

MEDIA RELEASE

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Ontario's Culture Sector: An Economic Powerhouse in Need of Bold Action

Amid recent trade disruptions, Ontario must strengthen its domestic economy by investing in key sectors—especially those often overlooked. A new policy brief from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) highlights the province's culture sector (includes the arts and creative industries), as a critical driver of economic growth, global competitiveness, and community cohesion.

The brief, Ontario's Arts, Culture, and Creative Industries: Strengthening Competitiveness and Communities, highlights the sector's significant socio-economic impacts and challenges and offers recommendations to support its long-term growth. In 2022 alone, the province's culture sector contributed over \$26 billion to Ontario's GDP. Ontario represents nearly half of Canada's cultural economy, supporting 270,000 jobs across diverse industries such as film, music, galleries, and interactive digital media.

"Cultural industries strengthen our communities, make Ontario more attractive as a destination for investment, talent and tourism, and enhance our global business opportunities at a time of uncertainty in our trading relationships," said Daniel Tisch, President and CEO of the OCC. "The Ontario Chamber's latest policy brief finds our cultural industries brimming with potential to drive innovation, inclusion, and competitiveness. But bold and decisive action is necessary to secure their future."

Despite its significant contributions, the sector faces critical challenges, including insufficient access to capital, labour shortages, and new challenges from the rise of artificial intelligence. Strategic investments and coordinated action across government, industry and academia can unlock the potential of the cultural industries, and the communities and businesses that they support.

Key recommendations include:

- Developing a comprehensive Ontario Culture Sector Strategy that integrates cultural development into Ontario's economic planning.
- Enhancing talent development to address labour shortages and promote opportunity for underrepresented communities.
- Expanding and simplifying funding mechanisms while streamlining access to capital for small- and medium-sized cultural enterprises.
- Strengthening international competitiveness through marketing campaigns, trade missions, and cultural showcases.
- Investing in purpose-built cultural infrastructure, expanding transportation networks, and diversifying funding strategies to include rural, remote, Indigenous, and underserved communities.

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About Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce:

The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce serves as the recognized voice of visionary leadership for over 350 members and businesses in the Chatham-Kent community. Their mission is to champion business excellence by encouraging business relations, integrating business with the community, and fostering entrepreneurship. They aim to enhance economic prosperity and quality of life for local businesses. You can find them at 54 Fourth St, Chatham, ON N7M 2G21. For inquiries, you can reach them at (519) 352-7540 or via email at info@chatham-kentchamber.ca.

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