



Oct 25, 2023

RE: Canada Summer Jobs

Dear Member(s) of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities:

Since 2002, Hamilton Fringe Festival/HFTco has earned key place in Hamilton's arts and culture sector; we have consistently demonstrated proven value as a job creator, a centre of mentorship, and a regional leader in initiatives centering equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility and the creation of Safer Spaces within the arts industry here in southwest Ontario.

The unique model of the Fringe festival, in which 100% of ticket sales go directly to the artists, means that we rely heavily on donors, sponsors, and government funding to maintain our activities. Through our proven ability to not just meet the CSJ's stated goals but to over-deliver year over year, and with the years-long support of the CSJ program, HFTco and Hamilton Fringe has been a key contributor to the nurturing and growth of early-career arts administrators in Hamilton's arts and cultural sector. Many of our CSJ alums have gone on to permanent and semi-permanent positions here and in other cornerstone arts organization in and around the city.

This year, without warning, the CSJ notified our organization that we would not be receiving funding. We received that notification on July 18, 2023: one day from the launch of the Hamilton Fringe Festival, HFTco's flagship event and a major economic and cultural driver in the city, as well as a key tourism draw.

The timing of this decision--and the decision itself--left us absurdly inadequate time to pivot, and had an immediate negative impact on our organization's ability to deliver one of this region's biggest cultural drivers to audiences, while starving the organization of our ability to continue providing mentorship and on-the-job training for Hamilton's future arts leaders now and into the coming years.

From our point of view, this year's administration of the CSJ program has been unacceptable, and with the late-coming rejection of our application outright, the decision-makers of the CSJ have placed a key cultural organization in the Hamilton regions into grave uncertainty--all as the live performance industry is still struggling to rebuild audiences post-pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Stanton', written over a white background.

Christopher Stanton (He/Him)
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