



Senior Artists' Research Project

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CANADA'S SENIOR ARTISTS AT RISK: *Organization launched to assist artists in their senior years*

Toronto – The findings of a national and international study into the needs of Canada's senior artists has led to the creation of a new organization to address the needs of this vulnerable group.

"Our research into the situation of senior artists paints a disturbing picture," said Joysanne Sidimus, project director for the Senior Artists Research Project (SARP). "Because of the unique nature of their work, Canada's senior artists are experiencing serious challenges in health and isolation, financial insecurity and a lack of adequate housing."

As many artists are self-employed, they are not entitled to the same benefits as employees. They experience wildly fluctuating incomes, often declining significantly at a much earlier stage in their career than other Canadians. The situation worsens as they reach their senior years. Some of the findings on senior artists include:

- 46% have had health care needs not covered by public health plans in the past year and 38% do not have extended health coverage. Overall, 73% are at moderate or high health risk;
- 35% have annual income from all sources that is less than \$20,000;
- 61% are at moderate or high financial risk; and
- 23% reported having "financial difficulties" over the past year

The SARP Steering Committee determined that a new organization should be formed to provide needed programs and services, continue to research and disseminate information about existing services and programs that support senior artists, and to work with existing organizations to identify and fill gaps in service.

SARP Steering Committee:

The Actors' Fund of Canada - ACTRA - Actra Fraternal Benefit Society - American Federation of Musicians, Canada - Canadian Actors' Equity Association - Canadian Artists' Representation (CARFAC) - Canadian Music Centre - Cultural Careers Council Ontario - Dancer Transition Resource Centre - Directors Guild of Canada - PAL Canada Foundation - Royal Canadian Academy of Arts - Union des artistes - Writers Guild of Canada - The Writers' Union of Canada - Carol Anderson

Joysanne Sidimus, Project Director - Celine Marks, Administrator - Garry Neil, Consultant

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Primary research was undertaken by Kelly Hill of Hill Strategies Research Inc, and included a nationwide survey of artists, town hall meetings and an examination of international best practices. A total of 1,860 online and paper surveys were returned and analyzed. The research was supported by the McLean Foundation, Trillium Foundation, Canada Council for the Arts, and donations from individuals, unions and other organizations of artists.

To view the SARP Summary of Findings and the new organization's Mandate, please go to <http://www.dtrc.ca/sarp>

To view the Hill Strategies full research report and executive summary, please go to:
http://www.hillstrategies.com/resources_details.php?resUID=1000369 (English)
http://www.hillstrategies.com/resources_details.php?resUID=1000370&lang=fr (French)

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