Identification of Leading Equity Funding Practices to Support People with Disabilities

A Review of the Literature

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Executive Summary

To increase the accessibility and equity of its funding practices, SaskCulture wants to investigate, learn about, and ultimately incorporate promising practices within the organization when it comes to equitable funding for people with disabilities. To achieve this, SaskCulture retained the services of Left Turn Right Turn (LTRT) to conduct a literature review of existent and documented practices which have increased the equity and access of other cultural and funding organizations. Specifically, what are similar organizations doing to increase opportunities for people with disabilities when it comes to accessing funding?

This report documents the methodology for conducting this literature review, the key findings from the literature, as well as promising practices, opportunities, and considerations for SaskCulture as they work to become more inclusive of and accessible to people with disabilities across their operations.

The literature indicates that increasing equity in funding requires a holistic conception of funding, as well as proactive equity measures around the whole funding framework. That is, it is not just a matter of who gets funded and how they apply for funding. It is the entire funding apparatus and the culture surrounding it that needs to be considered from an equity lens. Equity and access must be applied to all facets and levels of funding, all means of funding, and in all funding policies to be meaningful and effective.[1]

Reviewing the literature, the following emerged as key areas of consideration when it comes to advancing equitable funding practices, for both people with disabilities and other equity-denied groups:

- What is funded.
- Who is funded.
- How and with whom relationships are developed with cultural organizations, communities, advocacy organizations, and cultural contributors.

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[1] American Planning Association, "Equity Diversity, and Inclusion Vision, Mission, and Strategy," https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/document/APA-Equity-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Strategy-2020.pdf, 2019.

- Evaluation and success criteria for funding.
- Accessibility, equity, and accountability criteria for funding applicants and recipients.
- Adjudication of funding programs.
- Communication of funding opportunities to stakeholders, before, during, and after the funding cycle.
- Impacts of funded initiatives on surrounding communities.
- Beneficiaries of funded initiatives.

The following report elaborates on these concepts and suggests opportunities for SaskCulture to increase equity in funding for people with disabilities.

*A note on language. Throughout this report, the term "cultural contributor" is used as a shorthand to describe people who participate in the creation and execution of cultural activities. LTRT recognizes that SaskCulture typically does not fund cultural contributors directly, but rather organizations who support cultural activities. The exception is Creative Kids, a program which provides children and youth with artistic and cultural experiences. SaskCulture funds the administration of this program. Predominantly, SaskCulture supports cultural contributors only by extension. There are many roles within the cultural ecosystem, some of which may be supported directly (organizations) or indirectly (artists, heritage workers, multiculturalism workers) by funding from SaskCulture. For the sake of brevity and consistency, the term "cultural contributor" has been chosen as the preferred shorthand for this broad group of people.

Introduction

SaskCulture

SaskCulture describes itself as "a non-profit, community-based, volunteer-driven provincial cultural organization." Using a portion of funds derived from Sask Lotteries, SaskCulture works to direct those funds to support cultural activity in the province of Saskatchewan. Working with a network of community professionals who provide guidance and expertise to SaskCulture on shaping the state of arts and culture, SaskCulture leverages the funds raised and allocated through Sask Lotteries to offer:

- A wide range of funding programs
- Province-wide cultural promotions
- A voice for culture with governments and decision-makers
- Linkages to a diverse cultural network
- Many different organizational development opportunities

SaskCulture's mandate is to nurture a thriving cultural community, increase awareness of the value of culture and cultural activity, as well as to increase participation by all peoples in Saskatchewan's diverse cultural experiences.

SaskCulture and Equity Funding Practices for People with Disabilities

Related to its mandate, SaskCulture is working to create more equitable funding practices for all people. SaskCulture is investigating how it can increase opportunities for equity-denied groups through its funding practices. Among those groups are people with disabilities. This literature review explores emerging and promises practices in equity funding as documented across a range of sources. Many of these practices relate to equity-denied groups more broadly as there is limited literature dedicated to equity funding for people with disabilities specifically. However, these tenets and practices, combined with disability-specific accessibility considerations, are easily applied to the specific priorities and needs of people with disabilities.

Definitions

The following are terms which appear throughout this report and their associated definitions within the context of this report:

Disability - According to the Accessible Canada Act, disability "means any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society."[2]

This definition of disability acknowledges the embodied experience of disability as well as the external barriers that make the experience of disability more or less impactful. That is, it is the lived experience of disability in the mind and/or the body interacting with societal circumstances that create barriers for people with disabilities. As Benedicte Ingstad and Susan Reynolds put it in their work on disability and culture, "Everywhere there are people who must live with biological [differences] that cannot be cured and that inhibit, to some extent, their ability perform certain functions. But the significance of a deficit always depends on more than its

> *As Benedicte Ingstad and Susan Reynolds put it in their work on disability and culture, "Everywhere there are people who must live with biological [differences] that cannot be cured and that inhibit, to some extent, their ability perform certain functions. But the significance of a deficit always depends on more than its biological nature; it is shaped by the human circumstances in which it exists."*

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[2] Accessible Canada Act, S.C. 2019, c10, "Disability," https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/a-0.6/FullText.html#:~:text=disability%20means%20any%20impairment%2C%20including,person's%20full%20and%20equal%20participation

biological nature; it is shaped by the human circumstances in which it exists."[3] This framing of disability aligns with the Social Model of Disability which challenges the idea that disability is a problem within the person and their body that needs to be corrected, and instead frames disability as an experience that is influenced by external social factors. For example, a person who is deaf experiences a reduction in or absence of the perception of sound. This is the embodied experience of deafness. However, it is the interaction of that embodied experience with a society that privileges sound as a source of information that results in barriers for deaf people. Therefore, "disability is an experience of exclusion or disadvantage created when society fails to accommodate and include people who have impairments."[4]

> *"Disability is an experience of exclusion or disadvantage created when society fails to accommodate and include people who have impairments."*

Accessibility/access - The ability to engage fully and equitably with people, spaces, services, programs, technologies, products, devices, and policies free from barriers.

Barrier - Anything that might hinder people with disabilities' full and equal participation. Barriers can be architectural, technological, attitudinal, based on information or communications, or can be the result of a policy or procedure.

Equity - "Denotes fairness and justice in process and in results. Equitable outcomes often require differential treatment and resource redistribution so as to achieve a level playing field among all individuals and communities. This requires recognizing and addressing barriers to provide opportunity for all individuals and communities to thrive."[5]

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[3] *Disability and Culture*, eds. Benedicte Ingstad and Susan Reynolds Whyte, "Preface", (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), ix.

[4] Canada Council for the Arts, "Context Brief: Deaf and Disability Arts – Social Model of Disability", https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/funding-decisions/decision-making-process/application-assessment/context-briefs/deaf-and-disability-arts-practices

[5] McGill University, "Definitions – Equity", https://www.mcgill.ca/equity/resources/definitions

Cultural Contributor(s) - A person or persons who participate in and support a cultural ecosystem, including but not limited to artists, heritage workers, multicultural workers, funders, volunteers, donors, and arts, culture, heritage and multicultural organizations.

Impact of Cultural Funding

For an organization to be accessible, accessibility must be embedded into all practices across the organization. Accessibility applies to all things. This literature review examines how just one pillar, namely funding practices, of SaskCulture's operations can be more accessible. Nonetheless, it is an important pillar.

> *"Cultural equity explicitly values the unique and collective cultures of diverse communities and supports their existence in physical spaces, in public policies and investment, and in expression in civic and spiritual life."*

Cultural initiatives play an important role in shaping the very nature of communities. Cultural equity, including equitable funding practices, matters because it is both an investment in and reflection of the community it serves. So, what is cultural equity, exactly?

According to the organization Policy Link, "Cultural equity explicitly values the unique and collective cultures of diverse communities and supports their existence in physical spaces, in public policies and investment, and in expression in civic and spiritual life."[6] They can go on to explain that cultural equity is more than lip service and optics. True cultural equity, "explicitly addresses legacies of structural racial [and other] discrimination and remedying of institutionalized norms that have systemically disadvantaged categories of people based on race, ethnicity, customs, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, and socioeconomic or citizenship status."[7]

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[6] Policy Link, "Building a Cultural Equity Plan," https://www.policylink.org/our-work/community/arts-culture/plan, accessed March 2024.

[7] Policy Link, "Building a Cultural Equity Plan," https://www.policylink.org/our-work/community/arts-culture/plan, accessed March 2024.

As the Americans for the Arts foundation put it:

> *Cultural equity embodies the values, policies, and practices that ensure that all people — including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion — are represented in the development of arts policy; the support of artists; the nurturing of accessible, thriving venues for expression; and the fair distribution of programmatic, financial, and informational resources.[8]*

"Equitable development is informed by culture, recognizing shared, interdependent values and practices that shape the quality of our lives…In public spaces, art forms are the manifestations of the places where people live and reimagine their lives, and where they gather to advance justice for all."

Equity and inclusion are, therefore, more than matters of belonging. They are matters of economic and social justice. Cultural equity, "reverses economic disinvestment to ensure healthy and thriving communities where people feel a sense of belonging."[9] Who and what gets invested in determines what a community looks like, who can use the space and how, and whether there are places and opportunities for people within that community. The outcomes of cultural investment are, in effect, visible

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[8] Americans for the Arts, "Cultural Equity," https://www.americansforthearts.org/about-americans-for-the-arts/our-statement-on-cultural-equity#:~:text=Cultural%20equity%20embodies%20the%20values,%2C%20citizenship%20status%2C%20or%20religion%E2%80%94, accessed March 2024.

[9] Policy Link, "Building a Cultural Equity Plan," https://www.policylink.org/our-work/community/arts-culture/plan, accessed March 2024.

manifestations of how a community defines itself. And how a community defines itself shapes the lives of the people who live there. As scholars Kalima Rose, Milly Hawk Daniel, and Jeremy Liu explain, "Equitable development is informed by culture, recognizing shared, interdependent values and practices that shape the quality of our lives…In public spaces, art forms are the manifestations of the places where people live and reimagine their lives, and where they gather to advance justice for all."[10] In terms of SaskCulture's mandate, the primary value of cultural investment lies in its ability to reflect, promote, and celebrate the people of a community. There is also value in the way such investment can enrich, uplift, beautify, and transform a community.

Thinking beyond SaskCulture's specific mandate, investment in cultural funding is more than the promotion of culture itself. It is an investment in the people and places that create and inform culture. In fact, investment in culture is increasingly becoming a cornerstone of economic development strategy.[11] And no wonder. Between 2020-2021, culture (broadly defined) accounted for between 2.3% and 2.7% of Canada's total economy GDP to the tune of $50+ billion dollars.[12] Considering the tertiary industries that facilitate the promotion of cultural works (e.g. construction to erect new cultural institutions; manufacturers of culture-related tools; maintenance of public infrastructure in and around places where cultural engagement takes place, etc.), the economic impact of strong cultural investment is even greater.[13] Consider also that these statistics represent a time when cultural economies were at a low ebb due to the impacts of the

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[10] Kalima Rose, Milly Hawk Daniel, and Jeremy Liu, "Creating Change Through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer," (Oakland: Policy Link, 2017), 5.

[11] Carolyn G. Loh, Amanda J. Ashley, Leslie Durham, and Karen Bubb, "Our Diversity is Our Strength: Explaining Variation in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusions Emphasis in Municipal Arts and Cultural Plans," *Journal of the American Planning Association* Vol. 88, no. 2 (2022): 192.

[12] American Planning Association, "Equity Diversity, and Inclusion Vision, Mission, and Strategy," https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/document/APA-Equity-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Strategy-2020.pdf, 2019.

[13] Statistics Canada, Provincial and Territorial Cultural Indicators, 2021. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/230626/dq230626a-eng.htm, June 26, 2023 "Culture GDP is the economic value added associated with culture activities. This is the value added related to the production of culture goods and services across the economy, regardless of the producing industry. Culture jobs are the number of jobs that are related to the production of culture goods and services."

COVID-19 pandemic.[14] Cultural engagement is still rebounding post-pandemic, but it is on the rise. Culture is becoming an increasingly significant area of investment across Canada. In fact, cultural development plans are becoming a staple of municipal and other planning initiatives

because of the economic value and social enrichment culture provides to a given community.[15] Cultural initiatives, then, have tangible economic impacts on the communities in which they take place.

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All this to say that the way SaskCulture distributes the funds under its discretion matters. And it matters in ways that go beyond mere representation in the culture itself. Seeing one's culture come to life or seeing oneself reflected in someone else's interpretation of culture is important. But it's the dividends of equitable funding, such as economic and social uplift, that are the biggest return on investment. Increasing access and equity in cultural funding for people with disabilities is, therefore, a meaningful pursuit.

Disability Culture

The inclusion of people with disabilities in the cultural landscape is significant for reasons beyond equitability. Because disability is both an embodied and a social experience, disability itself can manifest as culture.[16] Disability is both a product of the

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[14] Statistics Canada, Provincial and Territorial Cultural Indicators, 2021. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/230626/dq230626a-eng.htm, June 26, 2023

[15] Carolyn G. Loh, Amanda J. Ashley, Leslie Durham, and Karen Bubb, "Our Diversity is Our Strength: Explaining Variation in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusions Emphasis in Municipal Arts and Cultural Plans," *Journal of the American Planning Association* Vol. 88, no. 2 (2022): 192.

[16] *Disability, Culture, and Identity*, eds. Sheila Riddell and Nick Watson, (London: Routledge, 2003).

culture in which it exists, but also has the capacity to reflect, comment on, and contribute to the culture, as well as exist as its own distinct culture. Disability in the culture and disability as culture are separate but interrelated concepts, elaborated on below.

Disability in the Culture

As disability studies scholars Alexis Buettgen and Rachel Gorman explain, "Disabled people are integral parts of our families, communities, and cultures."[17] The presence of people with disabilities is common to all communities and cultures, though their role within the culture is influenced by time and place.[18] Henri Jacques Stiker describes the different conceptions, perceptions, and treatment of disabilities across time and culture, making clear that the experience of disability from Western Antiquity to the birth of modern rehabilitation in the 20th century has undergone many evolutions. However, the existence of disabled people has persisted throughout. Buettgen and Gorman note that, "In many cultural contexts, especially western capitalist national contexts, disabled people face discrimination in many aspects of social and cultural life, including education, the labor market, healthcare, media representation, family life, and the community."[19] They go on to say that, "In mainstream cultural contexts, disability is understood overwhelmingly

> *"In mainstream cultural contexts, disability is understood overwhelmingly as a problem of individual biology, and often as an individual tragedy. In fact, there is no such thing as a self-evident, essential 'disability' that exists outside of its social, cultural, and historical context. Disability is therefore always about culture."*

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[17] Alexis Buettgen and Rachel Gorman, "Disability Culture", in eds. M. Zangeneh, A. Al-Krenawi, *Culture, Diversity and Mental Health - Enhancing Clinical Practice, Advances in Mental Health and Addiction* (Springer Nature, 2019), 39.

[18] Henri Jacques Stiker, *A History of Disability* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

[19] Alexis Buettgen and Rachel Gorman, "Disability Culture", in eds. M. Zangeneh, A. Al-Krenawi, *Culture, Diversity and Mental Health - Enhancing Clinical Practice, Advances in Mental Health and Addiction* (Springer Nature, 2019), 39-41.

as a problem of individual biology, and often as an individual tragedy. In fact, there is no such thing as a self-evident, essential 'disability' that exists outside of its social, cultural, and historical context. Disability is therefore always about culture."[20] Put another way, there is no fixed understanding of disability. What we mean when we say "disability" depends so much on the culture in which disability is considered and experienced. Understanding that "people in very different settings understand and react to impairment" in very different ways is important. The "historical changes in conceptions and practices related to disability" are significant to understanding both disability and the cultural contexts

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in which it exists.[21] The ways in which people experience, process, reflect on, and make meaning of disability is both meted out on an individual and personal level, on a collective level among people with disabilities, and a socio-cultural level relative to the time and place in which disability is experienced.[22] [23]

Buttegen, Gorman, and Stiker's work focuses on western culture. Others such as Steven E. Brown have pointed out that "Moving to an international perspective the word 'disability' has different connotations to diverse cultures just as the word 'culture' does." He ventures, "Worldwide there may be hundreds, if not thousands, of definitions of

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[20] Alexis Buettgen and Rachel Gorman, "Disability Culture", in eds. M. Zangeneh, A. Al-Krenawi, *Culture, Diversity and Mental Health - Enhancing Clinical Practice, Advances in Mental Health and Addiction* (Springer Nature, 2019), 39-40.

[21] *Disability and Culture*, eds. Benedicte Ingstad and Susan Reynolds Whyte, "Preface", (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), ix.

[22] *Inclusion, Disability, and Culture*, eds. Santoshi Halder and Lori Czop Assaf, (Springer, 2017).

[23] Abbas, J., Church, K., Frazee, C., & Panitch, M. (2004). Lights…camera…attitude! Introducing disability arts and culture. Toronto, ON: Ryerson RBC Institute for Disability Studies Research and Education.

disability and I would venture the same applies to the idea of culture." He concludes that, "Any word that has such historical and contemporaneous significance will create controversy and interest."[24]

Taken altogether, this means that:

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1. *Disability exists and persists across time and place.*

2. *Disability is both a product of and capable of reflecting the wider culture.*

3. *Conceptions of 'disability' and 'culture' are not fixed. They differ across time and place.*

4. *Nonetheless, disability and culture are always interrelated.*

5. *Because disability and culture are inherently interrelated, disability and its many representations (e.g. in media, literature, performance, visual arts) are significant and valuable aspects of culture.*

Disability as Culture

The way in which disability has emerged as a culture within the culture—a subculture—has been influenced by many factors, not the least of which include wider social movements. In the North American context, disability rights movements were heavily involved by civil rights movements seeking racial justice. Scholars note that, "Disability social justice movements have from their inception, criticized the ways that disabled

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[24] Steven E. Brown, "What Is Disability Culture?" *Disability Studies Quarterly* Vol 22:2 (2002).

people are misrepresented and ignored in mainstream arts, culture, and media."[25] Significantly, "Over the past 20 years, disability social justice movements have shifted from a focus on legal rights and policy change toward a greater emphasis on cultural production."[26] Recognizing that greater visibility and presence in cultural production reinforces or even increases visibility and presence on all fronts, disabled activists have turned to the arts as an outlet for activism, expression, self-actualization, and pushback against the dominant culture. Put another way, "Disabled artist/activists have been articulating an aesthetic that challenges social norms as well as the boundaries of the artistic disciplines that they are engaging in."[27] Buettgen and Gorman argue

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that, "At the heart of the disability arts movement has been the belief that negative and absent representations of disabled people are intrinsic to disability oppression, and the belief that the democratization of art production is necessary for us to generate positive representations of disabled people."[28] The concept of disability culture, "recognizes that disability justice movements and disability rights movements are social and cultural in

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[25] Alexis Buettgen and Rachel Gorman, "Disability Culture", in eds. M. Zangeneh, A. Al-Krenawi, *Culture, Diversity and Mental Health - Enhancing Clinical Practice, Advances in Mental Health and Addiction* (Springer Nature, 2019), 40-41.

[26] Alexis Buettgen and Rachel Gorman, "Disability Culture", in eds. M. Zangeneh, A. Al-Krenawi, *Culture, Diversity and Mental Health - Enhancing Clinical Practice, Advances in Mental Health and Addiction* (Springer Nature, 2019), 40-41.

[27] Alexis Buettgen and Rachel Gorman, "Disability Culture", in eds. M. Zangeneh, A. Al-Krenawi, *Culture, Diversity and Mental Health - Enhancing Clinical Practice, Advances in Mental Health and Addiction* (Springer Nature, 2019), 41.

[28] Alexis Buettgen and Rachel Gorman, "Disability Culture", in eds. M. Zangeneh, A. Al-Krenawi, *Culture, Diversity and Mental Health - Enhancing Clinical Practice, Advances in Mental Health and Addiction* (Springer Nature, 2019), 41.

nature, and that collectively, these movements may produce new 'cultures' or ways of understanding and being in the world."[29]

It is important not to conflate the term "disability" with "culture" altogether. Yes, disability is a product of and capable of reflecting the culture. However, it is also a very real and embodied experience. Disability exists within and across the spectrum of humanity, regardless of time and place. Blindness, for example, exists outside of any cultural context. However, the experience of blindness is informed by the culture in which a person experiences it. Likewise for progressive physical disabilities, down syndrome, and so on. Therefore, "The term disability culture can be misleading in that it can imply that disability stands in for culture, or that disability is one culture in a multicultural society."[30] Disability culture is as diverse as the people with disabilities who contribute to it. Because disability is a universal experience—that is that it can be and is experienced by all types of people, albeit in distinct ways—it is necessarily a multifaceted and intersectional one. The fact is that, "people from many cultural, linguistic, and national backgrounds have contributed to the international development of disability social justice movements and disability arts."[31]

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[30] Alexis Buettgen and Rachel Gorman, "Disability Culture", in eds. M. Zangeneh, A. Al-Krenawi, *Culture, Diversity and Mental Health - Enhancing Clinical Practice, Advances in Mental Health and Addiction* (Springer Nature, 2019), 41.

[31] Alexis Buettgen and Rachel Gorman, "Disability Culture", in eds. M. Zangeneh, A. Al-Krenawi, *Culture, Diversity and Mental Health - Enhancing Clinical Practice, Advances in Mental Health and Addiction* (Springer Nature, 2019), 40-41.

It is not just time, place, language, and nationality which influence that experience of disability and the culture of disability. Disability itself is a factor. While no two experiences of disability are alike, people with similar disability types are more likely to have shared experiences. Having established that disability forms a part of intersectional identities, it stands to reason that the experience of a racialized queer deaf person is going to be distinct from a white cis-het deaf person. But barriers to linguistic access may be common to both people. They share a common cultural reference point even if the totality of their experiences is different. And from those common cultural reference points emerge disability subcultures. If disability is a subculture of the dominant culture, then deaf culture[32] [33] [34] [35], crip culture[36] [37], and mad culture[38] [39] are disability subcultures.

> *Deaf, crip, and mad cultures are just a few subcultures that members as well as cultural commentators have consciously attempted to define. None are monolithic nor easily defined.*

There are countless and difficult to define disability subcultures. Deaf, crip, and mad cultures are just a few subcultures that members as well as cultural commentators have consciously attempted to define. None are monolithic nor easily defined. However, each

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[32] Alexis Buettgen and Rachel Gorman, "Disability Culture", in eds. M. Zangeneh, A. Al-Krenawi, *Culture, Diversity and Mental Health - Enhancing Clinical Practice, Advances in Mental Health and Addiction* (Springer Nature, 2019), 41.

[33] Paddy Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture: In Search of Deafhood* (Buffalo: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 2003).

[34] Eds. Irene W. Leigh, Jean F. Andrews, Raychelle L. Harris, and Topher Gonzalez Avila, *Deaf Culture: Exploring Deaf Communities in the United States* (San Diego: Plural Publishing, 2022)

[35] Carol Padden and Tom Humphries, *Inside Deaf Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

[36] Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

[37] Carrie Sandahl, "Queering the Crip or Cripping the Queer?: Intersections of Queer and Crip Identities in Solo Autobiographical Performance," *A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* Vol. 9:1 (2003), 25.

[38] Brady James Forrest, "Crip Feelings/Feeling Crip," *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* Vol. 14:1 (2020).

[39] Jenny Miller, "Creating a Mad Culture," *Hurricane Alice Foundation* Vol. 3:1 (1985).

is informed by intersecting histories among group members, common cultural reference points, and deviations from the dominant culture. They also involve a reclamation of language and identity from the dominant culture. Deaf culture, for example, "both predates and is contemporaneous with disability culture, and is deeply rooted in shared sign language and, often, shared experiences of growing up in schools for the Deaf, which have often also been residential. Some Deaf community members and organizers consider themselves to be part of a cultural group and do not consider themselves disabled—in this way, Deaf culture is related to, but in no way reducible to the idea of disability culture."[40]

Crip Culture borrows its name from the term "crippled", which was once a pejorative term for people with physical disabilities. The shorthand 'crip' is a reclamation of the term by people with physical disabilities which celebrates and validates their existence.[41] Crip culture is highly informed by queer culture. As Carrie Sandahl explains of crip and queer cultures, "Their primary constituencies, sexual minorities and people with disabilities, share a history of injustice." Specifically, "both have been pathologized by medicine; demonized by religion; discriminated against in housing, employment, and education; stereotyped in representation; victimized by hate groups; and isolated socially, often in their families of origin." Important to note is that, "Both constituencies are diverse in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, political affiliation, and other respects and therefore share many members (e.g., those who are disabled *and* gay), as well as allies."[42] It should be noted that this diversity and intersectionality is true for all disabilities, not just physical disabilities and/or those who identify with a crip identity. In terms of crip and queer identifying communities, "both have self-consciously created their own enclaves and vibrant subcultural practices."[43]

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[40] Eds. Irene W. Leigh, Jean F. Andrews, Raychelle L. Harris, and Topher Gonzalez Avila, *Deaf Culture: Exploring Deaf Communities in the United States* (San Diego: Plural Publishing, 2022)

[41] Robert McRuer, Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

[42] Carrie Sandahl, "Queering the Crip or Cripping the Queer?: Intersections of Queer and Crip Identities in Solo Autobiographical Performance," A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies Vol. 9:1 (2003), 25.

[43] Carrie Sandahl, "Queering the Crip or Cripping the Queer?: Intersections of Queer and Crip Identities in Solo Autobiographical Performance," A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies Vol. 9:1 (2003), 25.

Like crip culture, the term mad culture[44] [45] is one of reclamation. Formerly a term used to denigrate people living with mental illness or neurodivergence, 'mad' has been reclaimed as a word which validates the complexity and diversity of the human mind, and which acknowledges the history and lived experience of mad-identifying people. Mad culture is informed by mad studies which, "proposes 'a critical discussion of mental health and madness in ways that demonstrate the

> *Formerly a term used to denigrate people living with mental illness or neurodivergence, 'mad' has been reclaimed as a word which validates the complexity and diversity of the human mind, and which acknowledges the history and lived experience of mad-identifying people.*

struggles, oppression, resistance, agency and perspectives of Mad people to challenge dominant understanding of 'mental illness'."[46] One of the terrains in which these dominant understandings of mental illness are challenged is artistic expression. As Ekaterina Metchitailova explains of the relationship between madness and art, "madness should retain its aura of mystery, and it should always leave room for different views and stories…where there is still room to laugh about one's madness, and where some 'patients' want to offer different stories, different perspectives, different views on 'madness'." She notes that, "The art world is a world which still offers us these alternatives…The art world also demonstrates that we, as human beings, will always remain attracted to the mystery of madness. People are fascinated by madness, by what it hides. The art world is the world where madness belongs, where it should

[44] Brady James Forrest, "Crip Feelings/Feeling Crip," *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* Vol. 14:1 (2020).

[45] Jenny Miller, "Creating a Mad Culture," *Hurricane Alice Foundation* Vol. 3:1 (1985).

[46] Ekaterina Metchitailova, "The Mystery of Madness Through Art and Mad Studies," *Disability & Society* Vol 34:9 (2019).

belong."[47] The alignments and misalignments between experiences, conceptions, and expressions of madness make for fertile cultural ground.

What deaf, crip, and mad culture all have in common is that they are forged in similar crucibles, and propelled by a desire for reclamation, validation, celebration, and exploration of what it means to be deaf, crip, and/or mad. Other disability types, cultures, and communities no doubt share these characteristics, regardless of whether their subcultures are as well-defined and studied. Therefore, disability culture and the subcultures that exist within it are important and meaningful. As disability arts advocate Tony Doyle puts it, "A confident and forward thinking disability culture perspective is a powerful mechanism with which to voice the issues, legitimise our collective claims within health and sociopolitical contexts, as well as the arts… A disability culture movement can move the thinking behind the artistic practice, social relations and service provision by, with and for people with a disability beyond the simplistic notion of people with a disability being `included' in these structures rather than driving them."[48]

> *"A confident and forward thinking disability culture perspective is a powerful mechanism with which to voice the issues, legitimise our collective claims within health and sociopolitical contexts, as well as the arts…"*

Disability Culture vs. Cultural Activities

It is important to distinguish between disability as a culture and cultural activities by and for people with disabilities. As well established above, disability is many things. It is an embodied experience. It is an interaction between people with disabilities and the environments in which they live. It is a product of the culture and capable of reflecting the culture. And it is a subculture. Just because disability is enmeshed with the culture and is a subculture in its own right does not mean that every initiative or action

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[47] Ekaterina Metchitailova, "The Mystery of Madness Through Art and Mad Studies," *Disability & Society* Vol 34:9 (2019).

[48] Tony Doyle as quoted in Steven E. Brown, "What Is Disability Culture?" *Disability Studies Quarterly* Vol 22:2 (2002).

undertaken by disability communities is inherently a cultural activity, at least not insofar as SaskCulture's mandate is concerned. SaskCulture's mandate is to nurture a thriving cultural community, increase awareness of the value of culture and cultural activity, as well as to increase participation by all peoples in Saskatchewan's diverse cultural experiences through its funding initiatives. Therefore, a disability-led health clinic, for example, would not qualify for funding as an organization under SaskCulture's mandate. Though it may be led by people who identify with disability culture and serve disability communities, its purpose is to provide access to healthcare, not to promote cultural awareness and cultural activity. Likewise, an employment services organization for people who are deaf, or transitional housing for people living with mental health and substance use disorders are not engaging in cultural activities, even though their beneficiaries may identify with deaf or mad culture. While these are worthy initiatives that no doubt enrich the communities that they serve, they are not cultural activities in the sense that they do not increase awareness of or increase participation in cultural activity. Therefore, the observations and recommendations in this report are specific to equity funding practices which serve the promotion of cultural activities, specifically those by and for people with disabilities.

Research Plan and Methodology

This literature review represents one in a series of steps to improve equity and access within SaskCulture. The purpose of this literature review is to learn about equitable funding models and to determine which models or aspect of their approach might be useful to increase accessibility of SaskCulture's funding practices. This applies to both who and what is being funded, as well as to how organizations/persons apply for and access funding. In addition to identifying promising practices, this review considers leaders in the field with whom SaskCulture may consult, collaborate, or otherwise develop a relationship. These findings are captured in Appendix B: List of Programs and Organizations, appended as a separate document to this report.

In scope for this research is sourcing, collecting, analyzing, and reporting on relevant literature as concerns funding models (including internal organizational culture, application processes, funded applicants, and funding distribution mechanisms) for non-profit and cultural organizations. Also in scope for this review is identifying and cataloguing leaders in equity funding practices as relates to the above.

Out of scope for this review is determining which funding model or aspects of models are most appropriate for SaskCulture. LTRT has identified and reported on promising practices as identified in the literature, including the strengths of those approaches and their benefits to equity-denied groups. It is up to SaskCulture to determine the ways in which identified models and practices best align with SaskCulture's needs and operations. In other words, LTRT has not determined nor designed a specific funding model for SaskCulture. LTRT has reported on promising practices identified through research to help SaskCulture make an informed plan about how to improve the equity and access of its funding moving forward.

Inclusion Criteria

For this literature review, LTRT adopted a broad and inclusive definition of "literature". There is value to reviewing and including published, peer-reviewed literature. However, for this review to be inclusive, representative of the state of the field, and reflective of the practical realities of cultural funding organizations, LTRT broadened its scope of

literature. This literature review is supported by a wide range of literature including grey literature (government, policy, and position papers); organizational and advocacy websites; articles, blogs, and other forms of writing by people invested in and involved in the cultural community; and oral sources such as vlogs. In this case, we are using "oral" to mean knowledge that is not written down. This includes signed languages as well.

LTRT began its search using Google Scholar. We used the following search terms and variations (e.g. arts accessibility; accessible arts) on these terms:

- ***Equity funding***

- ***Equitable funding***

- ***Accessible funding***

- ***Cultural funding***

- ***Cultural access***

- ***Arts organizations funding***

- ***Arts, people with disabilities***

- ***Cultural access, people with disabilities***

- ***Equity funding, people with disabilities***

- ***Equity planning***

- ***Equity policy***

- ***Arts accessibility***

From there, we identified and reviewed the initial literature, and we capitalized on the references within that literature to lead us to other sources.

We also searched for culture organizations within Canada to learn more about their policies and practices. We relied on our knowledge of the cultural sector in Canada from our past work with clients in the sector, and we leveraged that knowledge to learn about and investigate other relevant organizations.

We also conducted a broader Google search using the terms listed above, which led us to some of the less academic sources such as organizational websites, news media, blogs, and vlogs. As is often the case, one source would link or point us to another source, which deepened our pool of sources.

We prioritized the inclusion of sources created or heavily influenced by members of equity-denied groups, in particular people with disabilities.

We focused on sources produced in the last 10 years to ensure that practices reviewed are relatively current and remain relevant. The majority of sources were produced within the last 5 years. However, some older sources were included if they were foundational to the field of study, for example in the case of helping us to define disability as well deaf, crip, and mad culture.

Note that not all sources reviewed are necessarily quoted or referenced directly in this report. They are, however, captured in Appendix A: List of Documents Reviewed, appended as a separate document to this report. This is not to say they didn't inform the report. But for reasons of length and clarity, not all sources were commented on directly.

Exclusion Criteria

We excluded from our review sources that are more than 10 years old, unless they were exceptional and spoke to things not captured in newer sources.

We did not exclude but gave lesser weight to sources that are not inclusive of the perspectives of people with disabilities or other equity-denied groups.

We excluded sources that are only tangentially related to the work that SaskCulture is undertaking. Though not a large volume of highly relevant literature, there was sufficient volume to conduct this review.

In our initial research plan, we had listed as exclusion criteria the exclusion of any sources that undermined or were exclusionary of equity-denied groups, or which otherwise contain inflammatory, defamatory, or hateful speech. Thankfully, we did not encounter these types of sources under our search parameters.

Recording and Tracking

We have created a log of identified sources in a style similar to an annotated bibliography. The log is in a spreadsheet format and contains the following headings:

- Title of source

- Author of source

- Date of publication

- Organizational affiliation (if any)

- Link to the source

- Description of the source, including key themes

- Key words

Reporting

Having completed our review, the findings are documented below. The findings reported consider the availability of literature, the state of the field of equity funding overall, and most importantly, the key findings and promising practices related to equity funding. Rather than identify specific fundings models, we have identified common themes and promising practices which SaskCulture can extrapolate to their specific context.

Findings

Availability of Literature

Our scan revealed that there is limited academic literature on equity funding in the Canadian context. However, there are a number of Canadian cultural organizations doing promising work in equity generally. Their equity, strategic, and accessibility plans are included in this review.

There is more academic literature on cultural equity in the American context, some of it related to equitable funding. However, more of the literature represents a subset of other fields, for example municipal and planning policy and how cultural investment factors into that. In other words, there is less academic literature on equity funding models specifically, especially as relates to cultural organizations. There is more literature about the significance of cultural investment and how equity factors into that. These sources proffered useful considerations for the equity work SaskCulture is undertaking, and these considerations are reflected in the key findings below.

As was our initial assumption, there were as many or more valuable sources outside of traditional academic literature that informed our findings. These include policy and position papers; cultural organizations' websites; cultural organizations' strategic, equity, and accessibility plans; journalism; webinars; and vlogs. The practices and insights described therein are highly informative to this review.

Many of the sources reviewed focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion more broadly. Fewer focused on equity and accessibility for people with disabilities. Who are counted among equity-denied groups depends on context. In the Canadian context, equity-denied groups generally include women, black and other racialized persons, Indigenous persons, and people with disabilities. The unique considerations for people with disabilities are often subsumed under the umbrella of the needs and priorities of other equity-denied groups. Although, there is an

> *The unique considerations for people with disabilities are often subsumed under the umbrella of the needs and priorities of other equity-denied groups.*

overlap of priorities among people with disabilities and other equity-denied groups, especially considering that people with disabilities are often members of multiple equity-denied groups. Therefore, these sources were applicable and informative. There are things that this type of literature doesn't account for, however, such as physical, architectural, and other barriers for people with disabilities. We have accounted for these gaps in the literature through our commentary throughout this report. We have made specific mention of the unique barriers faced by people with disabilities, and therefore the unique considerations around equity that apply to them.

Themes

When it comes to equitable funding practices, the following emerged as key themes, and areas of consideration in reviewing the relevant literature:

- *What is funded.*

- *Who is funded.*

- *How and with whom relationships are developed with cultural organizations, communities, advocacy organizations, and cultural contributors.*

- *Evaluation and success criteria for funding.*

- *Accessibility, equity, and accountability criteria for funding applicants and recipients.*

- *Accountability measures for funding recipients.*

- *Adjudication of funding programs.*

- *Communication of funding opportunities to stakeholders, before, during, and after the funding cycle.*

- *Impacts of funded initiatives on surrounding communities.*

- *Beneficiaries of funded initiatives.*

- *Disability as a culture vs. cultural activities*

These themes are elaborated on below.

What is Funded

When it comes to increasing equity in funding, it is important to consider not just who is being funded, but what is being funded. Increasing access to funding for people with disabilities and other equity-denied groups isn't just a matter of ensuring that money gets into the right hands. It's a matter of ensuring that what gets funded is relevant, meaningful, and accessible to people with disabilities and other equity-denied groups.

> *"[T]he lion's share of public arts [funding goes to] support…large institutions and projects that predominantly reflect the expression of [w[hite and Euro-American culture."*

Scholars writing on creating change through arts and equitable development note that, "[T]he lion's share of public arts [funding goes to] support…large institutions and projects that predominantly reflect the expression of [w[hite and Euro-American culture."[49] Reconceptualizing what counts as art and culture and where and how these

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[49] Kalima Rose, Milly Hawk Daniel, and Jeremy Liu, "Creating Change Through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer," (Oakland: Policy Link, 2017), 5.

> *Projects that conceive of culture from a traditional and institutional lens may not resonate with all people… They may also be presented in exclusionary ways.*

expressions of art and culture take place is important to increasing equity in cultural funding.[50]

For example, projects that conceive of culture from a traditional and institutional lens may not resonate with all people. Museums, for example, tend to conceive of culture in static terms. Exhibits exist in fixed places and are oriented within a specific built environment. The contents of these exhibits can be esoteric. They may also be presented in exclusionary ways, relying on a high level of literacy in the form of plaques and other signage to understand the exhibits. Some people may not be able to physically access certain cultural spaces. Or they may experience barriers to other elements of exhibitions such as visual elements if they are blind or have low vision, auditory elements if they are deaf or hard-of-hearing, or contextual elements if they have intellectual, cognitive, or literacy disabilities. Other more traditional forms of art and culture, such as theatre, may pose similar barriers. Barriers to the built environment for people with physical disabilities are common in spaces such as auditoriums. And the medium in which live theatre is presented often poses barriers for people with sensory disabilities. Some of the venues are also cost prohibitive. Since people with disabilities experience unemployment and underemployment at rates much higher than their abled counterparts, economic barriers are a significant factor to access for many people with disabilities.

Because of these and other barriers, people with disabilities may be excluded or disengaged from traditional forms of culture, both as creators and consumers of that culture. Because they have

> *Because they have historically been excluded from these spaces, they may not consider these spaces as friendly or meaningful spaces in their lives, even if they have the means to access them.*

[50] Melissa Bean interviewing Caron Atlas, Director of Arts & Democracy Project, New York University, November 4, 2014.

historically been excluded from these spaces, they may not consider these spaces as friendly or meaningful spaces in their lives, even if they have the means to access them. These venues and avenues of expression may not encapsulate the needs, experiences, and/or culture of people with disabilities. Signing deaf people, for example, have a distinct language and culture that is reflected in specific visual art forms.[51]

As such, it is important to consider the very nature of funding opportunities. What is being funded? How is 'culture' defined? Will people with disabilities see themselves and their communities reflected in funding opportunities? Will people with disabilities be drawn towards or turned off from funded initiatives and the organizations who back them? The very nature of culture and of what counts as fundable projects needs to be considered with an equity lens as a starting point to increasing access.[52]

> *The very nature of culture and of what counts as fundable projects needs to be considered with an equity lens as a starting point to increasing access.*

It is important to also acknowledge that, due to barriers to access they face, people with disabilities often spend a significant amount of time and energy engaged in advocacy work, whether for themselves or on behalf of their communities. They may not have the same privilege to be able to devote time and resources to cultural pursuits as their abled counterparts. They may need different resources and/or more support to be able to both engage with and contribute to cultural activities. This is not to dismiss the groundbreaking and important work of disabled culture bearers in Canada.[53] This is to acknowledge the different level of effort required by people with disabilities when it

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[51] Canada Council for the Arts, "Deaf and Disability Arts Practices in Canada," https://canadacouncil.ca/research/research-library/2021/02/deaf-and-disability-arts, 2020.

[52] Eliza Chandler, Sean Lee, Lisa Fast, and Megan Johnson, "Insiders/Outsiders of Canadian Disability Arts," *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences* vol. 32, no. 47 (2023), 1-2. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10387487/pdf/S2045796023000598a.pdf

[53] E.g. Black Triangle Arts Collective; Corpuscule Danse; The Deaf Culture Centre; The Canadian Cultural Society for the Deaf; Tangled Art and Disability; National accessArts Centre; CRIP RAVE Collective; and the Disability Collective. See Appendix B for more details on these and other organizations.

comes to making time, place, and space for themselves to participate in cultural activities.

Related Recommendations
Consider funding distribution that allows for flexibility in the use of the funds by recipients. According to the World Institute on Disability, the freedom of discretionary spending is helpful to non-profit and disability organizations, which are typically underfunded.[54] Discretionary spending would allow funded organizations to use funds to the maximum benefit, per the needs of the organization and the initiative it is trying to fund.
Consult with the public and people with disabilities about their priorities for the allocation of funds.[55]
Work to increase the representation of people with disabilities across SaskCulture's operations.
Ensure that recruitment, interviewing, assessment, onboarding, training, and advancement procedures within SaskCulture are accessible to and inclusive of people with disabilities.
Review and refine SaskCulture's accommodations, accessibility, and/or DEI policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive of and responsive to the needs of people with disabilities.

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[54] Charlotte Stasio, World Institute on Disability, "Why Unrestricted Funds Are Important for Nonprofits," https://wid.org/why-unrestricted-funds-are-important-for-nonprofits/#:~:text=Unrestricted%20funds%20support%20the%20overall,operation%20of%20a%20nonprofit%20organization.

[55] Policy Link, "Building a Cultural Equity Plan," https://www.policylink.org/our-work/community/arts-culture/plan, accessed March 2024.

> Allocate funding and staff within SaskCulture for internal equity work[56] and external equity projects.[57] Ensure staff represent equity-denied groups.[58]

> Engage SaskCulture staff and partners in continuous learning about diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. This may include training, mentorship, listening circles, context briefings[59], or other activities.[60]

Who is Funded

Related to the question of what is being funded is the question of who is being funded. This question is particularly complex because the question of 'who' is layered. Firstly, when funding is being distributed, which people and organizations have access to those funding opportunities? Specific to SaskCulture's role of funding organizations, how does this money ultimately make its way to cultural contributors? Do cultural contributors need to be previously connected to or affiliated with funded institutions (e.g. museum, national arts council, academic institution) to access funding? What kinds of connections or other social capital do people need to both be aware of and have access to funding opportunities? Because of the barriers people with disabilities have historically faced in education, employment, and community integration, they may not have the same social capital as their abled counterparts. Skills developed, knowledge

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[56] National Arts Centre, "National Arts Centre Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism 2023-2026 Action Plan," https://nac-cna.ca/en/about/plan/equity-diversity-inclusion-anti-racism

[57] Policy Link, "Building a Cultural Equity Plan," https://www.policylink.org/our-work/community/arts-culture/plan, accessed March 2024.

[58] National Arts Centre, "National Arts Centre Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism 2023-2026 Action Plan," https://nac-cna.ca/en/about/plan/equity-diversity-inclusion-anti-racism

[59] Context briefs: "The Council makes use of context briefs on emerging, minoritized and less-understood arts communities and practices, and disseminates these to assessment committees. These briefs provide background information on historical and cultural contexts, help assessors understand and consider the barriers faced by different communities, and reinforce the Council's equity principles and practices." Canada Council for the Arts, "Equity Policy," December 2023, https://canadacouncil.ca/-/media/Files/CCA/Corporate/Governance/Policy/CCA/CCA-Equity-Policy.pdf, 10.

[60] Telefilm, "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2024," https://telefilm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2022-2024-Telefilm-Canada-Equity-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Action-Plan.pdf, 3.

acquired, and relationships formed through both informal and formal opportunities are the basis for social capital.

Some people with disabilities have more social capital than others. Certain people with disabilities are afforded more privilege because of their type of disability, the support networks they have access to, their socioeconomic background, and other aspects of their identity such as race and gender. Therefore, when considering equity funding initiatives, it is important to disentangle equity from diversity and inclusion. Often, equity initiatives are steeped in the language of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) broadly, with emphasis placed on diversity to the detriment of equity. It is important to consider not only which groups of people are represented and supported by cultural funding initiatives, but also to consider who within these groups are represented.

For example, white people with physical disabilities from affluent backgrounds may have more access to opportunities than racialized persons with intellectual disabilities. As scholars Amanda J. Ashley, Carolyn G. Loh, Karen Bubb, and Leslie Durham put it, "We found that these values [DEI] are only occasionally guiding principles and that most plans are written from the perspective of the majority (usually White) with very little information about demographic or socioeconomic context. Many talk about being inclusive or diverse without ever identifying the marginalized or low-resourced groups in the community."[61] People with disabilities who are low income, racialized, aging, or members of LQBTQ+ communities, for example, exist within a specific demographic context that is intersectional and informative to their level of access.[62]

All this to say that increasing equity and access to funding for people with disabilities needs to go beyond merely increasing the representation of people with disabilities in funded initiatives. It requires an examination of who is funded, through which institutions

[61] Amanda J. Ashley, Carolyn G. Loh, Karen Bubb, and Leslie Durham, "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Practices in Arts and Cultural Planning," *Journal of Urban Affairs* Vol. 44, 4-5 (2022): 727.

[62] Carolyn G. Loh, Amanda J. Ashley, Leslie Durham, and Karen Bubb, "Our Diversity is Our Strength: Explaining Variation in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusions Emphasis in Municipal Arts and Cultural Plans," *Journal of the American Planning Association* Vol. 88, no. 2 (2022): 192.

and through what means, and who among people with disabilities are still being left behind when it comes to funding opportunities.[63]

Related Recommendations
Ensure that the processes and procedures for applying for funding are accessible. This may include providing applications materials in multiple formats (large print, Braille, digital, ASL/LSQ, plain language); accepting applications in multiple languages and formats (including video applications of signed languages, and spoken languages); providing application assistance to people with disabilities; reconceptualizing the application process to be more inclusive and flexible.
Create an equity plan that incorporates specific information about the equitable distribution of arts and cultural resources. Highlight the concrete actions that will increase SaskCulture's capacity to find, communicate with, develop relationships with, and fund organizations/work by and for people with disabilities.[64]
Address other known barriers in grant application processes to enable arts and culture organizations who serve underserved communities to successfully compete for funds.[65]

How and with Whom Relationships are Developed with Cultural Organizations, Communities, Advocacy Organizations, and Cultural contributors

Related to the question of who is being funded is the question of relationships. That is, how are relationships developed with cultural organizations, communities, advocacy

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[63]Leah Sandals speaking to Eliza Chandler, "8 Things Everyone Needs to Know about Art and Disability," March 2016, https://canadianart.ca/features/7-things-everyone-needs-to-know-about-art-disability/

[64] Carolyn G. Loh, Amanda J. Ashley, Leslie Durham, and Karen Bubb, "Our Diversity is Our Strength: Explaining Variation in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusions Emphasis in Municipal Arts and Cultural Plans," *Journal of the American Planning Association* Vol. 88, no. 2 (2022): 192.

[65] Policy Link, "Building a Cultural Equity Plan," https://www.policylink.org/our-work/community/arts-culture/plan, accessed March 2024.

organizations, and the cultural contributors they support? And with whom are these relationships being developed? This is particularly relevant for SaskCulture, as SaskCulture typically does not fund individual cultural contributors, but organizations and initiatives who distribute their allotments to cultural contributors and projects. The broader and more inclusive SaskCulture's relationships and reach are, the better chance that people with disabilities and other equity-denied groups will have access to funding.

Relationships matter when it comes to funding. Having a relationship with a funding organization means having first-hand knowledge about the funding opportunities that are available. It also means having familiarity with the funding organization's practices, procedures, and mandates. Being familiar with how an organization works and what its priorities are is important for crafting a winning proposal and securing funding. Although most funding organizations evaluate funding proposals according to criteria that is meant to promote objectivity and fairness, the reality is that people who have strong relationships within the arts and funding community know how to draft proposals that align with these criteria.

Whether conscious or not, funding organizations and cultural institutions speak and respond to a certain type of language. It is the language of insiders who know the right jargon that will resonate with funders and adjudicators. People and organizations who face barriers to building relationships with influential organizations may be excluded from opportunities. This exclusion may be due to a lack of knowledge about certain opportunities altogether. It may be due to a lack of understanding about standard operating procedures for securing funding. It may also be due to a lack of learning and mentorship opportunities that result from strong relationships with influential organizations.

It is therefore important to consider how relationships are being forged. Are they typically forged on more traditional and exclusive terrain, for example at exhibition openings, conferences, galas and fundraisers, and other events that pose barriers to certain organizations and people? Are relationship-building events by invitation only? Do they have a cost associated with them? Are there barriers to access for people with

disabilities in the built environment, with information sharing, or communication? Where, how, with whom, and on what terms funding organizations and funded organizations develop relationships dictates who has access to funding opportunities.[66]

As Roberto Deboya notes in her work on placemaking and belonging, "before you have *places of belonging*, you must feel you *belong*." Referring to the revitalization of culture through public spaces, she explains, "Before there is the vibrant street one needs an understanding of the social dynamics on that street — the politics of belonging and dis-belonging at work in placemaking in civil society."[67] As such, relationship-building among funding organizations, funded organizations, advocacy organizations, communities, and cultural contributors is important. It ensures that people in need of funding have access to the people and places that distribute it. It also ensures that the people in charge of funding know who needs funding and what they need from these funding opportunities.

Once these relationships are forged, it is useful to consider how they are maintained. What are the communication channels? Does the maintenance of the relationship rely on mailing lists, listservs, or other means of communication that are either hard to find, or not open to the public? Are the communications channels among funding and other cultural institutions accessible (e.g. compatible with screen reading technology, written in plain language, containing closed captions, described video, and/or alternative text for audiovisual communications)? Where, by what means, and on what terms people engage with funding organizations is critical to their ability to pursue opportunities with those organizations.

Building these relationships is not only important for creating opportunities for people with disabilities. It is also important for reshaping the communities in which people live.

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[66] **Roberto Deboya, "Placemaking and the Politics and Belonging and Dis-belonging,"** *Grantmakers in the Arts Reader* **Vol. 24, no 1 (Winter 2013). https://www.giarts.org/article/placemaking-and-politics-belonging-and-dis-belonging**

[67] **Roberto Deboya, "Placemaking and the Politics and Belonging and Dis-belonging," Grantmakers in the Arts Reader Vol. 24, no 1 (Winter 2013). https://www.giarts.org/article/placemaking-and-politics-belonging-and-dis-belonging**

People with disabilities and other equity-denied groups need to be involved in, "prioritizing, designing, and implementing their aspirations for the futures of their neighborhoods, cities, and towns."[68] They need first to be connected to the people and things that afford them these opportunities. Then they can participate in shaping their communities according to their needs and experiences. This creates a positive feedback loop where, the more equity-denied groups are connected to the right relationships and opportunities, the more they can refashion those opportunities according to their needs and priorities. Speaking about developing relationships and promoting professional development opportunities for cultural contributors with disabilities, Eliza Chandler observes, "I think things like professional development only emerge as a possibility when you think disabled people can and should improve their art—which is a very obvious thing, but up until recently, it wasn't even a thing."[69] Increasing mentorship and cultural contributor development opportunities are priorities for Chandler and the organization she is affiliated with, Tangled Art + Disability.

Related Recommendations
Build relationships with disability, advocacy, and other community organizations to ensure that people with disabilities and the organizations they are involved with are aware of funding opportunities.
Nurture and maintain these relationships so that people with disabilities are well-informed about and well-positioned to apply for funding opportunities.
Consult people with disabilities and advocacy organizations about the work SaskCulture is doing to ensure that SaskCulture's funding initiatives and distribution of funds aligns with the needs and priorities of people with disabilities.

[68] Kalima Rose, Milly Hawk Daniel, and Jeremy Liu, "Creating Change Through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer," (Oakland: Policy Link, 2017), 4.

[69] Eliza Chandler speaking the Leah Sandals, "8 Things Everyone Needs to Know about Art and Disability," March 2016, https://canadianart.ca/features/7-things-everyone-needs-to-know-about-art-disability/

Evaluation and Success Criteria for Funding

Bygone are the days of cultural contributor patronages subject to the eccentricities and whims of wealthy individuals. Cultural funding like that proffered by SaskCulture is determined according to set criteria. Criteria for success is meant to promote objectivity on the part of the funder, and accountability on the part of the funded organization or person. However, these criteria and the methods for evaluating them are human-led, and therefore subjective. They are subject to the funding organization's definition of what a worthy or successful initiative looks like. Often, success criteria for funding relies on skills, knowledge, and experience that may be difficult to acquire for people facing barriers. SaskCulture's application and funding process may pose barriers to disability-led organizations seeking funding. Relatedly, the organizations that SaskCulture funds may distribute their funding to individuals in ways that are exclusionary. The following explains how evaluation and success criteria on both SaskCulture's side and on the side of the organizations they fund may pose barriers to people with disabilities—whether within the organizations SaskCulture is funding, or as recipients of funding from the organizations SaskCulture supports.

For example, even the knowledge and ability of how to fill out a funding application can be a barrier for some people. Can they understand what is being asked of them on the application? Can they articulate their work and their vision in the format required (typically written) on the funding application? Or are they better able to communicate their vision by speaking it or signing it in American Sign Language/Lanque des Signes du Quebec (ASL/LSQ)? In what language and to what level of literacy are applicants expected to complete their funding application? In their work on insider/outsider art in Canada, Eliza Chandler et. al note that, "[S]ome disabled cultural contributors still experience barriers despite promising systemic changes within Canada's arts funding agencies." They elaborate, "For instance, many project-based grants require a specific way of justifying and articulating the value of a project, which can require language that is inaccessible to cultural contributors labelled with or who identify as developmentally

disabled or neurodivergent, as well as and including those who have not had access to arts education."[70]

Beyond the literacy requirements for funding applications, there are often budgetary requirements for funding. Strong numeracy and money management skills are required to prepare a realistic budget. People with disabilities who have experienced barriers to education as well as economic marginalization may struggle to cost out their projects and to create realistic budgets and timelines.

Applications for funding may also require a track record of previous work, as well as references attesting to that work. For people facing barriers in academic, occupational, and community life, their portfolios and curriculum vitae may have gaps due to a lack of opportunities in the past. Is funding contingent on past success? And how is success defined? Do the same organizations and people tend to be funded because their past success contributes to their future success?

Re-examining the application process and evaluation criteria from an equity lens is important to increasing access for people with disabilities. Reframing what it means to be an applicant, how one applies, and on what basis they are adjudicated can remove barriers and create opportunities for disability organizations, and cultural contributors with disabilities by extension.[71]

Who is Adjudicating the Funding Programs?

Creating inclusive and accessible evaluation criteria is crucial to creating funding opportunities that are accessible for people with disabilities. It gives them the best chance to showcase their work and to make a case for the importance of their work. Regardless of how strong their applications are, these strengths will only truly be appreciated if there is diversity among adjudicating committees. Adjudicating

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[70] Eliza Chandler, Sean Lee, Lisa Fast, and Megan Johnson, "Insiders/Outsiders of Canadian Disability Arts," *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences* vol. 32, no. 47 (2023), 2.

[71] Eliza Chandler, Sean Lee, Lisa Fast, and Megan Johnson, "Insiders/Outsiders of Canadian Disability Arts," *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences* vol. 32, no. 47 (2023), 2-3.

committees that are largely white, abled, educated, and/or from socially or economically privileged groups will, consciously or not, bring certain biases to the adjudication process. Even if they can appreciate the merits of the project itself, they may not understand the nuances of the application.

For example, if a disability organization that serves disabled people of colour is applying to fund a disabled cultural contributors' cooperative, they may budget for things that are not traditionally accounted for in other cultural projects. For example, they may request funds for transportation to and from the project site for those working on the project. People who face barriers to transportation may incur higher costs for transportation, or they may lack access to convenient means of transportation. They may request stipends for food or other living expenses to ensure that cultural contributors or other people on the project can devote themselves to the initiative without having to worry about the basic costs of living. The arts and culture industry is not typically lucrative or financially stable for emerging cultural contributors, particularly for those facing barriers like people with disabilities and other equity-denied groups. If only people who can afford to create art are able to show up and create art, then a certain hegemonic culture tends to be reproduced over and over.[72]

To give another example of why diversity among adjudicating committees is important, suppose an applicant wants to submit an application in their preferred language. Maybe this language is a signed language, and the applicant wants to submit a video application. Maybe it is an Indigenous language in which few people are versed, or which is not easily captured on a standard computer keyboard. Even if the application process allows for this flexibility, if an adjudicator can't understand or appreciate the nuances of this language, they may fail to see the value of the project.

Relatedly, suppose an applicant wants funding for a theatrical production to be presented using a signed or Indigenous language, but their oral traditions don't easily

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[72] Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan, https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/accessibility-accessibilite/accessibility_plan-plan_accessibilite-eng.aspx.

lend themselves to written scripts or other structures. How might a panel of adjudicators not versed in these cultural traditions evaluate such a project?

Diversity among adjudicators is a key component to promoting equity in funding practices. However, this diversity cannot be tokenistic. There exists hegemony and privilege even among people from equity-denied groups.[73] For example, a panel of adjudicators could include a Black man, a disabled woman, an Indigenous man, and a white person from the LGBTQ+ community. In theory, this is a highly diverse panel of people. But if all these adjudicators grew up economically privileged with solid support networks and went on to become university educated and gainfully employed, then there is still a level of privilege among them that will inform their perspectives. This is not to say that these perspectives are invalid. It is to say that DEI efforts need to be more than superficial and to consider diversity and equity along multiple dimensions.

Related Recommendations
Involve people with disabilities in the adjudication process for funding. Ensure that there is diversity among disabled representatives on adjudicating committees, including different types of disabilities, and people with disabilities of various intersecting identities (race, culture, gender, socioeconomic status).[74] [75]
Ensure that evaluation criteria are inclusive of people with disabilities and account for the barriers they may face. For example, not assigning too much weight to previous experience, work history, awards, and other achievements, as people with disabilities may have faced barriers in education, employment, and access that limited their past opportunities; recognizing different levels of literacy and styles of communication among applicants; recognizing that

[73] Alberta Foundation for the Arts, "Adjudication", https://www.affta.ab.ca/funding/adjudication.

[74] Kalima Rose, Milly Hawk Daniel, and Jeremy Liu, "Creating Change Through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer," (Oakland: Policy Link, 2017), 4.

[75] Telefilm, "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2024," https://telefilm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2022-2024-Telefilm-Canada-Equity-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Action-Plan.pdf, 3

> people with disabilities may not have a large numbers of references upon which to draw due to barriers in education, employment, and other opportunities.[76]

> Include accessibility as a key criterion for evaluating applications. Have applicants explain how they will prioritize accessibility in their projects.

Accessibility, Equity, and Accountability Criteria for Funding Applicants and Recipients

Related to the above, it is important to consider what are the responsibilities of funding recipients. Equity funding goes beyond simply funding equity-denied groups. Equitable funding practices require that projects that are funded are inclusive. This means both diversity in what is represented, depicted, and celebrated through funded projects, as well as accessibility to engage with these projects. Therefore, it is worthwhile to consider what accountability measures are in place for organizations that receive funding, and the cultural contributors they distribute funding to. Are accessibility and equity criteria a part of funding applications?[77]

For example, if an organization or cultural contributor wants to create an exhibition, to receive funding do they need to make sure that exhibition is accessible for people with disabilities? Building these requirements into funding applications ensures that applicants think through their projects keeping equity and access front of mind.[78]

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[76] "Nashville Metro Arts Thrive Program — Recognizing that grants did not reach communities that lacked experience, awareness, and language capabilities to compete for funding, the Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission developed the Thrive program. It awards contracts of up to $4,000 directly to cultural contributor and neighborhood culture activators, without the formal, often cumbersome reviews of the standard grant process. There is a simple two-page application, and the agency provides tutorials, coaching sessions, language support, and neighborhood "shop talks" at community centers and other gathering spots that seek to meet residents where they are to cultivate their participation."[76]

[77] Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan, https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/accessibility-accessibilite/accessibility_plan-plan_accessibilite-eng.aspx.

[78] Government of Canada, "National Operating Funding – Performance and Accountability Framework", https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/social-development-partnerships/performance-accountability-framework.html.

Canada Council for the Arts prioritizes accessibility across its operations, including as a measure of public accountability for themselves, and the organizations and cultural contributors they support.[79] This creates multifold opportunities for people with disabilities in arts and culture. If accessibility is a criterion for a successful funding application, this puts people with disabilities—who are well versed in accessibility by virtue of their lived experience—in good stead to develop successful projects. If funded projects are accessible, this also means that more people with disabilities can engage with the cultural initiatives in their community. This exposes people with disabilities to avenues of creative inspiration, and connects them to their cultural communities. This sense of connectedness and relationship building is important for creating opportunities for people with disabilities for the reasons described above.

Related Recommendations
Offer application assistance for people with disabilities to ensure they can complete their applications fully and showcasing the best of their abilities.[80]
Offer supplementary funding towards the cost of disability-related supports. For example, if a funded organization/project requires a sign language interpreter for project staff, fund that as a separate line item outside of the project budget.[81][82]
As a condition of funding, ensure that funded organizations/persons report on relevant impact and outcomes of their funded projects, especially as concerns impacted groups and communities.

[79] Canada Council for the Arts 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan, https://canadacouncil.ca/about/public-accountability/accessibility.

[80] Canada Council for the Arts, "Equity: An Ongoing Commitment," https://canadacouncil.ca/priorities/ongoing-priorities/equity

[81] Canada Council for the Arts, "Equity: An Ongoing Commitment," https://canadacouncil.ca/priorities/ongoing-priorities/equity

[82] Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan, https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/accessibility-accessibilite/accessibility_plan-plan_accessibilite-eng.aspx.

As a condition of funding, require that funded organizations/persons meet a minimum threshold of accessibility for their projects.
Have disability and advocacy organizations take a lead in cultural equity planning for communities. Consider the broader impact and legacy of what and who gets funded, and how this impacts local economies and communities.[83]
Begin demographic data tracking; implement voluntary self-identification forms; establish scorecards for equity that apply to SaskCulture, funded organizations, and people funds are being distributed to.[84]

How are Funding Opportunities Communicated to Stakeholders? Before, During, and After?

To successfully apply for and receive funding, one must know that a funding opportunity exists. So much of access is predicated on awareness. How are people informed about and aware of things happening in their communities? The way that funding opportunities are communicated to stakeholders matters. Some of the more traditional channels of communication are inaccessible and/exclusionary. For example, where and how does SaskCulture share news of its funding programs? On its website? On its social media channels? That requires that a person or organization knows SaskCulture exists in the first place and that they follow the news of SaskCulture.

People who face barriers don't always have the tools and resources to access opportunities. For example, people who have recently immigrated to Canada or who are first-generation Canadians may not be familiar with Canada's cultural institutions. They might not know where or how to seek out opportunities. The same might be true for people who came from economically-disadvantaged backgrounds. They may have

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[83] Policy Link, "Building a Cultural Equity Plan," https://www.policylink.org/our-work/community/arts-culture/plan, accessed March 2024.

[84] Canada Council for the Arts, "Equity Policy," December 2023, https://canadacouncil.ca/-/media/Files/CCA/Corporate/Governance/Policy/CCA/CCA-Equity-Policy.pdf, 8.

lacked the means and opportunity to engage with the arts growing up. As a result, they may not know who are the major players in the arts and culture scene, nor with whom to build relationships or seek opportunities. If knowledge of funding opportunities relies on a person or organization's familiarity with the funder, that creates barriers to access. This connects back to the importance of relationship building. If a funding organization has strong relationships with community and advocacy organizations, these organizations can help to spread the word about funding initiatives. They can connect the funder with a wider range of stakeholders.[85]

It is not just by who and where information gets communicated that matters, but also how. The way information is communicated may be inaccessible for some people with disabilities. If information about funding is communicated strictly in hard copy print, people with literacy disabilities or who are blind or have low vision may not be able to read it. If information is shared electronically but lacks accessibility features such as screen reading compatibility, closed captions, described video, alternative text, and plain language, that information may be inaccessible to some people. People who have low technological literacy or who don't have internet access may also miss critical information about funding opportunities if it is only available online.[86]

It is therefore important that funding opportunities are communicated through multiple channels and by multiple means, keeping in mind best practices in accessible communications. As part of its commitment to accessibility, the National Film Board is consulting with people with disabilities to improve the accessibility of its public-facing website along multiple dimensions, including comprehensibility and navigability.[87]

These principles are not only important for communicating funding opportunities. They also apply to communicating information about funded projects. Communities need to know where funds are being directed, what are the cultural projects that are taking root

[85] Eliza Chandler, Sean Lee, Lisa Fast, and Megan Johnson, "Insiders/Outsiders of Canadian Disability Arts," *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences* vol. 32, no. 47 (2023), 2-3.

[86] Canada Council for the Arts 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan, https://canadacouncil.ca/about/public-accountability/accessibility/accessibility-plan.

[87] National Film Board 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan, https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/nfb-onf/documents/pdfs/accessibility-plan/NFB_Accessibility_Plan_2023-08-29_EN_VA.pdf.

in their communities, and how they can engage in the cultural life of their communities. Ensuring that the wider community is aware of these projects promotes accountability for the funders and those funded. It promotes engagement of community members. And, it signals to organizations and the cultural contributors they support what opportunities may be available to them in the future.

Related Recommendations
Ensure that SaskCulture's communications practices are accessible to people with disabilities. This includes but is not limited to communication around funding opportunities, awarding of funds, information about funded initiatives, and reporting on impacts and outcomes of funded initiatives. Follow best practices in accessible communications include disseminating information in multiple formats (large print, Braille, digital, ASL/LSQ, plain language), using multiple channels (print media, electronic media, social media). and embedding accessibility features into communications (closed captions, described video, alternative text).

Who Benefits from the Funded Initiatives?

It's nice to imagine that art for art's sake is the reason behind all cultural investment. But the reality is more complicated. Cultural investment is part and parcel of cultural planning. Cultural planning considers the beautification and social improvement of a space. But it goes deeper than that. As Jason Kovacs explains in his work on cultural planning in Ontario, Canada, "Cultural planning is often explained as a strategic approach to urban cultural development; an approach that involves the 'mapping' and leveraging of a wide range of 'cultural resources' (arts, culture, and heritage)." He cautions that, "[I]t is increasingly being questioned whether cultural planning is anything more than a fairly traditional arts policy with a different name. In particular, it has been observed…that cultural plans usually fail to address more than arts sector concerns."[88]

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[88] Jason F. Kovacs, "Cultural Planning in Ontario, Canada: Policy or More?" International Journal of Cultural Policy Vol 17, no. 3 (2011): 321.

In other words, although cultural planning is purportedly about community investment, it is not always apparent how that investment benefits the broader community outside of the arts sector. That's not to say that cultural investment can't enrich a community along multiple dimensions. But that investment has to be intentionally focused on equity, accessibility, and broader community uplift. As Rose, Daniel, and Liu explain, "Without equity, community redevelopment can improve a physical place but leave the people behind, stifle broad creativity, bring economic benefit only to a few, lead to a homogeneous community, or displace many."[89] When cultural investment is thoughtful, intentional, and approached from an equity lens, "The tools of arts and culture can accelerate equity, build communities of opportunity, and design for broadly shared prosperity."[90]

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[89] Kalima Rose, Milly Hawk Daniel, and Jeremy Liu, "Creating Change Through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer," (Oakland: Policy Link, 2017), 4.

[90] Kalima Rose, Milly Hawk Daniel, and Jeremy Liu, "Creating Change Through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer," (Oakland: Policy Link, 2017), 4.

Considerations, Promising Practices, and Opportunities

The literature is clear. Equitable funding practices for people with disabilities and other equity-denied groups are necessary to ensure that:

- People have access to funding opportunities.

- People see their culture reflected in their communities.

- People are creating accessible and meaningful modes of cultural engagement.

- People are connecting with their community and with one another in ways that are celebratory, informative, enriching, and inclusive.

- Cultural and funding institutions are sharing resources equitably and investing in meaningful and impactful cultural initiatives.

The literature is also clear on the steps that cultural and funding organizations such as SaskCulture can take to improve equity funding practices, for both people with disabilities and other equity-denied groups. The following is a list of key considerations, promising practices, and opportunities SaskCulture can implement or enhance their current practices with to ensure its funding practices are equitable. These same recommendations have been seeded throughout the report in the areas where they are most relevant.

Note that the ordering and categorizing of recommendations here is different than in the main body of the report. This is because the areas of consideration described throughout this report are overarching and may impact multiple areas of SaskCulture's operations. Therefore, this recommendations section is not ordered according to the thematic areas described above, but according to aspects of SaskCulture's operations where concrete actions can be taken which support equity funding practices for people with disabilities.

Employment

#	Recommendation
1	Work to increase the representation of people with disabilities across SaskCulture's operations.
2	Ensure that recruitment, interviewing, assessment, onboarding, training, and advancement procedures within SaskCulture are accessible to and inclusive of people with disabilities.
3	Review and refine SaskCulture's accommodations, accessibility, and/or DEI policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive of and responsive to the needs of people with disabilities.
4	Allocate funding and staff within SaskCulture for internal equity work[91] and external equity projects.[92] Ensure staff represent equity-denied groups.[93]

Education

#	Recommendation
5	Engage SaskCulture staff and partners in continuous learning about diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. This may include training, mentorship, listening circles, context briefings[94], or other activities.[95]

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[91] National Arts Centre, "National Arts Centre Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism 2023-2026 Action Plan," https://nac-cna.ca/en/about/plan/equity-diversity-inclusion-anti-racism

[92] Policy Link, "Building a Cultural Equity Plan," https://www.policylink.org/our-work/community/arts-culture/plan, accessed March 2024.

[93] National Arts Centre, "National Arts Centre Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism 2023-2026 Action Plan," https://nac-cna.ca/en/about/plan/equity-diversity-inclusion-anti-racism

[94] Context briefs: "The Council makes use of context briefs on emerging, minoritized and less-understood arts communities and practices, and disseminates these to assessment committees. These briefs provide background information on historical and cultural contexts, help assessors understand and consider the barriers faced by different communities, and reinforce the Council's equity principles and practices." Canada Council for the Arts, "Equity Policy," December 2023, https://canadacouncil.ca/-/media/Files/CCA/Corporate/Governance/Policy/CCA/CCA-Equity-Policy.pdf, 10.

[95] Telefilm, "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2024," https://telefilm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2022-2024-Telefilm-Canada-Equity-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Action-Plan.pdf, 3.

Communication

#	Recommendation
6	Ensure that SaskCulture's communications practices are accessible to people with disabilities. This includes but is not limited to communication around funding opportunities, awarding of funds, information about funded initiatives, and reporting on impacts and outcomes of funded initiatives. Follow best practices in accessible communications include disseminating information in multiple formats (large print, Braille, digital, ASL/LSQ, plain language), using multiple channels (print media, electronic media, social media). and embedding accessibility features into communications (closed captions, described video, alternative text).

Process and Procedure

#	Recommendation
7	Ensure that the processes and procedures for applying for funding are accessible. This may include providing applications materials in multiple formats (large print, Braille, digital, ASL/LSQ, plain language); accepting applications in multiple languages and formats (including video applications of signed languages, and spoken languages); providing application assistance to people with disabilities; reconceptualizing the application process to be more inclusive and flexible.
8	Create an equity plan that incorporates specific information about the equitable distribution of arts and cultural resources. Highlight the concrete actions that will increase SaskCulture's capacity to find, communicate with, develop relationships with, and fund organizations/work by and for people with disabilities.[96]
9	Address other known barriers in grant application processes to enable arts and culture organizations who serve underserved communities to successfully compete for funds.[97]

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[96] Carolyn G. Loh, Amanda J. Ashley, Leslie Durham, and Karen Bubb, "Our Diversity is Our Strength: Explaining Variation in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusions Emphasis in Municipal Arts and Cultural Plans," *Journal of the American Planning Association* Vol. 88, no. 2 (2022): 192.

[97] Policy Link, "Building a Cultural Equity Plan," https://www.policylink.org/our-work/community/arts-culture/plan, accessed March 2024.

Evaluation and Adjudication

#	Recommendation
10	Involve people with disabilities in the adjudication process for funding. Ensure that there is diversity among disabled representatives on adjudicating committees, including different types of disabilities, and people with disabilities of various intersecting identities (race, culture, gender, socioeconomic status).[98] [99]
11	Ensure that evaluation criteria are inclusive of people with disabilities and account for the barriers they may face. For example, not assigning too much weight to previous experience, work history, awards, and other achievements, as people with disabilities may have faced barriers in education, employment, and access that limited their past opportunities; recognizing different levels of literacy and styles of communication among applicants; recognizing that people with disabilities may not have a large numbers of references upon which to draw due to barriers in education, employment, and other opportunities.[100]
12	Include accessibility as a key criterion for evaluating applications. Have applicants explain how they will prioritize accessibility in their projects.

Funding Distribution

#	Recommendation
13	Consider funding distribution that allows for flexibility in the use of the funds by recipients. According to the World Institute on Disability, the freedom of discretionary spending is helpful to non-profit and disability organizations, which are typically

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[98] Kalima Rose, Milly Hawk Daniel, and Jeremy Liu, "Creating Change Through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer," (Oakland: Policy Link, 2017), 4.

[99] Telefilm, "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2024," https://telefilm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2022-2024-Telefilm-Canada-Equity-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Action-Plan.pdf, 3

[100] "Nashville Metro Arts Thrive Program — Recognizing that grants did not reach communities that lacked experience, awareness, and language capabilities to compete for funding, the Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission developed the Thrive program. It awards contracts of up to $4,000 directly to cultural contributor and neighborhood culture activators, without the formal, often cumbersome reviews of the standard grant process. There is a simple two-page application, and the agency provides tutorials, coaching sessions, language support, and neighborhood "shop talks" at community centers and other gathering spots that seek to meet residents where they are to cultivate their participation."[100]

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	underfunded.[101] Discretionary spending would allow funded organizations to use funds to the maximum benefit, per the needs of the organization and the initiative it is trying to fund.
14	Consult with the public and people with disabilities about their priorities for the allocation of funds.[102]

Accountability Measures

#	Recommendation
15	As a condition of funding, ensure that funded organizations/persons report on relevant impact and outcomes of their funded projects, especially as concerns impacted groups and communities.
16	As a condition of funding, require that funded organizations/persons meet a minimum threshold of accessibility for their projects.
17	Have disability and advocacy organizations take a lead in cultural equity planning for communities. Consider the broader impact and legacy of what and who gets funded, and how this impacts local economies and communities.[103]
18	Begin demographic data tracking; implement voluntary self-identification forms; establish scorecards for equity that apply to SaskCulture, funded organizations, and people funds are being distributed to.[104]

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[101] Charlotte Stasio, World Institute on Disability, "Why Unrestricted Funds Are Important for Nonprofits," https://wid.org/why-unrestricted-funds-are-important-for-nonprofits/#:~:text=Unrestricted%20funds%20support%20the%20overall,operation%20of%20a%20nonprofit%20organization.

[102] Policy Link, "Building a Cultural Equity Plan," https://www.policylink.org/our-work/community/arts-culture/plan, accessed March 2024.

[103] Policy Link, "Building a Cultural Equity Plan," https://www.policylink.org/our-work/community/arts-culture/plan, accessed March 2024.

[104] Canada Council for the Arts, "Equity Policy," December 2023, https://canadacouncil.ca/-/media/Files/CCA/Corporate/Governance/Policy/CCA/CCA-Equity-Policy.pdf, 8.

Accessibility and Accommodation

#	Recommendation
19	Offer application assistance for people with disabilities to ensure they can complete their applications fully and showcasing the best of their abilities.[105]
20	Offer supplementary funding towards the cost of disability-related supports. For example, if a funded organization/project requires a sign language interpreter for project staff, fund that as a separate line item outside of the project budget.[106][107]

Relationship Building

#	Recommendation
21	Build relationships with disability, advocacy, and other community organizations to ensure that people with disabilities and the organizations they are involved with are aware of funding opportunities.
22	Nurture and maintain these relationships so that people with disabilities are well-informed about and well-positioned to apply for funding opportunities.
23	Consult people with disabilities and advocacy organizations about the work SaskCulture is doing to ensure that SaskCulture's funding initiatives and distribution of funds aligns with the needs and priorities of people with disabilities.
24	Consult people with disabilities and advocacy organizations in the design of programs, practices, policies, and procedures at SaskCulture to ensure that there are no barriers to access and opportunities across the organization's mandates.
25	Conduct research and public engagement with people with disabilities and other equity-denied groups to ensure SaskCulture is fulfilling its mandate in ways that resonant with and positively impact local communities.[108]

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[105] Canada Council for the Arts, "Equity: An Ongoing Commitment," https://canadacouncil.ca/priorities/ongoing-priorities/equity

[106] Canada Council for the Arts, "Equity: An Ongoing Commitment," https://canadacouncil.ca/priorities/ongoing-priorities/equity

[107] Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan, https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/accessibility-accessibilite/accessibility_plan-plan_accessibilite-eng.aspx.

[108] National Arts Centre, "National Arts Centre Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism 2023-2026 Action Plan," https://nac-cna.ca/en/about/plan/equity-diversity-inclusion-anti-racism

26	Develop strong community partnerships by "bring[ing] together cultural contributors, leaders of cultural organizations, culture bearers, municipal planners, grassroots leaders, community developers, government officials, residents, neighborhoods, and philanthropy to shape policy that builds and sustains resilient, inclusive, and prosperous communities."[109]
27	Develop pathways to mentorship for prospective funding applicants, for example, by leveraging relationships with community partners who can mentor and support prospective applicants through the funding application process.

Appendix A: List of Documents Reviewed

See attached spreadsheet

Appendix B: List of Programs and Organizations

See attached spreadsheet

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[109] Kalima Rose, Milly Hawk Daniel, and Jeremy Liu, "Creating Change Through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer," (Oakland: Policy Link, 2017), 4.