



Saskatchewan
Arts Alliance

ENVISIONING A FULLY-FUNDED SK ARTS

Prepared by the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance

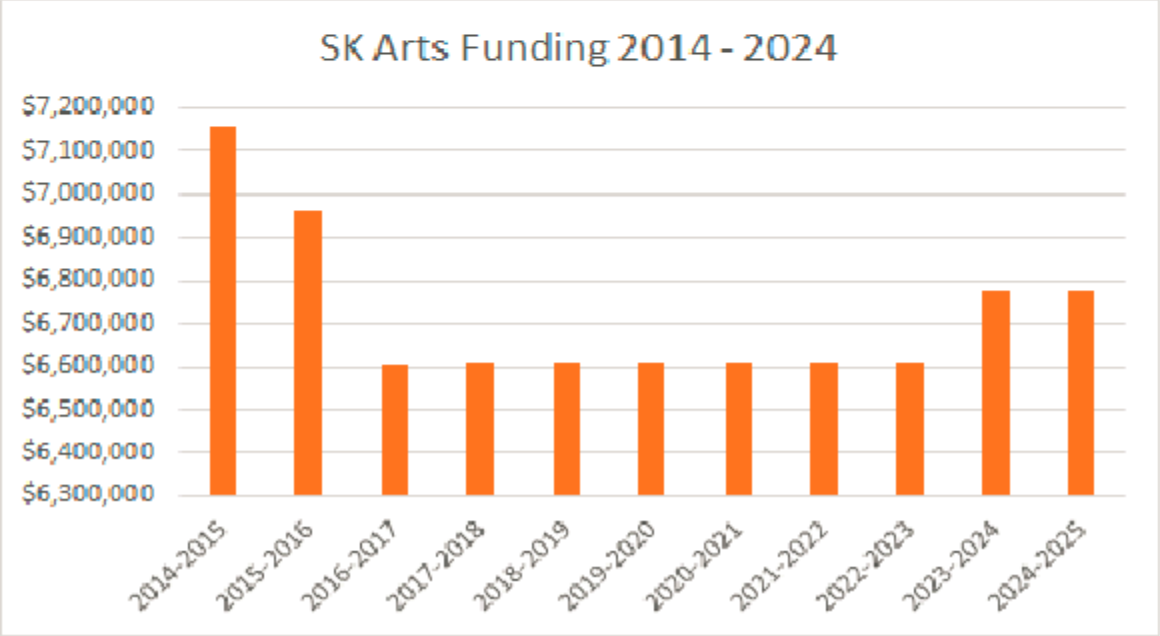
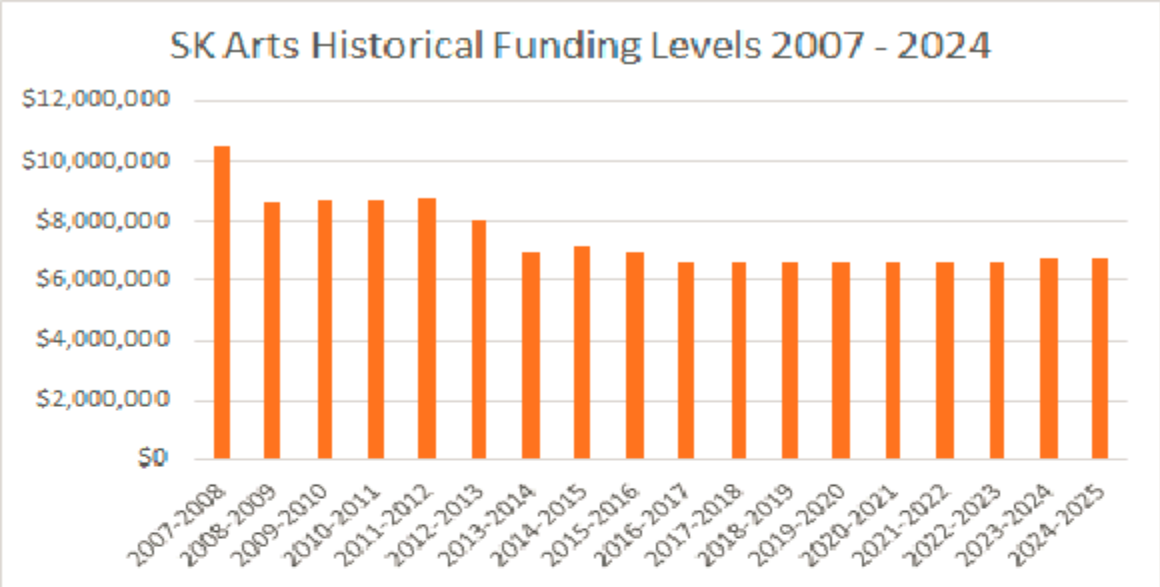
Prepared by:
Ariana Malthaner, PhD

2025



The Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, as part of its ongoing advocacy for increased funding for SK Arts, consulted with SK Arts' leadership and staff to evaluate the organization's financial needs. Through this research, the SAA and SK Arts worked to establish an appropriate baseline for both operational needs and grant amounts that SK Arts should distribute to artists, arts organizations, and programs across the province.

SK Arts needs increased funding. At its peak in 2007, SK Arts received \$10.5 million in funding from the provincial government, with funding remaining above the \$8 million mark until 2013-2014, when it dropped to \$6.955 million. Ten years ago, in 2014-2015, funding was at \$7.158 million before dropping below \$7 million, where it has remained ever since.



Saskatchewan has not been immune to the rising cost of living and significant inflation seen worldwide. Indeed, according to the Bank of Canada's [Inflation Calculator](#), SK Art's current funding level is \$6.775 million, which is equivalent to \$5.263 million in 2014 dollars. If SK Arts' funding had kept up with the inflation rate, it would currently be \$9.213 million, compared to 2014 dollars.

Not only has the numerical value of SK Arts' funding decreased in the past ten years (by \$383,000), but the actual purchasing power of SK Arts funding has decreased by 22%.

The SAA has identified a persistent gap in the allocation of funding provided by the government to SK Arts, which has decreased for the last 15 years. As the primary arts funding body in the province, this decline is concerning. The SAA acknowledges that the provincial government makes significant contributions to arts and culture through various channels, including Creative Saskatchewan, SaskCulture via the SaskLotteries Trust Fund, the Community Initiatives Fund, and others. While each of these agencies and programs serves distinct needs and stakeholders, increased or adequate funding for one does not necessarily meet the broader needs of the provincial arts community.

Although the SAA has continued to advocate for increased funding related to inflationary concerns, on account of this funding stagnation, the SAA felt that it would be more effective first to determine what SK Arts' financial needs are better to inform our advocacy and government relations work.

Currently, SK Arts receives \$6.775 million in funding from the provincial government. The SAA has previously demonstrated that organizations funded by SK Arts generate \$74 million¹ in economic output for the province, but this does not include SK Arts itself. Following the same

methodology previously applied and utilizing the [Statistics Canada Multipliers](#), the SAA has determined that SK Arts on its own, at its current operating level, generates \$17.6 million in economic output, \$9.7 million in GDP and supports the equivalent of 194 full-time jobs² in Saskatchewan.

Despite this significant contribution to the overall provincial economy and the innumerable social and societal benefits, SK Arts remains underfunded. As part of our consultation with SK Arts, two speculative budgets were created: one that addresses SK Arts' current needs and would allow them to operate at full capacity, and a second that would enable SK Arts to expand and grow beyond its current operations.

¹ Saskatchewan Arts Alliance. 2023. "[Economic Impact of Arts Organizations Funded by SK Arts.](#)"

² Direct impact refers to the economic value directly associated with the organizations' expenditures, including employment and income of all employees. Indirect economic impacts are the economic value resulting from the operations of the organizations that has an impact on other industries through the demand for goods and services (eg. real estate, transportation, manufacturing etc.) Induced impact is the economic value added as a result of both the direct and indirect impacts (eg. the money put back into the economy by the spending of the employees of the arts' organizations as well as the employees of the industries impacted by their organizations' activities.)

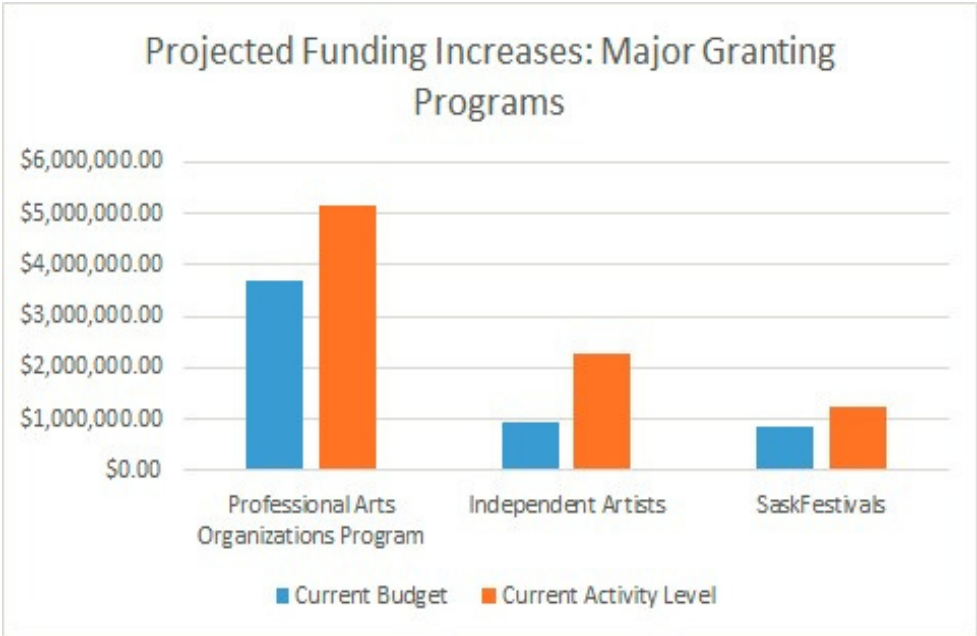
For both, SK Arts identified three significant areas where the additional funding would be invested.

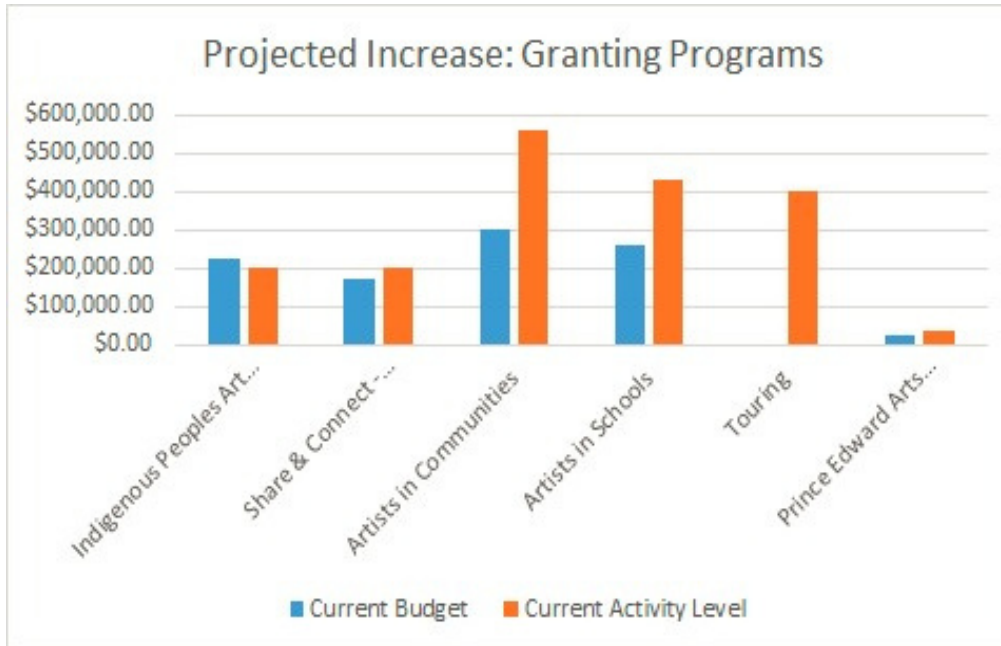
The first priority for additional funding is SK Arts' granting programs. SK Arts aims to increase the funding of these programs, as increasing grant amounts would greatly benefit the artists and arts organizations they support.

SK Arts would increase granting in the following ways:

- Increase operational funding to the Professional Arts Organizations Program and SaskFestivals by 40%
- Increase funding to the Independent Artists program, setting the success rate at 55% of requests received annually.
- Double the funding for Building Arts Equity to reflect two deadlines of the same level instead of one deadline in 2023/2024, when the program was introduced.
- Increase funding for both Indigenous Peoples Art and Artists and Share & Connect - Indigenous Community Arts to reflect a 75% success rate.
- Increase funding for Artists in Communities to reflect a 75% success rate Increase funding for Artists in Schools to reflect a 90% success rate
- Increase funding for Prince Edward Arts Scholarships to reflect an 85% success rate

Increased grant funding would also permit the re-establishment of the Equipment Purchase Fund and a Saskatchewan Touring Fund as permanent initiatives.





Outside of granting, SK Arts would address deficiencies in the storage and care of its permanent art collection. SK Arts currently owns 3,700 art pieces representing 850 artists, valued at almost \$7.4 million; however, SK Arts currently does not have adequate facilities for housing and caring for this collection. Concerns over the fire alarm system, security, public access to the building, and limitations in the ability to transport art were all raised in our consultations. Increased funding to SK Arts would allow them to better care for, maintain and display this substantial and important collection.

SK Arts would additionally address its internal operations to increase the capacity of overburdened staff, increase professional development opportunities, and better manage its existing programs, services, and outreach. One of the main ways in which SK Arts would address these issues would be through the creation of the equivalent of 6 full-time positions:

- Director of Programs
- Program Consultant
- Administrative Coordinator
- Part-time Administrative Coordinator: Programs
- Indigenous Consultant: Permanent Collection
- Part-time Registrar
- Freelance Curatorial Assistant
- Part-time Finance/Administrative Assistant

SK Arts would additionally increase the fees paid to peer assessors, introduce higher prize levels for the Arts of Celebration events, and create an Indigenous Advisory Circle, among other activities.

In the proposed Current Levels budget, SK Arts would require a nearly 74% increase in funding from the provincial government to \$11,783,172. With this increased funding, SK Arts' projected economic output would be \$25.8 million, \$14.4 million in GDP, and the equivalent of 286 full-time equivalents in Saskatchewan.

SK Arts additionally prepared an Envisioned Budget that would allow the agency to expand its operations beyond its current level. This Envisioned Budget would allow for an increase to all grant programs, an increase to the accessibility fund, increased outreach and the creation of 3.5 further full-time equivalents on top of the increase from the Current Levels budget: two additional Program Consultants with a primary focus on outreach, a Policy and Planning Advisor, and the part-time Administrative Coordinator position above would be increased to full time. The part-time Finance/Administrative Assistant position would be made full-time, and a part-time social media staff position would be implemented. Professional development for staff was also increased, as well as increased funding for Ask Artists in addition to the existing LIVE Arts and five new outreach events located around the province.

This budget would necessitate \$12,863,586 in funding from the provincial government, a 90% increase from current funding levels. At this level, SK Arts's economic impact would be \$27.5 million in economic output, \$15.3 million in GDP, and the equivalent of 305 full-time jobs in the province.