

# Arts & Culture in 2021 Alberta Municipal Elections

A GUIDE TO KEEPING ARTS & CULTURE IN THE CONVERSATION IN YOUR CITY



## In this Guide

**ELECTION  
INFORMATION**

.....

**ARTS & CULTURE IN  
ALBERTA**

.....

**KEEPING ARTS AND  
CULTURE IN THE  
CONVERSATION**

.....

**QUESTIONS TO ASK  
CANDIDATES**

## Introduction

Alberta Partners for Arts and Culture (APAC) is an informal coalition comprised of Alberta's Provincial Arts Service Organizations and Cultural Industry Service Organizations. APAC advocates for a strong and sustainable arts and cultural sector in Alberta and speaks collectively on priorities and opportunities that impact our members.

This guide is a nonpartisan outline to encourage arts and culture nonprofits, their members, and arts patrons to use their voice and vote in the various municipal elections on October 18, 2021 in municipalities, towns, and villages across Alberta.

Regardless of the size or location of the election you vote in, it's important to keep arts and culture in the conversation.

\*\* summer villages, improvement districts, special areas, First Nations, and the Alberta side of the City of Lloydminster do not have municipal elections this October





## Election Information

### What are you voting on?

Municipal elections in all areas will ask voters to elect a mayor or councillors, or both, to represent you at a local level. In addition, some municipalities will ask for you to vote for a schoolboard trustee.

A significant addition to this election will be voting on provincial issues:

- regarding the elimination of equalization payments from the Constitution
- whether or not Albertans wish to continue with Daylight Saving Time clock changes
- electors will vote to select three Senate candidates, who the province will forward to the Queen's Privy Council for Canada for filling future vacancies related to Alberta in the Senate of Canada

If your municipality or locale is an exception and will not be holding an election, you must go to the nearest polling district to vote on these provincial issues.



### Important Dates:

September 20, 2021

- Nomination day: (final day to submit to run for any position)

October 4 - 13, 2021

- Advanced Polling

October 18, 2021

- Election Day

How to find out more about your local elections:

- All municipal websites have links with detailed information on polling station locations for election day and advanced polling.
- Websites will also have a list of candidates and their contact/website to learn more about their platforms.

### COVID 19 Risk Reduction

The following regulations are in place across the province for the municipal elections to ensure a safe election period:

- Candidates and volunteers should wear masks during the campaign
- Masks will be mandated when at the polling stations
- Frequent sanitation within polling stations
- Social distancing guidelines will be clearly marked
- Pens and pencils for ballots will be sanitized or be single-use

# Arts and Culture in Alberta

## A brief message to candidates

In 2019, the visual and applied arts and live performance industries contributed approximately \$1.3 billion in GDP and sustained nearly 20,000 jobs in Alberta (1).

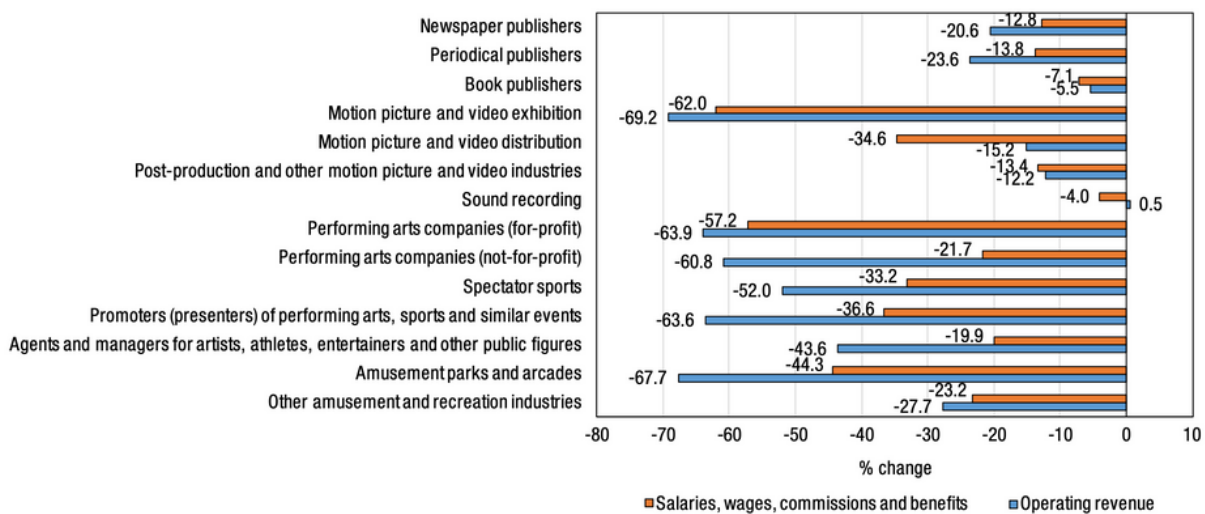
Federal research by Stats Canada has shown that in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic and necessary responses (cancellation of events, festivals and performances; operating restrictions; and changing consumer preferences for physically distanced, at-home and online activities) to combat the global pandemic resulted in a mass operational revenue fall in arts, culture, and recreation industries. Despite government assistance, salaries, commissions, and benefits for those working in these industries also fell (2). See the chart below supplied by Stats Canada (2).

We ask candidates to take in these stats this election and recognize the importance of keeping the arts and culture industry at the forefront of their platforms. As candidates running for MPs, we ask you to reflect our voices within your party.

**As leaders within Alberta's creative scene, APAC is eager to be a resource to candidates, regardless of location or position, seeking out their constituents' cultural needs.**



**Chart 1**  
**Percentage change in operating revenue and salary, wage, commission and benefit expenses for industries providing cultural, arts, entertainment and recreation services in Canada, 2020**



## Keeping Arts and Culture in Political Conversations

### Why does arts and culture advocacy matter for arts organizations and individuals?

In the 2017 municipal elections, voter turnout in Edmonton sat at just 31%, while Calgary had nearly 60%. Both of these are still less than provincial and federal elections (3). Albertans care about the federal and provincial elections; however, local elections can often have a massive effect on festivals, events, and arts and culture development in the community. Arts and culture leaders, community members, and patrons need to use these elections as a stage to voice their needs and wants.

People are less likely to vote when they don't hear issues that they care about in political conversations, believe their vote won't make a difference, or feel uneducated about their vote (4).

As leaders in the industry, we have the resources to approach elections from a nonpartisan perspective while still encouraging arts and culture advocacy and a larger voter turnout. Simple engagement and educational posts on nonprofit's digital platforms alone have increased voter turnout (5).

There are responsible ways to advocate for the industry, which vary depending on your role. We encourage leaders in the arts and culture nonprofit sector to remain nonpartisan; however, private businesses and citizens have more leeway to be vocal about their votes.



#### **Do's and don't of our political advocacy as an organization (best practices):**

DO focus on your organization's needs

DO give all candidates an equal opportunity to present their views

DON'T promote or oppose a candidate publicly or internally

DON'T work on campaigns

DON'T transfer resources (financial or physical) to assist only their campaign

# Keeping Arts and Culture in Political Conversations

Helpful Resources: Click the links below

[Municipal Elections Overview from the Government of Alberta](#)

[Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations: Election Resources for Nonprofits](#)

[Creative Calgary: Arts Advocacy Toolkit & Calgary Candidate Information](#)

[The Sprawl Independent Journalism Municipal Election Coverage](#)



## Question to ask Candidates

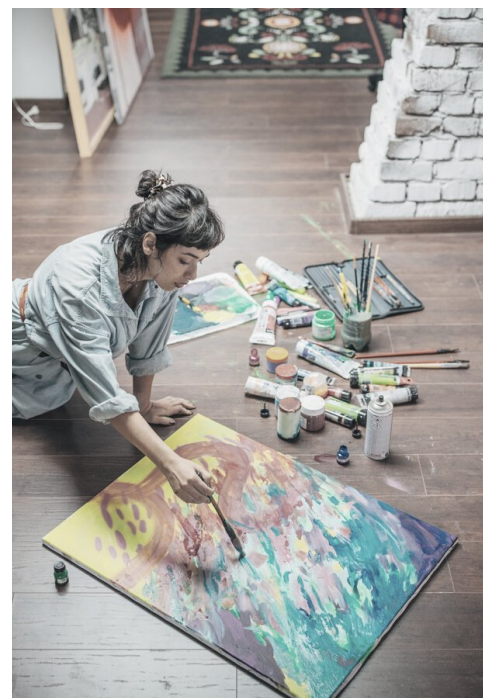
Adapted from the Alberta Dance Alliance Federal Election Guide

### **Regarding financial assistance for creative workers and organizations:**

- What is your platform on funding for the arts and culture sector in your municipality?
- How do you plan to work with arts & culture organizations within your locale in regards delivering funding (through grants or otherwise)?
- What are your plans to get artists back to work (as an industry that was first to shut because of Covid-19, and it the last to reopen)?

### **Regarding inclusivity:**

- What will you do to ensure a continuum of programs supporting diversity, equity, inclusion, and reconciliation initiatives in your locale cultural organizations and arts projects?



## Sources

1. Statistics Canada, Provincial and Territorial Culture Indicators, 2019 [link](#)
2. Statistics Canada: Financial impacts of the pandemic on the culture, arts, entertainment and recreation industries in 2020 [link](#)
3. Edmonton Voter Turnout [link](#)
4. CCVO's Vote kit 2019 [link](#)
5. New Horns, Old Dilemmas: Policy engagement in a polarized environment by Roger Gibbins 2018 [link](#)
6. Lobbying Act Canada regulations information [link](#)

Document created by Alberta Dance Alliance on behalf of Alberta Partners for Arts and Culture.

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