requests to meet specific program needs and goals.

Scenario A: Worst Case <i>Minimally viable program</i>	Scenario B: Blue Sky <i>Full and ideal implementation</i>	Scenario C: Adaptive <i>Efficient but adaptable</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2 full time staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project manager (admin and operations) ○ Case manager (program) ● 1 part time / contract staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Admin and operations support assistant (or intern) ● Consultants as-needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communications (?) ○ Evaluation (outcomes) ● Services management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordination and planning provided in-kind ○ Volunteer advisory committee <p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opportunity to streamline, pare down to essentials, and identify external champions <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No active alumni support ● Flat structure may not facilitate accountability (internally; to stakeholders) ● Low-engagement would be more sustainable for overhead, but may result in higher attrition, higher turnover, lower retention (hosts or participants) ● High-engagement would be more effective, but less sustainable (higher likelihood of burnout, staff turnover) ● Light on evaluation, social research and development (R&D) ● Overly (and unsustainably) reliant on in-kind activity, resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 4+ full time staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project manager (operations) ○ Program manager (administration) ○ Case manager ○ Alumni manager ○ Employer (contract host) engagement / corporate relations ● 2+ part time / contract staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administrative assistant ○ Operations assistant ○ Communications assistant ○ Recruitment specialist ○ Government relations ○ Grant writing / development ● Consultants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evaluation team (incl. alumni / youth; developmental evaluation) ○ Social R&D team ○ Research impact / knowledge mobilization ● Services management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordination and planning contracted by Program Manager, managed by Project Manager ○ Advisory committee performance managed <p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A more resilient organizational structure ● Better supports innovation, organizational learning, accountability ● Hierarchy may contribute to efficiency and accountability (clearer division of labour) ● More staff would improve organizational resilience through greater, more evenly distributed capacity <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Likely unobtainable from a single funding source (see <i>Recommendation 2</i>) ● Challenging to coordinate across multiple funding sources ● Likely dependent on competitive sources (corporate initiatives; private philanthropy) ● May be difficult to fully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2–3 full time staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project manager (operations and stakeholder engagement) ○ Program manager (admin and alumni) ○ Case manager (program) ● 2+ part time / contract staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Admin and operations support assistant (or intern) ○ Program delivery support assistant (or intern) ● Consultants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research and evaluation team (incl. alumni / youth) ● Services management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordination and planning provided in-kind ○ Volunteer advisory and industry engagement committee <p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustains capacity / institutional knowledge during lean periods ● May be prepared to scale when resources permit <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May still undervalue true program costs, underestimate impact ● May still suffer from staff turnover and low-engagement programming, support ● Priority-setting may prefer delivery over growth (implementation over partnership building, evaluation, etc.)

	implement at any existing partner; may be challenging to coordinate across the partnership	
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Stakeholder Consultations

Consultations were carried out with key stakeholders to identify possible strategic options to secure funding for ArtWorksTO. Key areas of discussion included opportunities for funding included, but were not limited to: partnerships with other City of Toronto departments; positioning a direct operating budget request to Council; prioritizing provincial and federal grant applications; soliciting corporate sector partners; as well as reviewing other possible funding avenues. Consultations were carried out with stakeholders at:

- Youth Development Unit, City of Toronto
- Toronto Youth Partnerships and Employment, City of Toronto
- Economic Development and Culture, City of Toronto
- Ontario College of Art and Design University
- Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development

Analysis of Consultations

The consultations provided insight on the sustainability options for ArtWorksTO and include the following key points.

Direct Funding Ask to City of Toronto Council

A direct request to Council is possible (for operational funding). ArtWorksTO fulfills several City of Toronto mandates including efforts to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion, to encourage youth social development, to cultivate youth cultural engagement, to support local economic development, and to combat anti-Black racism. The program was born out of the Youth Equity Strategy that received endorsement from Council.

However, the current funding environment is tight: during the COVID-19 pandemic funds were redirected to initiatives to help combat the fallout from the pandemic. It remains unclear—particularly given the upcoming municipal election—whether or how funding will shift to continue or redirect such spending. As well, the Youth Development Unit has experienced some leadership changes which has meant that leadership support for ArtWorksTO is unclear.

Moving forward, cultivating leadership support to put forward a council is necessary. As well, should the funding ask go forward, it would need to be a 80/20 split, where 80% of the funding is from outside sources matched with 20% from the City, most likely for administration funds. These outside sources could be through provincial/federal grants, private foundation and corporate donorship.

A Deeper Partnership with Economic Development and Culture

Information gathered from the consultations suggest that there is keen interest from both Youth Development (YDU) and Economic Development and Culture (EDC) to pursue a deeper partnership given the alignment on supporting youth arts and culture as well as workforce development. EDC is already familiar with ArtWorksTO, with several EDC staff supporting creative contracts or sitting on the program's advisory committee. A few areas for deepening strategic partnerships were identified:

- To partner on the decolonization of museum spaces – an initiative that is being pursued by the General Manager for EDC. ArtWorksTO could partner on this initiative by recruiting diverse artists to reimagine how Toronto museums function and/or deliver public programming.
- To partner on shared events; for example, Luminato. A partnership model could be in the form of a certain percentage of the sponsorship dollars that goes to hiring youth creatives from ArtWorksTO to be involved with the festival; for example, commissioning work from artists.
- To further strengthen the partnership, the suggestion was made to develop a slide deck that provides context to ArtWorksTO and clearly outlines where the partnerships with Economic Development and Culture are sought and why, and what the specific partnerships would look like. Once that is in place, the suggestion was made to present at a management/directors meeting to propose a closer EDC collaboration with ArtWorksTO.

Corporate Sponsorship/Donorship

Many corporations have a corporate social responsibility (CSR) mandate and in the past few years diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) has been gaining prominence. The consultations revealed that tapping into corporate funding through CSR and/or DEI would be of benefit to the ArtWorksTO. In particular, a focus on IBPOC recruitment may help to target corporations.

The creation of an industry table was suggested where corporate partners are asked to donate or invest a set amount of funds and in return are provided with the benefits of ArtWorksTO, which has a job ready talent pool as well as wraparound supports for youth in the form of industry advisors and mentorship. A few corporations that were specifically mentioned to reach out to include: [RBC](#), [BMO](#), [CIBC](#), [LUSH](#), [Virgin](#), and [Corus](#). Contacting the [Sponsorship Marketing Council of Canada](#) was also mentioned to seek guidance on which corporations would have a mandate fit with ArtWorksTO and thus reach out to. It was noted that it has to be easy for corporations to understand exactly what ArtWorksTO is about and what it offers. Materials (a “pitch” deck, [business model canvas](#), and/or data dashboard) should be tailored to succinctly communicate the value of the ArtWorksTO model).

Further feedback was provided in terms of defining the specific technical/creative skill set that corporate partners are looking for and then catering to that need. For example, corporate partners may be looking for specific skills in Tik Tok and for ArtWorksTO to provide a matching pool of youth who can provide that expertise. It was argued that ArtWorksTO operates in a saturated market where there are many non-profit organizations (e.g. Remix, POV, Sketch) and post-secondary career initiatives ([ADaPT at TMU](#); [Design4 at OCAD U](#)) that provide parallel and overlapping services. It was

suggested that focusing on certain disciplines or specific skill sets may help to differentiate ArtWorksTO from the others.

It was advised that ArtWorksTO build in specific touch points with corporations. This could be in the form of inviting corporations to events, or to hold specific corporate events to showcase ArtWorksTO. It was noted that OCAD and Youth Employment Partnerships, for example, each do this to attract corporate partners for their internship and employment programs.

Employment Ontario

There is opportunity for social service agencies contracted by Employment Ontario and are part of the City of Toronto portfolio of agencies to take on the job development and placement role for ArtWorksTO. There may be agencies that align with the ArtWorksTO demographic, whether by individual or intersectional identity factors. These agencies are positioned to provide placements in the arts and culture sector. The possibility for this partnership is currently being explored with the hope of a more fulsome discussion at an upcoming Employment Ontario meeting with agencies.

Targeted Outreach to Government of Ontario

The consultations revealed that targeted outreach to the Government of Ontario may help to secure provincial funding grants. It was suggested that ArtWorksTO consider onboarding a governments relations function to its administrative portfolio. It was noted that engaging in direct conversations with the Ministers of Labour, Training and Skills Development as well as Employment Development, Job Creation and Growth may help to secure funds – a strategy that is frequently conducted by organizations. As well, engaging the bureaucratic side, such as the Regional Director for the Central Region of Employment Training and Skills Division, may also help in efforts to secure provincial funds.

It was also suggested that ArtWorksTO visit the Employment Ontario Partners Gateway: <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopq/> to get up to date information on upcoming grants.

Sustainability Recommendations and Discussion

1. Strengthen ArtWorksTO's profile as a singular organization

ArtWorksTO does not currently have a clear or unified narrative of its partnership model.¹ Through a cursory web search, ArtWorksTO appears on multiple partner sites with varying narratives (including those of ArtWorxTO) which may be confusing to the public. This may affect aspects of its internal operations and administration and its public profile, particularly regarding its feasibility as an organization and its potential for impact. With only a program model and without a partnership model (org chart, hierarchy, or similar), prospective government and corporate partners who want to quickly learn key details about the organization and its program model will face challenges doing so.

¹ Three common partnership models are suggested in the following guide: Commonwealth Corporation. (2013). *Partnerships: A Workforce Development Practitioner's Guide (Workforce Development In Practice)*. Commonwealth Corporation. http://commcorp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/resources_2013-05-workforce-development-practitioners-guide.pdf

Stakeholders looking to champion the program or leverage government or corporate relations will continue to encounter difficulty explaining program feasibility.

It is important to position ArtWorksTO as a single organization to the public and to funders, including by consolidating narratives to affirm a singular organization, regardless of whether and how program administration and delivery is managed by distinct service providers (Neighbourhood Arts Network, OCAD U, the Remix Project) to the partnership. A singular ArtWorksTO entity with cohesive and targeted messaging will help to better articulate to the public and to funders the program's purpose, its "value add" to organizations and businesses across economic sectors, the unique nature of the program, and its impact on diverse youth creative workers.

2. Funding Diversification

ArtWorksTO has been fully funded by FutureSkills up until now. In order to ensure the sustainability of the program it is important to diversify funding sources and to prospect for future funding diversification. Funding sources generally fall under three umbrella areas of provincial grants, federal grants, and non-government (including corporate funding, discussed in Recommendation 3 below).

This link [📄 ArtWorksTO Sustainability Planning - Grants](#) identifies provincial, federal, and foundation grants that are prioritized based on alignment of ArtWorksTO purpose and identifies specific narratives to use with each grant. The key grants that ArtWorksTO may want to prioritize are:

Provincial Grants

- Systems Innovation Grant: Ontario Black Youth Action Plan (grant next due August 31, 2022)
- Ontario Skills Development Fund (grant next due <2023 date>)

Federal Grants

- Skills for Success Program (grant next due <2023 date>)
- Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program (grant next due <2023 date>)
- Workplace Opportunities: Removing Barriers to Equity (grant next due <2023 date>)

Non-Government Grants

- Canada Council - Digital Innovation Cultivate and Grow (grant next due <2023 date>)
- Catherine Donnelly Foundation - Adult Education for Social Change (grant next due <2023 date>)
- Catapult Canada - Access Innovation Fund (grant next due <2023 date>)
- Good Foundation (grant next due <2023 date>)
- Inspirit Foundation - Building Equitable Narrative Ecosystems (grant next due <2023 date>)

Building on the recommendation, ArtWorksTO should bring on board someone with development experience to (1) create a prioritized funding application strategy and (2) leverage grant writing

expertise to cultivate organizational capacity. This linked [funding matrix](#) can help guide planning in the interim. The suggested priority for applications are:

- a. Employment and Social Development Canada - Training and Tools stream (ESDC; federal);
- b. Skills Development Fund - Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (Ontario/provincial);
- c. DEI/EDI, equity, inclusion, and/or anti-racist funding greater than \$100,000 per year;
- d. Other skills development / workforce development funds greater than \$100,000 per year;
- e. Private foundation funding greater than \$100,000

Securing federal/provincial/non-government grants will help to develop a case to City of Toronto Council for base operational funding for ArtWorksTO. As learnt from the stakeholder consultations, there is more likelihood of a Council request if outside funding sources are sought. Most likely this split would be 80/20 - 80% coming from outside funding and 20% being requested from the City of Toronto.

3. Identify Prospective Corporate Sector Partners

A common strategy that has not been used so far but that should be strongly considered is partnerships with the corporate sector. ArtWorksTO's focus on equity deserving youth in its workforce development partnership may be highly appealing for a number of reasons.

For example, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) has become top of mind for many corporate organizations, especially in the past few years. The sector is looking to support programs that serve BIPOC communities and often the funding comes with fewer conditions than government and foundation grants. ArtWorksTO is well positioned to secure corporate donorship and should build a corporate outreach strategy to target key corporations where there is a mandate alignment.

One such approach could be the development of an industry table where corporate partners pay a set amount to receive the benefits of ArtWorksTO - a talented pool of creative BIPOC youth to choose from as well as the necessary wrap-around supports to ensure a successful internship experience for the youth and the employer. The industry table could also function as an advisory table to inform the current market needs, which could help to tailor the OCAD courses provided to ArtWorksTO participants so that participants are graduating with marketable skills.

It is important to keep in mind that developing and nurturing corporate partnerships does require the necessary expertise and skill set, and should be undertaken by an entity that has this experience. A suggestion offered in the stakeholder consultations and one to consider is to host corporate events where select potential partners are invited to learn more about the benefits of partnering with ArtWorksTO and features the work of participants.

To help nurture the relationships, it is advised that a consistent communications strategy is developed with corporate partners to keep them apprised of the key impacts of the program and to continue to seek opportunities for additional internships and full-time positions for alumni.

4. Amplify Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Program Focus

ArtWorksTO is a program that, at its core, serves youth who are Indigenous, Black, Persons of Colour, and/or 2SLGBTQ+. The program must continue to explore ways to amplify this feature in its messaging. This should be done through a coordinated and strategic communications campaign that identifies and focuses customized messaging to particular audiences. Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) has gained prominence across sectors over the past few years and has led to new funding streams by provincial and federal governments, as well as charities and foundations. Messaging ArtWorksTO as an EDI program will help to position the program well with the new EDI fundings streams and create new sources of funding for the program.

With funding streams focused on workforce development, ArtWorksTO may want to emphasize that it serves BIPOC youth to help differentiate the program from other applicants. Funders may also choose to prioritize the ArtWorksTO application given that the program serves marginalized and underserved communities; however, this is dependent on the funding objectives.

5. Strengthen Partnerships Across City of Toronto Divisions

The Youth Development Unit of the City of Toronto is a core and founding partner of ArtWorksTO. Other City divisions have partnered since the program's inception, allocating a range of resources, modest to significant, into such contributions as contract hosting, public sector expertise, and program resourcing and funding. Through ArtWorksTO, YDU has worked to forge additional relationships across the City, such as with Economic Development and Culture (EDC), with whom a partnership has been formed around their ArtWorxTO program. ArtWorxTO—as distinct from ArtWorksTO—is the City of Toronto's commitment to investing in public art. EDC's ArtWorxTO has hosted several ArtWorksTO projects, commissioned several of its program participants, and has senior staff on ArtWorksTO advisory.

With EDC, as with other divisions, there remains further opportunity for ArtWorksTO, via YDU, to deepen partnerships across the City institution, as well as to integrate further into common youth social development, local economic development, workforce development, social procurement, and other City platforms, strategies, and initiatives. Our stakeholder consultations (as well as past consultations for the program's alumni pathways research) has revealed that there is interest from multiple divisions: these need to be strengthened, and to have specific and coordinated resources to support them.

One avenue for this development, in addition to the above-mentioned funding and corporate engagement, is for the Youth Development Unit to approach the People and Equity Division to explore ways the program can better communicate its value as an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion initiative. Doing so may help to gain integrated City support of the People and Equity Division and bolster a case to Council to continue to fund the program.