

ACTION AREA: INSPIRED PEOPLE

Second Cycle Granting Highlights



In the second granting cycle, the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) will invest in **72 initiatives totalling \$10.3 million** to achieve the priority outcomes for this Action Area. Over 20% of this investment is going into rural or small communities; 33% to medium size communities; and 12% to francophone arts, culture and heritage activities.

Investments in the [Inspired People Action Area](#) will impact over 600,000 people, including over 180,000 who will have increased access to arts-based learning opportunities and over 400,000 who will engage in community-based arts creation.

One grant in particular which highlights OTF investments in Inspired People, is the “Digital Creator North” project led by Near North Mobile Media Lab (N2M2L). In this project, N2M2L, in collaboration with public libraries in Elliot Lake, Kenora, New Liskeard, Sault Ste. Marie, Sioux Lookout and Timmins, will establish media arts creative spaces for youth. More than 750 emerging artists between the ages of 14-19 years will receive hands-on training in video production, audio recording, 3D printing, graphic design, and coding/programming. Creative experimentation, peer networking and collaboration skills will form the basis for this pre-professional training and enable youth to achieve success in post-secondary media arts programs and the industry.

To date, OTF has invested \$15.9 million in 123 initiatives to achieve the priority outcomes of the Inspired People Action Area.

Alignment with Government Priorities

The Inspired People Action Area is aligned with the Government of Ontario’s recently launched Culture Strategy and Arts Policy Framework because it enables people to benefit by experiencing, participating and engaging with culture, heritage and the arts. Evidence-based investments in this Action Area will support Ontario’s Culture Strategy through improved and expanded cultural infrastructure, building the skills and talents of next generation artists, fostering creativity in our schools and telling our stories that value our diversity.

Background

The Inspired People Action Area is built on the recognition that culture, heritage and the arts have intrinsic value. We are hard-wired as human beings to experience creative acts, become authors of our own self-expression and combine such experiences into lived engagement as we find our place within society.

Even though Ontarians enjoy an abundance of culture, heritage and arts offerings, the time spent on such activities declined by 12% between 1994 and 2010 according to the [Canadian Index of Wellbeing \(CIW\)](#). Communities benefit from a strong cultural infrastructure. However 72% of arts organizations report insufficient access to facilities and specialized equipment. There is an urgent need to develop young audiences for the future. Only 62% of elementary schools in the Greater Toronto Area have music teachers, and the numbers drop steeply for eastern Ontario (32%) and northern Ontario (26%). In 33% of elementary schools in Ontario, students do not have opportunities to work with artists, perform in a musical group, or play an instrument. Community arts programs are limited.

Evidence from the field shows that arts-based learning models, such as “Learning Through the Arts” and “ArtSmarts,” have many positive impacts on the intellectual and social development of young people. Students engaged through arts creation methodologies develop critical thinking, higher self-esteem and leadership. Research also shows significant benefits to the health and well-being of seniors participating in arts and heritage activities. As well, community-based arts and heritage initiatives engender inter-cultural understanding, belonging and civic pride.

Therefore, OTF is focusing its investments in this Action Area on two priority outcomes: better quality programming and infrastructure to experience culture, heritage and the arts; and more people connect with culture, heritage and the arts.