



January 2011

The IMAA surveyed its members regarding the new program *Grants to Media Arts Organizations: Multi-Year Operating and/or the Grants to Media Arts Organizations: Initiatives programs* in the Media Arts section with the deadline of December 1st 2010. Approximately 35% of the membership responded.

Overall Impression:

The overall impression of the grant application was by and large positive. Many expressed relief that this was a multi-year application and while preparing the application was extremely time-consuming, the three-year cycle means decreased grant application paperwork on the whole. Given that the nature of the questions is fairly open, some expressed satisfaction in the exercise of thinking more broadly about their organization's mandate, mission and future goals.

“A long overdue initiative.”

“The application is quite radical in terms of an operating request and hope our provincial funder follows it.”

“Although it was rushed, it was handled professionally. A lot of effort was made to ensure that our sector was informed of the hoped-for outcomes of the change and to support those working with the new application.”

Concerns:

- The space provided was insufficient to be able to provide adequate context and information related to the multi-part, future activities section of the grant, which for many felt repetitive and redundant. This challenge was exemplified by organizations with multiple departments that formerly applied under separate programs.
- The grant process appeared to favour larger, single mandate organizations within larger cities over broad mandate organizations in smaller cities and / or regions.
- The “mega jury” process might not serve anyone adequately given that this one jury is responsible for assessing everything over a long drawn-out period.
- The Initiatives deadline coinciding with the operating grant deadline was a major challenge.

- Having to produce 8 copies of the support material was time consuming, wasteful and its necessity is questionable.
- Basic problems with filling out the actual application forms.

CADAC:

The feedback for CADAC was fairly split; some found it simple but bothersome, while others found it extremely vague, difficult to adapt to the particularities and / or not relevant to their organizations.

- The system times out too frequently.
- The lines don't sync up with the activities, there are many "other" categories for the numbers.
- The stats form seems to be geared toward performing arts.
- It is unclear about how the numbers are being used.
- The financial portion gives all the years but the statistics portion of CADAC only gives four years at a time.
- The new categories were confusing; consistency from year to year would be an improvement.
- The language in the CADAC forms could be more specific to the activities of media arts organizations.
- In media arts there is a challenge in estimating future statistics when changes in technology are rapid and it is impossible to predict the outcome, especially for distributors.

On-site Assessment Tour:

While some members are not affected by the Council's decision to cancel the onsite visits of organizations, or are indifferent, others feel that this decision will further distance officers from the organizations they serve; several members felt that it should be reinstated immediately. There is concern that officers will not truly understand the needs and questions of the organizations, or be able to assess and gauge the health of organizations.

"We always eagerly anticipate the visit as it gives us the rare opportunity to present our physical space and some of the key people involved with the organization. I have to admit a bit of trepidation to having our evaluation totally based on our paper application. I hope that an officer may be available to visit centres in the coming year."

Specific Recommendations:

- The equipment section needs further clarification and information.
- Include more space in PART F1 – REPORT ON THE PRECEDING CYCLE: OPERATING in order to allow organizations to include more contextual information and to include organizational strengths such as staff, financials, board.
- Streamline the questions in PART F2 – PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT CYCLE: OPERATING so that they allow for a focused description of the organizations future activities as it relates to the mandate and vision in order to reduce repetition and allow for more illustrative content.
- Given that the spirit of the program requires applicants to "self define" as organizations, eliminate restrictions on what kind of information can be submitted by a given organization. For example, a production centre might have a media art collection; however including a list of works was limited to cinemateques.
- Develop the application forms so that they allow for more text and the ability to include images, charts and tables to describe the organization.
- Reduce the turnaround time for the grant results to 4 months. Many organizations are dependent on receiving operating funds from the Canada Council in early April. This is particularly a concern for members in smaller communities and in certain regions where the municipal and provincial funders are less supportive.
- Reinstate the on-site assessment tour.