

Attachment 1

Background

In 2013 the Edmonton Arts Council implemented a new process for determining annual City of Edmonton operating grants for large institutions that combine a production/presentation organization with the direct responsibilities associated with the ownership/operations of a major building.

This process consolidates support previously provided through other existing Operating grants programs. The review and assessment process included written submissions, meetings and discussions with the organization, the Edmonton Arts Council, and City of Edmonton staff.

Final recommendations were ratified by the Edmonton Arts Council Board.

Support is intended to provide a predictable base of operating assistance for both the arts company, its breadth of programming, and the operations of the facility.

These grants represent the largest single investments that the EAC manages on behalf of the City of Edmonton. After several years of static grant amounts, this year's recommendations represent modest increases for the ESO, Citadel and Fringe Theatre Adventures.

Recommended Support 2018

Citadel Theatre	\$1,070,000
Edmonton Symphony Orchestra / Francis Winspear Centre for Music	\$ 1,070,000
Art Gallery of Alberta	\$ 1,125,000
The grant through this process does not take into account the \$250,000 project funding committed by City Council as part of the 2017 budget.	
Fringe Theatre Adventures	\$ 385,000
Total Recommended	\$ 3,650,000

Cornerstone Discussions 2018: Outcomes and Themes

This is the sixth year of the Cornerstone Arts Operating stream. The process has matured, and continues to be well received. Generally, the organizations are open to the opportunity to discuss challenges, plans and issues.

The three groups downtown in the Arts District are concerned about weathering the coming year or two until the construction in and around Churchill Square is complete. They anticipate short-term challenges for their audiences due to the combination of traffic, parking, and accessibility impacts of the development. The road access limitations also effect the ability of school groups to attend during the day due to school bus accessibility and parking.

The Art Gallery of Alberta is set to deliver another balanced financial year. Attendance continues to be a concern, which they are moving to address with the support of City Council directed project funds (which are not accounted for in this recommendation). Significant focus on acquiring and showing Indigenous art with support from the Canada Council for the Arts was noted.

The recent changes of artistic and executive leadership was a positive point of discussion with the Citadel Theatre. Of continued concern is the need for facility maintenance and renewal, and the need for capital fundraising. The Citadel manages the oldest facility of the Cornerstone group, which now houses several theatre companies and is well used by many other Edmonton groups.

The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and Winspear Centre for Music are considered as one entity for the purposes of this grant. They continue to be in a stable and positive position. The conversation was well focused on how they consider their place in the community and their connection with their audiences. Construction of the planned expansion at the rear of the facility is still pending investment from the Province.

Fringe Theatre Adventures' 2017 Festival was very successful. They have set themselves high goals in attracting and retaining new audiences outside the Festival in order to activate the theatre spaces year-round. The Fringe outlined ongoing capital work, including LED lighting and similar initiatives, and the need to work towards a comprehensive capital plan for the facility.

The ESO, Fringe and Citadel are all recommended for investment that is marginally higher than 2017.

The total grant budget recommended is \$3,650,000 (2017: 3,529,000).