

Canadian Museums Association

Responses

1. Economic Recovery and Growth

Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?

Canada's more than 2600 museums contribute significantly to a robust tourism industry as well as to the quality of life of Canadians; nearly 60 million people visit museums each year. Museums also create employment and high quality on-the-job learning experiences (in a wide variety of skills from public relations, technology, customer service, to research, publication and design) which could be better utilized, especially in areas of job losses where re-training opportunities are required. The Canadian Museums Association (CMA) operates a very successful youth employment program on behalf of the Government of Canada. This cost shared program provides employment opportunities for students and internships to recent graduates, and is especially important in smaller communities where trained personnel is hard to come by. The program is seriously oversubscribed due to insufficient funds and the CMA is currently refusing close to 50% of all funding requests for summer jobs and 90% of employers' requests for national internships. With youth and student unemployment sitting at an all-time low, the Government of Canada must invest in measures to address this situation and get more youth working. As such, we recommend the funding for Young Canada Works in Heritage be increased. A resources augmentation of \$5 million would generate close to a thousand new positions for students and graduates in the heritage field. A second recommendation to enhance economic growth in Canada's heritage sector is to encourage greater self sufficiency for museums. This can be accomplished with the Canadians Supporting their Museums Fund, a matching donations program aimed to stimulate sustained private sector support to Canadian museums and heritage organizations. Despite a reduction in both individual and corporate taxes in recent years, donations to museums have not seen a substantial growth. By investing in a federal program that matches each new dollar donated to museums (to an annual ceiling), the Government of Canada would create the right conditions to stimulate philanthropy and economic growth as well as help our museums become more fiscally strong.

2. Job Creation

As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?

Job creation is an essential factor in our country's growth and the heritage sector is an important contributor in creating employment opportunities. Museums and heritage organizations not only offer on-the-job learning experiences for students and graduates, they also promote international exchanges to enhance professional skills and knowledge in Canada's heritage labour force. At a national level, Canada's museums host an important number of summer jobs and internship opportunities through the Young Canada Works (YCW) program. This cost shared program has become a major pillar in the federal government's support of youth engagement and employment, and is especially important in smaller communities with reduced resources. While employers gain access to a pool of enthusiastic young workers, students gain the opportunity to work in the field of culture and heritage and gain concrete

experience to further their career development. The current program is highly over-subscribed with a turn-down rate of 50% of the funds requested. In order to stimulate job creation in the heritage sector, the Canadian Museums Associations (CMA) recommends a modest yet targeted \$5 million investment in the YCW program, achieved by new funding or a re-allocation of existing youth employment funding to this program. On the international stage, Canada must have a dynamic presence to help our companies and industries grow. Culture should be a foundation upon which to build this presence. CMA works with the Canadian Fund for International Understanding through Culture to create strong relationships between museums in Canada and abroad. These relationships result in professional development that enhances our sector's skills and knowledge, and collections and exhibition exchanges that stimulate the economy by increasing museum visits, which in turn impact the broader tourism sector. As an example, a delegation of Canadian museum directors met with their counterparts in China in June 2012, where 12 Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) were signed for professional training and exhibition exchanges. The CMA intends to further build this relationship with China and expand it to a greater number of countries. The collaboration is a model on which the government can build upon to help other sectors.

3. Demographic Change

What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?

Rather than representing a challenge, Canada's aging population creates a great opportunity for museums and heritage organizations. Some 50,000 seniors volunteer their time and services every year in museums and galleries throughout the country. In some remote areas, museums could not survive without this essential community engagement. With Canadians living longer and healthier lives, we must create more meaningful cultural and heritage programs to address this population's needs. The concept of "retirement" should be transformed into community engagement and learning/sharing, not only through volunteerism but also by contributions to research and preservation programs. With respect to skills shortages, Canadian museums require workers with a variety of skills due to the complex nature of the work required in diverse fields (conservation, research, information technology, design, marketing, client services...) The creation of a cost shared employment stimulus program aimed at services offered in areas such as museums and other heritage-related environments could stimulate job creation and re-training opportunities for the existing labour force, especially in light of recent federal reductions. Finally, Canada's new citizens should not be discarded when it comes to skills shortage. Many have years of experience and useful skills and knowledge to bring to Canada's workforce. The Canadian Museums Association has worked diligently with private organizations to stimulate Canadian citizen's participation in the heritage sector by creating a free one year cultural access pass to new Canadians at citizenship ceremonies. The pass provides access to museums, galleries and heritage organizations throughout the country and encourages citizens to actively participate in their local museum. The pass offers a great model for more national initiatives in community engagement.

4. Productivity

With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?

Productivity should not only be restricted to competitiveness or labour incentives. Productivity in the broader sense should refer to the quality of life and a positive attitude towards work, life and community. A dollar of profit is not necessarily a dollar of value. Means need to be explored to create a society which is not passive but is engaged in various ways of self improvement by volunteering,

donating, or lifelong learning, contributing to the common good. Funding and tax remedies can assist but a more persuasive means is required to stimulate involvement within communities. Community engagement programs need to be established, encouraged and valued, not seen as liabilities but rather as building assets. Productivity within Canada's museums can be greatly improved with the right financial conditions. While museums and heritage organizations have relied heavily on government support in the past, our heritage institutions need to increase the diversification of their revenue sources by encouraging Canadians to become more active contributors to our heritage. This can be accomplished by a minimal investment in a matching donations program. Private sector donations are a key source of stabilization, and a federal program that matches every dollar donated to museums would enable our country's museums to become more self-sustaining and to develop fundraising expertise. Experience shows that programs such as this are a powerful incentive for existing private donors to increase their donations as well as for new donors to come on board. Museums with increased revenues generated through private donations would gain the capacity to restore more of Canada's heritage objects, enable their presentation to the public, create more exhibitions that can promote our history both at a national and international level, and in turn stimulate the country's "cultural economy". Finally, productivity can be boosted by enhanced intellectual property laws. The recent amendments to the Copyright Act are an excellent step forward. Yet a neglected area still requiring updating is the matter of copyright owners that cannot be located. Current provisions are out of date and inefficient. We recommend this area be considered for future amendments to the Copyright Act.

5. Other Challenges

With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?

Canada's growing youth unemployment rate is a key challenge faced by the federal government. The highly successful Young Canada Works program, partly delivered by the Canadian Museums Association, should serve as a model of efficiency and effectiveness to address this critical issue. The program provides summer employment and post-graduate internship opportunities that enable students and graduates alike gain the necessary skills and experience in their career development. However, the program's capacity is severely limited and additional funding is required to stimulate greater employment and on-the-job training of young Canadians. A modest yet targeted \$5 million investment in the YCW program would generate close to a thousand more jobs and internships in the heritage sector that could lead to full-time employment. It is through the fruit of this demographic's labours that Canada will thrive and prosper in coming years. In addition, the upcoming 150th anniversary of Confederation presents Canada with an ideal opportunity to energize Canadians and get them involved in various national projects. For museums, the anniversary and the years leading up to it represent a dynamic platform to promote this nation's history and culture, on a national and international stage. Museums and heritage organizations have an important role to play in the presentation of artefacts and our country's intangible cultural heritage: the people, stories, songs, traditions, ideas that continue to shape this country. The celebrations should not only be about looking back but also moving forward, innovating, and building Canada's cultural and heritage sector, calling upon the population's participation and investment. The anticipated report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage and its recommendations will be an important stepping stone in the planning and implementation of national projects. To build a stronger Canada, we need to be investing in the soft costs of community, identity and values. Canada's museums and related organizations represent very good value for the dollar and even better social values.