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Submission to the  
Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the  
Status of Persons with Disabilities  
On the Canada Summer Jobs Program  
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We are writing to share perspectives from Canadian orchestras on the Canada Summer Jobs wage subsidy program, as part of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities' current consultation.

Orchestras Canada/Orchestres Canada (OC) is the national association for Canadian orchestras, a network of 142 independent charitable organizations united by their commitment to music and to their communities. OC's members range from internationally recognized professional orchestras to volunteer driven community and youth ensembles.

Large or small, our member orchestras are valued contributors to quality of life across Canada. They bring people together for shared experiences in person and on-line, they create jobs<sup>1</sup>, they celebrate Canadian innovation, and they encourage and symbolize collective accomplishment. Orchestras are also pillars of Canada's arts and culture infrastructure and drivers of the arts economy, with direct economic impact of \$58.9 billion or 2.8% of GDP in 2017.<sup>2</sup>

Our assessment of the Canada Summer Jobs program

- We and our member orchestras have used the program to create many meaningful short term work opportunities for young people.
- The application forms are available in a few different formats, which is helpful, and the support materials provided are informative.
- Communications about the availability of funding are dealt with proactively by program officers.
- The special consideration for not-for-profit organizations – in the form of 100% reimbursement for provincial/territorial minimum wage and for Mandatory Employment Related Costs – is appreciated.
- Notification of the status of applications has been timely, especially in 2022 and 2023. This represents significant progress, as delayed notifications were reported in the past.
- As a sector, we have benefited from the opportunity to work with brilliant and insightful young people with the help of the Canada Summer Jobs wage subsidy program, and we are collectively grateful.

Recommendations for program improvement

Greater flexibility on start and end dates

In 2023, Canada Summer Jobs-funded positions could start as early as April 24 and as late as July 24; all jobs needed to be completed by September 2. This is a problem. While the concept of the "summer job" has a certain history and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://canadacouncil.ca/research/research-library/2019/05/arts-facts-using-cadac-data-47-symphony-orchestras>, pp. 6-8

<sup>2</sup> <https://hillstrategies.com/2019/06/19/estimates-of-the-direct-economic-impact-of-culture-in-canada-in-2017>

resonance, it may not be as relevant in an era where students can attend school year-round or where young workers might be looking for a meaningful role at pretty much any time of the year. Furthermore, our member orchestras typically focus their public performances from September to May – meaning that any CSJ-subsidized jobs they create are most likely occurring during orchestras’ off-seasons. While there’s *always* plenty of work to do behind the scenes, CSJ’s scheduling limitations place unnecessary limitations on the kinds of roles orchestras can create. Surely there are alternatives: greater flexibility on job start and end dates (as was the case at the height of the pandemic) would help workers and employers alike.

#### Alignment with other career-development and job creation programs

The Government of Canada offers an array of programs to support employers in the creation and sustaining of meaningful jobs and training opportunities. Way-finding services like the Business Benefits Finder ([https://innovation.ised-isde.canada.ca/s/list-liste?language=en\\_CA&token=a0B0b00000OGBp5EAH](https://innovation.ised-isde.canada.ca/s/list-liste?language=en_CA&token=a0B0b00000OGBp5EAH)) are invaluable to Canadian employers in any sector.

However, the very diversity of employment support programs available invites some obvious questions. Are there, or can there be, designed and deliberate connections between Canada Summer Jobs and other employment support programs, to ensure that a successful Canada Summer Jobs experience could evolve into meaningful full-time work, whatever the industry? Is the full potential of the Canada Summer Jobs program recognized as we collectively – government and employers - work to address emerging labour market needs, the creation of socially and economically meaningful work, and support the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century careers? The program on its own cannot solve Canada’s workforce challenges, but we believe this popular – and very useful – program could be part of the solution we collectively seek.

We wish you well in your deliberations.