

Theatre Individual Project Grants September 1, 2021 General Expert Panel Comments

Comments made by the Expert Panel during its assessment of applications submitted to the September 1, 2021 deadline are outlined below. Please note that these comments provide a summary of the Expert Panel's assessment and do not necessarily relate to every individual application submitted to this deadline. **The Expert Panel does not provide individual comments.**

Project Description:

- The panel appreciated the variety of solid applications but were excited by, and gave priority to, proposals that stretch the boundaries of audience engagement.
- The panel appreciated there were many ambitious projects but were concerned when resumes did not indicate that participants had the experience and expertise to successfully carry out such large scale projects.
 - Mentioning mentors or having support letters from industry leaders went a long way in mitigating these concerns.
- The panel appreciated proposals from artists that had a strong sense as to why this project needs to happen. What is the artistic urgency? What is the artists' connection to the material?
- The panel were pleased to see so many artists demonstrate a commitment to diversity, inclusion and the 35//50 initiative on stage, in leadership, and behind the scenes -- through either the list of principal artists, or the outlining of their artistic process that made it clear that these artists were integral to the success of the project and not an afterthought or tokenism. The Expert Panel appreciated when artists provided evidence of community support and consultation.
- The panel was concerned when budgets showed the AFA as the only support. There were also concerns when the budget indicated large unconfirmed support from other sources with no plan B offered if funding did not come through.
- The panel highly ranked projects that were artistically relevant and provided growth opportunity for the artists involved.
- The panel gave priority to those artists that were able to indicate how Alberta would benefit from the project.
- Conversely, there were many exciting ideas that the panel was unable to support as key details were missing.
 - There needs to be a clear concise project description along with realistic timelines, accurate and detailed budgets, specific venues and indications of community support.
- The Expert Panel was very supportive of original projects or works from Alberta artists and their contribution to Alberta's art ecology. They were especially supportive of projects where

there was much potential for artistic growth, rather than slight variation on the artist had done previously.

Professional Development:

- Artists that indicated the difference training would make and supplied strong justifications regarding their choice of program were highly ranked by the panel.
- The Expert Panel supported applicants that were able to demonstrate clearly how the proposed training fit within their artistic practice, and how and why this specific training would further their practice.
 - The panel members appreciated those who had thoroughly researched programs that were a “good fit” for their talents and articulated long term goals.
- The panel gave priority to professional development applicants where there was a clear indication of ties to Alberta and that the knowledge would be brought back to be shared.

Budget:

- The Expert Panel was concerned about viability when the project’s revenue sources were mostly pending and no plan B was indicated should funding from other sources not be realized.
- The Expert Panel was supportive of projects that compensated artists with industry standard or a living wage.
 - As the theatre industry moves towards more sustainable and humane practices, the panel appreciated those artists and collectives that provide the time and support to write and create in ways that honour the professionalism of the artists involved.
- In an era where inclusion and diversity plays a large role moving forward, it is important to consult with the relevant communities and provide appropriate recognition and/or financial compensation for that consultation.
- The panel appreciated when applicants demonstrated confirmed additional revenue sources when applicable.
- The panel appreciated when applicants showed diverse revenue sources, including commitment from the artists themselves.