

April 10th, 2020

Delivered by Email

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, PC, MP
Prime Minister of Canada

Dear Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and Ministers:

As a follow up to our second open letter (April 3rd, 2020), the Canadian Crafts Federation / Fédération Canadienne des métiers d'art (CCF/FMCA) congratulates the federal government for your intensive, continued dedication to developing emergency programs to benefit Canadians and Canadian businesses. Thank you for your work.

Were an expansion to the CERB (or a new program) developed for freelance/gig economy workers, including artists, it must not focus exclusively on hours worked. Craft artist incomes are much more complex. Attached to this letter, we have provided a document outlining the many streams of income (including descriptions and timelines) to help illustrate these complexities.

As demonstrated in this document, craft artists' incomes are not easily categorized. They do not fit into typical employment structures with a straightforward hourly wage or salary. In order to ensure that new exemptions or programs avoid the unintentional disqualification of craft artists - either through direct policy or through the impression given by the language of the eligibility - we encourage the government to:

1. Allow for exemptions of the sale of art, or any proceeds of the sale of art.
2. Implement a cap, such as a \$2,000 limit for additional income, while remaining eligible for the CERB.
3. Clarify when income is counted by the program: is it in the month that the work occurred (which matches accrual accounting) or the month the payment is received? (This is a very important point to clarify for craft artists.)
4. Consider implementing a basic income program. This could be tailored to artists (using previous years' activity or current year activity as the indicator for eligibility) or expanded to support a broader basic income for all Canadians. A long term crisis requires long term solutions.

We know that the government is working hard to ensure all Canadians can access support through sweeping new programs to help the most people possible, as quickly as possible. We are astounded at the speed and dedication of the politicians, public servants, and many others working around the clock to make these programs happen.

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We are extremely thankful to be heard and to have seen the collective requests of the cultural sector reflected in the responses from the government. We know you are listening, and we thank you for these efforts. Additionally, we hope that the information we provide gives new context and ideas to your deliberations.

Once more, we reiterate the closing statement of our previous letter: “The craft sector is a significant contributor to the Canadian economy (according to Statistics Canada’s 2017 Cultural Satellite Account craft contributes more than \$2.2 billion to the GDP). The sector is a logical, creative, and healthy partner in our communal efforts to rebuild from this crisis. In the new normal, the arts can play a significant role in the rebuilding of social interaction and a healthy society - but not if our artists are left financially devastated through the recovery period.”

This letter has been reviewed and approved by the Executive Directors of the following provincial and territorial craft councils: Yukon Art Society, Craft Council of British Columbia, Alberta Craft Council, Saskatchewan Craft Council, Manitoba Craft Council, Craft Ontario, Consiel des métiers d’art du Québec, Craft NB, Prince Edward Island Crafts Council, Craft Nova Scotia, Craft Council of Newfoundland & Labrador, and the Nunavut Arts & Crafts Association.

In Solidarity,



Maegen Black

CCF/FCMA Director

Attachment: Craft Artist Income

CC:

Kimberly Bent, CCF/FCMA President

Hon. Chrystia Freeland, PC, MP
Deputy Prime Minister

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, PC, MP
President of the Treasury Board

Hon. Stephen Gilbeaut, PC, MP
Minister of Canadian Heritage

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, PC, MP
Minister of National Revenue

Hon. Bill Morneau, PC, MP
Minister of Finance

Hon. Carla Qualtrough, PC, MP
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion

Hon. Filomena Tassi, PC, MP
Minister of Labour

Hon. Senator Patricia Bovey, PC