Ontario Arts Council
Performance Measures

December 2014

ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Preface to December 2014 Report

2014-15 is a transitional year for OAC's performance measures, with the launch of OAC's new strategic plan, *Vital Arts and Public Value*, taking place half-way through the fiscal year in October 2014. We are currently working on developing revised performance measures in the context of this new strategic plan.

In the meantime, OAC has selected the following key performance measures and related indicators from our current performance measures framework to highlight for 2014-15:

- Supporting the lives, careers and work of Ontario artists by protecting direct grant dollars going to individual artists.
- Supporting the creativity, vitality and health of Ontario's arts organizations by providing stable operating funding to arts organizations.
- Supporting the renewal that contributes to a healthy arts sector by making room to support new organizations in OAC's operating grant programs.
- Helping to ensure that Aboriginal, francophone, culturally diverse, new generation and regional artists/arts organizations are recognized for the value they provide by supporting these priority groups through a competitive, peer assessment granting process.
- Demonstrating organizational accountability and effectiveness by committing to administrative costs of no more than 11% of OAC's total budget.

This report continues to track our results for 2013-14 against the existing indicators and targets for these performance measures.

OAC Performance Measures

Introduction

At the Ontario Arts Council (OAC), we track and report on our activities on many fronts. Every year we prepare statistics on the size, distribution and reach of our grants to Ontario artists and arts organizations. In addition, we are committed to tracking our ongoing progress on the specific strategies and themes laid out in our 2008-2013 strategic plan, *Connections and Creativity*.

In 2008-09, we decided to take our commitment one step further by identifying measures to help us to better understand and assess our overall performance as an organization.

Our aim was to develop a small number of high-level performance measures for OAC that would be relevant for a number of years. We chose OAC's vision statements from our strategic plan as a framework for the performance measures because these statements capture OAC's broad, high-level, desired outcomes. Organizing the performance measures around the vision statements gives us a link to our mission – the "why" we are doing what we do. In this way, these performance measures are intended to work hand-in-hand with the tracking of our progress on the specific strategies and themes outlined in the strategic plan – the "what".

What we confirmed in the process of developing our performance measures is that many of our key activities – such as the funding of individual artists and the provision of ongoing operating support – are fundamental expressions of OAC's commitment to and support of our vision for Ontario. We learned that our vision statements are more than compelling words – they are real goals that it is OAC's mission to help achieve. We are serious about making a contribution to this vision. The performance measures outlined in this document are our guide and our commitment to assessing OAC's progress on this front.

This is our fifth report on OAC performance measures.

OAC VISION STATEMENTS

We envision an Ontario where:

- The lives, careers and work of individual artists flourish.

- Arts organizations are creative, viable and healthy.

- People of all ages and in all regions actively engage and participate in the arts.

- Aboriginal, francophone, culturally diverse, new generation and regional artists and arts organizations are recognized for the value they provide to all of Ontario's people, cultures and creative sectors.

- The creativity, innovation and excellence of Ontario's artists and arts organizations in all their diversity are seen and acclaimed locally, nationally and internationally.

Summary of the Process

As mentioned, we used OAC's vision statements as the framework for the performance measures.

For each vision statement, we thought about what kinds of things would indicate to us that the vision statement had been achieved. We then reviewed our list and used several criteria to select appropriate indicators as true measures of OAC's performance. (See box: About Indicators.)

Once we identified our list of draft indicators we began the process of setting numerical or directional targets for each indicator and choosing the appropriate benchmark year – along with calculating the benchmark figures. During the process of setting targets some of the indicators were revised or changed if it became clear that there was no "right answer" against which to measure OAC's performance. In other words, these were good statistics for us to track elsewhere, but were not the best indicators for our performance measures.

We chose 2006-07 as the standard benchmark year for the indicators, as this was the year before OAC began receiving a series of budget increases from the Ministry of Culture – and so would give us baseline actual figures to track the impact of the increases. For a couple of indicators, data were not available back to 2006-07, so we identified a different benchmark year.

Next, we calculated the most current figures available for each indicator to compare with our benchmarks. The source of our data includes OAC's own grant statistics, as well as the financial and statistical information submitted by our grant recipients in their operating grant application forms and project grant final reports. *(Note: There is generally a 2-year time lag on the availability of information on actual financial and statistical figures from organizations receiving OAC grants. For example, confirmed actual figures for 2012-13 are currently being received by OAC with the organizations' 2014-15 operating applications.)*

These performance measures were approved by the OAC Board of Directors at its meeting on April 29, 2009.

About Indicators:

- Indicators should be "real" and meaningful to OAC (i.e. should be things that we feel are true measures of our performance against our desired outcomes.)

- We need to feel confident that performance on the indicator can be attributable to OAC. For this reason, some external indicators that relate to the vision statement, but were outside OAC's control or influence, were not included in this exercise.

- Each indicator must relate to and be a measure of the related value statement. We agreed that the chosen indicators do not tell the "whole story" about the statement, but that together they are key elements that capture the essence of the vision statement and that do suggest overall movement or progress toward the statement/outcome. This is what makes them indicators.

- It's important that each item we choose is in fact an indicator – and not just a good statistic. This means that there must be a "yardstick" for each indicator – a "right answer" or target – against which we can measure performance.

- We must be able to articulate the conceptual link between the indicator and the statement.

A Note on Attribution

Establishing attribution for performance measures can be a challenge for funders like OAC that achieve their goals largely through supporting the work of grant recipients and partners.

We faced this challenge as we went through the process of selecting indicators for each of the vision statements. In every discussion we asked ourselves: Is progress on this indicator within OAC's direct control? If not, can we reasonably claim that OAC made a contribution to the outcome through our policies, activities and actions?

Along the way, we discarded some indicators over which OAC has no control. The final indicators include a mix of those within OAC's direct control and those to which we make a more indirect – but still real – contribution. For the latter, we have explained our rationale for claiming some attribution for the results.

VISION STATEMENT 1:

The lives, careers and work of individual artists flourish.

Indicator:	% of OAC's grant $ going directly to individuals
Connection to Vision:	Contribution to artists' incomes helps artists flourish Grants to individual artists contribute directly to artists' incomes, and provide recognition and validation of an artist's professional practice. In these ways, grants help the lives, careers and work of individual artists flourish. As the only provincial agency in Ontario that supports individual artists, OAC is committed to protecting a significant portion of our grants budget for direct support of individual artists.
Target:	Maintain at 2006-07 benchmark rate of 17%

RESULTS:

TARGET	BASELINE 2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
17%	17%	17%	17%	19%	18%	18%	18%	18%

PROGRESS-TO-DATE: **Met**

OAC chose a "percent of granting budget" target to better track our success at protecting individual artists' share of our grant dollars at a time when our overall budget was changing. We have met our target each year of maintaining grants to individual artists at or above 17 percent of our granting budget. It is worth noting, however, that the total grant dollars going to individuals increased from $6.3 million in 2006-07 to $9.6 million in 2013-14.

VISION STATEMENT 2:

Arts organizations are creative, viable and healthy.

Indicator:	**% of OAC granting budget going to operating grants**
Connection to Vision:	Operating grants directly contribute to the viability and health of arts organizations
	When not-for-profit organizations are asked by funders what they need the most to survive and thrive, ongoing support for core operations is usually at the top of the list. Yet operating grants are very rare in the broader funding world. As the only Ontario agency that gives ongoing operating grants to arts organizations, OAC holds a unique role and responsibility. OAC is committed to providing significant and stable operating funding to arts organizations to directly support the creativity, vitality and health of Ontario's arts organizations.
Target:	At least 65%

RESULTS:

TARGET	BASELINE 2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
At least 65%	70%	71%	70%	68%	68%	68%	69%	68%

PROGRESS-TO-DATE: **Met**

OAC chose a "percent of granting budget" target to better track our success at maintaining the share of our grant dollars going to operating grants at a time when our overall budget was changing. We have met our target each year of ensuring operating grants are at or above 65 percent of our granting budget. It is worth noting, however, that the total grant dollars going to operating grants increased from $25.6 million in 2006-07 to $36 million in 2013-14.

VISION STATEMENT 2:

Arts organizations are creative, viable and healthy.

Indicator:	# of new organizations getting OAC operating grants
Connection to Vision:	A "healthy" arts sector is renewed through new organizations In addition to our focus on individual arts organizations, OAC also monitors the health and vitality of the arts sector as a whole. We believe that one sign of a healthy and vital arts sector is the emergence of new organizations. In many cases, these new organizations are indicators of renewal as the sector evolves to reflect new art forms, new generations and the changing demographics of the province. As these new organizations emerge and prove themselves, OAC is committed to make room for them in our operating support programs. In this way we will continue to directly support the renewal that contributes to a healthy arts sector.
Target:	Each year there will be new organizations receiving operating support

RESULTS:

TARGET	BASELINE 2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Each year there will be new organizations receiving operating support	21 new (5% of all operating organizations)	32 new (7% of all operating organizations)	55 new (11% of all operating organizations)	42 new (8% of all operating organizations)	40 new (7% of all operating organizations)	40 new (7% of all operating organizations)	8 new (1% of all operating organizations)	12 new (2% of all operating organizations)

PROGRESS-TO-DATE:

Met

Over the past few years, OAC has experienced high levels of demand for operating support from new organizations. It has become increasingly difficult to meet this demand after several years of a flatline budget. As a result, beginning in 2012-13, OAC changed its policy on new operating applicants so that all organizations seeking operating funding for the first time can apply only in the first year of a program's three-year funding cycle. This reduced the number of operating programs accepting first-time applications in 2012-13, which in turn reduced the number of first-time operating recipients that year. In addition to helping OAC to better manage the high demand for first-time operating grants, this new policy also has the advantage that all operating applicants (new and returning) are assessed as a group.

It is worth noting that a total of 250 new organizations received operating funding from 2006-07 to 2013-14, with first-time grants to these recipients totaling $4.7 million.

VISION STATEMENT 4:

Aboriginal, francophone, culturally diverse, new generation and regional artists and arts organizations are recognized for the value they provide to all Ontario's people, culture and creative sectors.

Indicator:	% of OAC grant dollars going to each priority group
Connection to Vision:	Fact of OAC funding and recognition by peers (jurors/advisors) = recognized value
	Artists and arts organizations that receive grants from OAC have made it through a competitive process where they are assessed by peers (jurors and advisors). In this way, the fact of OAC funding is itself an indicator that the value of these artists and arts organizations has been recognized by their peers. In addition, OAC funding will help these artists and arts organizations to raise the quality and visibility of their work – which help build their recognized value within the community.
	While by no means a perfect guide, the census provides an objective context within which to better understand the activity that OAC is seeing involving these groups.
Target:	**Francophone:** Exceed representation of Ontario artists in the census by 4% **Aboriginal:** Exceed representation of Ontario artists in the census by 5% **Culturally Diverse/People of Colour:** Representation more closely corresponding to % of artists in the census **New Generation:** Representation more closely corresponding to % of artists in the census **Regional:** Representation more closely corresponding to % of artists in the census

RESULTS:

TARGET BY PRIORITY GROUP	2006 CENSUS % of ON Artists	BASELINE 2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
		Operating	Operating	Op/All	Op/All	Op/All	Op/All	Op/All	Op/All
Francophone: Exceed % in census by 4%	3%[1]	5%	5%	5%/7%	5%/7%	5%/7%	6%/7%	6%/7%	6%/8%
Aboriginal: Exceed % in census by 5%	1%[2]	2%	2%	2%/5%	2%/6%	3%/6%	3%/6%	3%/6%	3%/6%
Culturally Diverse/People of Colour: More closely corresponding to % in census	14%	3%	3%	4%/8%	4%/8%	4%/9%	4%/8%	4%/9%	4%/9%
New Generation: More closely corresponding to % in census	22%[3]	n/a[3]	n/a[3]	n/a[3]	1%/3%	1%/6%	1%/6%	1%/7%	1%/7%
		All	**All**	**All**	**All**	**All**	**All**	**All**	**All**
Regional: More closely corresponding to % in census	61%[4]	42%	41%	42%	42%	42%	41%	43%	42%

PROGRESS-TO-DATE: **Met for some priority groups; not yet met for others**

We have already met our targets for the francophone and Aboriginal priority groups, and are making some progress on the culturally diverse and new generation priority groups – however there's still work to be done. The slow rate of change in the overall percentages partly reflects the fact that it takes time for organizations new to OAC to move from project grants into the larger operating grant stream where they should eventually account for a greater proportion of total grant dollars. For example, 24% of project grant dollars went to culturally diverse artists and arts organizations in 2013-14 – a proportion that greatly exceeds the census target for this priority group. And since 2006-07, 15% of the organizations entering the operating stream for the first time (i.e. new operating recipients) were culturally diverse. Proportions of project grant dollars met or exceeded the census targets for most of the other priority groups as well: francophone (14% of 2013-14 project grant dollars); Aboriginal (16%); and new generation (22%). Also, it's important to note that the distribution of our grants by priority group generally reflects the relative proportion of applications we receive from each group – making OAC's outreach efforts a continuing priority to help increase applications from each group.

Our applications from, and grant dollars to, the regions have remained relatively consistent over the past seven years, and are well below our target. However, the census figure on which our target is based represents the regional distribution of individual artists only, and therefore does not reflect the high concentration of large arts organizations located in Toronto. For this reason, the census target, while useful as a general benchmark, is imperfect as an absolute goal. It is worth noting that half (51%) of the organizations entering the operating stream since 2006-07 have been regional, and half (49%) of the new operating grant dollars over this period went to regional organizations.

BEYOND THE VISION STATEMENTS

Additional Key Performance Measures and Related Indicators:

OAC also looked at performance measures beyond the five vision statements.

One addition is a performance measure of accountability and operational capacity (see below).

OAC is also exploring performance measures in the following areas:
- client/stakeholder satisfaction; and
- a healthy internal working environment for staff.

MEASURE: ACCOUNTABILITY/OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

Indicator:	% administration expenditures to total budget
Context:	As one indicator of organizational accountability and effectiveness, OAC has committed to administrative costs of no more than eleven percent of OAC's total budget. This reflects our commitment to invest the main part of our budget (89%) directly in grants and services for artists and arts organizations.
Target:	Not to exceed 11%

RESULTS:

TARGET	BASELINE 2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Not to exceed 11%	11%	11%	11%	10%	11%	11%	12%	12%

PROGRESS-TO-DATE: **Did not meet**

OAC's base budget has not increased since 2009-10. However, costs have continued to rise, including the administrative impact of the 53% increase in the number of applications since 2006-07. As a result, we slightly exceeded our target for this indicator this year.

If you have questions, please contact:
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The Ontario Arts Council is the province of Ontario's primary funding body for professional arts activity. Since 1963, the OAC has played a vital role in promoting and assisting the development of the arts and artists for the enjoyment and benefit of Ontarians.