

Summary of the Evaluation

Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage Program

2015-16 to 2020-21

Overview

The Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage (BCAH) Program supports the engagement of Canadians in their communities through performing and visual arts and in the expression, celebration and preservation of local heritage. BCAH has three components:

1 Local Festivals (Local Arts and Heritage Festivals) provides funding to local groups for recurring festivals that present the work of local artists, artisans and heritage performers.



2 Community Anniversaries (Community Historical Anniversaries) provides funding to local groups for non-recurring local events, with or without a minor capital project. Eligible events and capital projects are those that commemorate the 100th anniversary or greater of a significant local historical event or person, in increments of 25 years.



3 Legacy Fund (Community Historical Anniversaries Legacy Fund) provides funding for community-initiated capital projects that restore, renovate or transform an existing building or exterior space meant for community use. This could be a statue, community hall, monument, garden or work of art. Eligible capital projects are those that commemorate the 100th anniversary or greater of a significant local historical event or person, in increments of 25 years.



Evaluation findings

Relevance

The Program continues to demonstrate relevance. It:

- responds to current and changing needs. Data shows that Canadians have strong interest to engage with arts and heritage activities;
- adapted to new needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, including by providing both additional funding and flexibility with some eligible expenses;
- complements other Canadian Heritage (PCH) programs and initiatives offered by the provinces/territories and municipalities;
- aligns with government priorities and supports the Department's strategic outcomes for arts and heritage, specifically citizen engagement; and
- adapted to better meet some needs of certain equity communities, including Indigenous peoples and the 2SLGBTQI+ community. There are opportunities to further consider ways to better meet the needs of equity communities.

Effectiveness

The Program achieved expected results. It:

- funded a total of **4,712 projects**, an average of 785 annually.



- **94%** (4,432) were for Local Festivals.
- **6%** (280) were for the Community Anniversary and Legacy Fund.

- supported non-profit community organizations, Indigenous and municipal governments to organize arts and heritage events and projects in their communities across Canada. Projects:
 - exposed a large number of local attendees and visitors to arts and heritage;
 - provided opportunities for local artists/artisans/heritage performers and local volunteers;
 - attracted local partners; and
 - reached equity communities such as Indigenous peoples and members of the 2SLGBTQI+ communities.

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Effectiveness (continued)

Emergency Support Fund

Results from the delivery of the Emergency Support Fund (ESF) 2020-21:

\$4.46 million Provided \$4.46 million in ESF funding to local festivals in 2020-21 that helped organizations to adapt to rapidly changing conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Many organizations were able to pivot events to a hybrid model of virtual and in-person activities, resulting in increasing total attendance (driven by virtual visits).



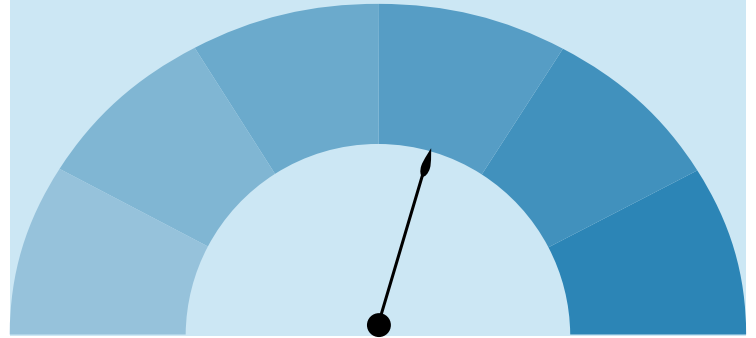
Not surprisingly, volunteer involvement declined substantially during the pandemic.



Streamlined application processes permitting funding to quickly cover new pandemic-related costs.

Performance measurement

There were some barriers and gaps related to the availability of some select data for strategic planning and decision-making, including information that would support a better understanding of funding provided to priority groups and other sources of project funding, beyond BCAH.



Efficiency

Overall, the Program has mechanisms in place to support efficient delivery for the achievements of results.

BCAH's best practices that support efficiency include:

- its delivery model for the Local Festivals and Community Anniversaries components, with national coordination and regional delivery, supported good service to local community organizations;
- the introduction of batch processing of applications for Local Festivals and Community Anniversaries automated several steps, improving efficient program delivery; and
- the additional \$7 million in supplementary funding introduced in 2019-20 has helped the Program to provide more continuity in funding to the larger organizations with recurring festivals.
 - However, this increased the workload of program staff, and may have contributed to challenges in achieving service standards.
 - Also, there is concern that the supplementary funding scheduled to end on March 31, 2024, would reduce the average level of funding per project and negatively affect recipients' capacity to achieve results.

The Program has an ongoing high administrative cost ratio, as reported in the previous evaluation and compared to other select PCH programs.

26.4%
↓
15.3% The ratio declined substantially over the six years, from 26.4% in 2015-16 to 15.3% in 2020-21. This decrease appears to be due, in part, to the increase in G&C expenditures in the final two years from additional supplementary funding allotted to the Local Festivals component and the ESF in 2020-21.

Although the evaluation recognizes that each program is unique and that BCAH faces some funding instability, there are practices from other PCH programs that could contribute to a more efficient delivery of BCAH.

Recommendations

1 The evaluation recommends that the ADM, Community and Identity, in collaboration with the ADM, Official Languages, Heritage and Regions, examine ways to improve the efficiency of the Program.

2 The evaluation recommends that the ADM, Community and Identity, build on existing mechanisms to determine how the Program can further support equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility priorities, and ensure clear tracking of related performance indicators to support decision-making and reporting.

3 The evaluation recommends that the ADM, Community and Identity, build on past efforts and review BCAH's logic model and performance measurement indicators to ensure strategic information is available for planning, decision-making and reporting, while streamlining the effort required by recipients and by program administration.