

SaskCulture: Identification of Leading Equity Funding Practices Executive Summary

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility: Secondary Research & Literature Review



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Culture

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INTRODUCTION

SaskCulture is a non-profit provincial cultural organization that works with Saskatchewan communities, volunteers, and members to celebrate and build the province's rich cultural life. The organization is able to distribute funding through its cultural programs thanks to funding from Sask Lotteries.

SaskCulture is currently engaged in a Funding Program Renewal Project. The purpose of this Project is to a) ensure SaskCulture's funding model is sustainable, adaptive, and accessible and b) ensure SaskCulture strives for continuous improvement in its support of programs, activities, and experiences that are more Inclusive, Diverse, Equitable and Accessible in Saskatchewan.

In Autumn 2021, SaskCulture engaged Praxis Consulting to conduct a thorough Secondary Research and Literature Review to be referenced internally to:

- *Part 1*: identify inclusive (humanizing, strength-based) language for people and groups oppressed by racism/discrimination and underserved by SaskCulture as identified in the strategic plan;
- *Part 2*: identify leading equity funding practices to support Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA); and,
- *Part 3*: identify leading practices for supporting inclusive leadership development.

The *Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility: Secondary Research & Literature Review* is a component of Phase One in SaskCulture's program renewal. Please visit the website for more information on SaskCulture's program renewal and Terms of Reference:

<https://www.saskculture.ca/programs/funding-program-renewal>.

This Executive Summary covers Part 2 of the literature review report: The Identification of Leading Equity Funding Practices in Support of IDEA.

SaskCulture engaged Praxis to conduct preliminary research so that SaskCulture, along with members, volunteers, communities, and organizations are able to evaluate and consider forward-thinking, evidence-based approaches to equity funding practices.

To explore the leading equity practices funders are using to support IDEA, Praxis researched and reviewed a bank of resources provided by SaskCulture in a resource tracker, researched additional resources, and conducted five (5) 1:1 interviews with similar organization leaders across Canada.

Through researching and answering eight (8) specific questions listed in the Research Methods section of this report on pp. 2-3, in addition to the interviews, Praxis was able to identify examples of leading equity funding practices that Canadian and US funding organizations are developing and/or using to support equity funding, as well as examine how these organizations evaluate and monitor progress. Praxis also explored the leading equity funding practices organizations employ for specific groups identified as underserved by SaskCulture in its strategic plan:

- **Indigenous** - in Saskatchewan, specifically First Nations and Métis
- **Racialized People** - Other identified inclusive language includes: Persons of Color/BIPOC
- **Newcomer** - defined as landed immigrants who came to Canada up to five years prior to a given census year
- **2SLGBTQIA+**
- **People with Disabilities / People living with a disability**
- **People living in/from Northern Saskatchewan**

With this research, SaskCulture is hoping to spark discussion, build awareness, consider ways to connect with underserved communities, identify risks and challenges, and evaluate best practices alongside and in consultation with individuals, communities, and organizations in Saskatchewan.

RESEARCH METHODS

SaskCulture supplied Praxis with a resource tracker that included articles, websites, speeches, and reports from various Canadian and US public agencies, governmental agencies (both federal and provincial), non-profit organizations and resources, philanthropic communities, and other organizations similar to SaskCulture. Praxis also sourced and reviewed additional reports, websites, and articles. Forty-eight (48) resources in total were reviewed on this topic.

Praxis conducted a thorough analysis of these resources to provide evidence-based responses and insights to questions about leading equity practices by funders. The research revealed the way in which these organizations support and advance IDEA, improve on accessibility, build out equitable operations and governance, reach and assist underserved applicants, measure and evaluate data, and handle risks and challenges.

Additionally, Praxis conducted five (5) interviews with individuals from similar Canadian arts and cultural organizations in November and December 2021.

The purpose of these interviews was to gain a more informed perspective for SaskCulture in understanding the practices other organizations are using and/or considering to advance IDEA. Due to the exploratory approach to the research, these interviews were for internal reference only and remain anonymous.

Questions Researched

In consultation with SaskCulture, Praxis developed a framework to explore and discover answers and insights regarding the following questions for Part 2 of the entire internal report:

1. What practices are funders using to support inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility?

2. What are some innovative policies/initiatives (including operational policies) funders are using to advance inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility?
3. How are funders making funding more accessible? (e.g., online or paper-based applications and follow-up, partnerships, delivery models)
4. How are funders ensuring funding decisions are equitable? What governance processes are being used to advance the principles IDEA?
5. What operational policies are being put into place to support IDEA?
6. What are leading practices in reaching underserved potential applicants? What actions have funding agencies taken to raise awareness of IDEA with mainstream organizations that advance more inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible projects?
7. How are organizations measuring the impact of their funding as it relates to IDEA and measuring the impact of changes as a result of advancing IDEA?
8. What are some potential risks to supporting and advancing inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility?

References and Appendices

References are provided at the end of this report to allow for easy sourcing of material.

A table of Resources and Links is included in Appendix A. The table is categorized by question. Please note that some web pages/documents no longer exist as they have been removed or redirected since the original internal report was completed in February 2022. The questions covering the Leading Equity Funding Practices portion of the 1:1 interviews are provided in Appendix B.

KEY FINDINGS BY CATEGORY

Both the secondary literature research and 1:1 interviews revealed innovative policies and initiatives that funders use to advance IDEA including through governance practices, operations, raising awareness with other organizations, reaching underserved communities, and improving accessibility. Some of the activities used to advance IDEA are as follows:

Shared Definitions and Data Collection

- **Establish a shared understanding and definition of IDEA.** Be as inclusive as possible in the definitions, understanding that language is complex and may not fit neatly into one definition.
- **Collect disaggregated data** on as many stakeholders as possible to understand the impact of funding, as well as gaps in funding that exist. Encourage grantees to do the same as well.
- **Advocate for better and more accurate data** from public agencies.

Engagement of experts, leaders, stakeholders, and employees

- **Engage stakeholders with lived experiences** in identifying barriers, needs, strengths, assets, resources, delivery models, and in all conversations, decision-making and power sharing, etc. Stakeholders with lived experience are the best audience to provide organizations with accurate, relevant information for planning and decision-making.
- **Ensure experts, leaders, and other stakeholders are invited to the table when key decisions are being made.** Participatory grant making is a model that engages affected organizations. Networking and building relationships with stakeholders are naturally embedded in the processes of the model.
- **Partner with community organizations, leaders, and key individuals** and work together to gain a strong understanding of the local contexts within which organizations are operating.
- **Embed the involvement of staff with lived experiences into all levels in the organization** so that IDEA is supported in all processes and operations of the organization.

Measurement, accountability, and frameworks

- **Measure and be accountable** on a regular basis to continue advancing IDEA.
- **Use frameworks, processes, and modeling** to truly understand where barriers exist for equity groups in accessing funding and support.
- **Evaluate an organization's networks** and ensure that they are inclusive to provide greater information about funding opportunities, access feedback, and establish roots in the community.
- **Set IDEA standards as funding criteria** for applicants who are seeking funding.
- **Support staff in IDEA education** via training, professional development opportunities, and resources to support their work.

Accommodations, accessibility, and removing barriers

- **Ensure accommodations and accessibility in each stage of the grant application process** from communication of opportunities to award updates by allowing more time for applications to be completed, providing multiple methods in which applications can be viewed and submitted, simplifying lengthy and tedious applications, and offering financial assistance for accessibility support and translations.
- **Remove barriers to apply for funding.** This can involve a re-evaluation of culturally relevant/welcoming outreach and application processes, as well as an assessment of qualification criteria for funding opportunities, etc.

Outreach

- **Ensure strategies/partnerships are working to address structural barriers** for underserved communities and that partner organizations show a dedication to IDEA.

- **Build trust and outreach in communities** with the right people and approach as defined by the communities/individuals from communities.
- **Find ways to support applicants with lived experiences in becoming active participants and philanthropists** on their own, rather than only receivers of funding.
- **Allocate funding for equity-seeking group-led organizations** (i.e., Black-led organizations) and organizations that serve equity-seeking groups. (There also seems to be a focus on allocating funding for first-time recipients from SaskCulture.)
- **Recognize implicit biases that may exist** pertaining to risk tolerance towards certain groups.

Potential Risks

The research and interviews also revealed some potential risks that funders may face when advancing IDEA. These include:

- **Lack of knowledge on the structural barriers** faced by people with lived experiences.
- **Limited administrative capacity** if the organization is a smaller, grassroots organization/grantee.
- **Unfamiliarity with inclusive grant-making practices.**
- **Negative perception** by the public around time spent on advancing IDEA.
- **Being viewed as performative and tokenistic.**
- **Lack of adequate transparency** around decisions taken.
- **Alienating established communities.**

Impact of the Pandemic on Equity Funding Practices

The pandemic forced organizations to re-evaluate the effectiveness of their delivery models, and through that process some organizations discovered inspired practices that they intend to continue using:

- **Structure funding to address long-term initiatives**, not just to meet short-term needs.
- **Build flexibility in at all stages of the application process** as smaller organizations are already stretched thin in their capacities. This might include shortening length of applications, limiting required documents, etc.
- **Be ready to provide emergency funding/quick funding** to enable sustainability of applicants' organizations.
- **Be ready to advocate for equity-seeking groups** for long-term change.

KEY FINDINGS BY QUESTION

1. What practices are funders using to support inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility?

Funding organizations are exploring and committing to a variety of funding practices that support IDEA. Examples include:

- establishing a shared understanding and definition of IDEA;
- collecting disaggregated data;
- accommodating and being accessible at each stage of the grant application process;
- evaluating an organization's network for inclusiveness;
- setting IDEA standards as funding criteria;
- partnering with community organizations and leaders; and,
- sharing decision-making and power by meaningfully engaging with stakeholders with lived experiences.

2. What are some innovative policies/initiatives (including operational policies) funders are using to advance inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility?

Funders are employing or exploring the following innovative policies and initiatives:

- inviting experts, leaders and stakeholders to the table when key decisions are being made as part of a participatory grant making model;
- removing barriers to applying for funding;
- providing support to underserved applicants so they can become active participants and philanthropists in their own right;
- embedding IDEA throughout an organization by supporting staff with lived experiences; and,
- allocating funding to organizations led by leaders from underserved groups that are working with underserved groups.

3. How are funders making funding more accessible? (e.g., online or paper-based applications and follow-up, partnerships, delivery models)

There are multiple practical suggestions for making funding more accessible such as:

- allowing more time to fill out applications;
- providing multiple methods in which applications can be viewed and submitted;
- simplifying lengthy and tedious applications; and,
- providing application assistance such as funding or language support.

4. How are funders ensuring funding decisions are equitable? What governance processes are being used to advance the principles IDEA?

Some approaches to changing governance practices to reflect IDEA include:

- breaking down barriers, such as discrimination and improving culture;
- developing available networking/mentoring opportunities for members of equity-seeking groups to become involved in governance leadership;
- creating diversity policies and other inclusive processes; and,
- measuring IDEA in leadership and procurement.

5. What operational policies are being put into place to support IDEA?

Some recommendations to advance IDEA through operational policies include:

- providing targets to ensure the workforce is representative;
- aligning IDEA with corporate values and vision;
- ensuring all stakeholders involved in the funding process align with the corporate commitment to IDEA; and,
- supporting employees in IDEA advancement initiatives (i.e., paid time off to vote).

6. What are leading practices in reaching underserved potential applicants? What actions have funding agencies taken to raise awareness of IDEA with mainstream organizations that advance more inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible projects?

In reaching underserved applicants, several recommended practices include:

- evaluating social and professional networks to ensure principles of IDEA are reflected;
- recognizing implicit biases towards tolerance for underserved potential applicants;
- making accommodations in the application processes; and
- diversifying channels through which underserved potential applicants can be contacted.

To raise awareness and advance IDEA, funding agencies can:

- connect with communities that organizations are serving and understand the local context;
- partner with organizations displaying a dedication to IDEA;
- create connections for advancement of IDEA;

- ensure strategies and partnerships are working towards addressing structural barriers;
- create long-term partnerships that last beyond a project lifecycle; and,
- evaluate organizations and their partners in advancing IDEA.

7. How are organizations measuring the impact of their funding as it relates to IDEA and measuring the impact of changes as a result of advancing IDEA?

To measure the impact of funding related to IDEA or changes resulting from advancing IDEA, organizations are exploring or taking the following approaches:

- advocating for better and more accurate data from public agencies;
- collecting disaggregated data so that organizations can take action to address opportunities or gaps for specific demographics; and,
- asking their members to collect disaggregated data as well.

8. What are some potential risks to supporting and advancing inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility?

Potential risks to supporting IDEA may be a result of:

- an organization's lack of knowledge of structural barriers faced by people with lived experiences;
- unfamiliarity with inclusive grant making practices;
- taking tokenistic but non-substantive measures to advance IDEA; and,
- failing to link employee surveys to action plans.

EXPLORATIONS

The purpose of the Explorations section is to invite individuals, communities, and organizations to consider the following questions and share their thoughts, insights, and concerns regarding the identification of equity funding and participatory grant making practices. These prompts and the discussions that result will assist SaskCulture in further researching and evaluating best practices for supporting and advancing IDEA.

1. What are you or your organization currently exploring and doing to support and advance IDEA that can be shared with SaskCulture and the broader community?
2. Based on your experiences in your organization and communities, what approaches can SaskCulture take to better practice equity as a funder?

3. What supports can SaskCulture provide organizations with who would like to increase awareness of IDEA in their own organizations and communities?
4. How can SaskCulture best support the consultation process throughout the program renewal?

These questions are examples of the type of questions that will be included in Phase 2 Consultations for the Program Renewal.

CONCLUSION

To continue meeting the needs of the diverse people of Saskatchewan through its cultural programming and funding processes, SaskCulture's Program Funding Renewal Project will spend several years examining and reviewing funding programs and consulting with stakeholders. The Renewal Project is currently in Phase One, the research and review phase.

As part of Phase One, this report highlights the research of equity funding practices that support and advance IDEA. Prior to consulting with stakeholders and partners, SaskCulture is showcasing the findings and sharing progress of this research to demonstrate what organizations are currently or considering doing to advance and support IDEA in funding. In Phase 2 and subsequent phases (listed in the Funding Renewal Program table on SaskCulture's website: <https://www.saskculture.ca/programs/funding-program-renewal>), SaskCulture hopes to continue to build awareness and understanding of IDEA in funding, grant making and programming; encourage meaningful discussion amongst Saskatchewan's stakeholders; and assess sustainable and adaptable solutions that will help improve funding evaluation mechanisms and integrate IDEA.

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APPENDIX A: TABLE OF RESOURCES BY QUESTION

Question	Resources	Context	Resource Type	# of pages	Origin
1	City of Edmonton	Indigenous Equity	Guide (PDF)	28	Canada
1	The Annie E. Casey Foundation	Racialized People Equity	Guide (PDF)	16	USA
1	The City of Calgary Anti-Racism Action Committee	Anti-Racism	Motion (PDF)	3	Canada
1	Akonadi Foundation (via Justice Funders)	Racial Justice	Blog Post	N/A	USA
1	RespectAbility (via PEAK Grantmaking)	Abilities / Disabilities Equity	Blog Post	N/A	USA
1	The D5 Coalition	Abilities / Disabilities Equity	Brochure (PDF)	2	USA
1	The Disability & Philanthropy Forum	Abilities / Disabilities Equity	Website	N/A	USA
1	PEAK Grantmaking	General Equity (grant making practices)	Blog Post	N/A	USA
1	Arabella	General Equity	Current Link Document (PDF)	6	USA
			Previous link (no longer available) Website	N/A	
1	The Donors Forum of Chicago, The Minnesota Council on Foundations, The Northern California Grantmakers, New York Regional Association of Grantmakers (via D5 Coalition)	General Equity	Toolkit (PDF)	23	USA
2	The Bridgespan Group	Racial Justice	Website (with downloadable PDF)	PDF (20)	USA / International
2	The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada (The Circle)	Indigenous and Black Racial Justice	Document (PDF)	1	Canada
2	The Vancouver Foundation	BIPOC Equity	Website	N/A	Canada

2	The Vancouver Foundation	Indigenous Equity	Website	N/A	Canada
2	The Yellowhead Institute	Indigenous Equity, Decolonization	Guide (PDF)	3	Canada
2	The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada (The Circle)	Indigenous Equity	Report (PDF)	56	Canada
2	Philanthropic Foundations Canada	Covid-19 Impact on Equity Groups	Document (PDF) Document no longer exists	5	Canada
2	Philanthropy News Digest	Racial Equity	Current Link Blog Post Previous Link (no longer exists) Blog Post	N/A	USA
2	PEAK Grantmaking	Equitable Grant Making	Blog Post	N/A	USA
2	GrantCraft	General Equity and Participatory Grant Making Practices	Report (PDF)	61	USA
2	The Canada Council	Diversity	Blog Post (Speech transcription)	N/A	Canada
2	The Toronto Arts Council	Equity Priority Group Programs	Website (several programs)	N/A	Canada
3	POISE Foundation (via PEAK Grantmaking)	Black Equity	Blog Post	N/A	USA
3	The Disability and Philanthropy Forum	Abilities / Disabilities Equity	Web pages: - CDPAANYS - Independent Living - People First - Disability Power	N/A	USA
3	The MacArthur Foundation	Abilities / Disabilities Equity	Checklist (PDF)	7	USA
3	The Canada Council	Abilities / Disabilities Equity	Web pages: - Application Assistance - Access Support - Corporate Policies	N/A	Canada
4	Toronto Metropolitan	Representation in Leadership	Current Link: Website (with downloadable PDF)	PDF (115)	Canada

	University Diversity Institute Former name Ryerson Diversity Institute		Previous link: Website (with downloadable PDF)		
4	The Canada Council and Toronto Arts Council	Measuring Impact and Assessment	Web pages: - Corporate Policies - Representation / Peer Assessment - Equity Steering Committee / Implementation	N/A	Canada
5	PEAK Grantmaking	Racial Equity	Website	N/A	USA
5	PolicyLink	Racial Equity	Website (with downloadable PDF)	PDF (8)	USA
5	Kotter Inc	Racial Equity / Justice	Website Page no longer exists	N/A	USA
6	Bridgespan Group (via Stanford Social Innovation Review)	People of Colour Equity	Web Articles - Racial Bias - Implicit Bias	N/A	USA
6	The Disabilities Funder's Network	Abilities / Disabilities Equity	Website	N/A	USA
6	Humber College and Tangled Art + Disability	Abilities / Disabilities Equity	Toolkit (PDF)	36	Canada
6	D5 Coalition	Advancing DEI	Report (PDF)	23	USA
7	The Annie E. Casey Foundation	Data on Race	Website (with downloadable PDF)	PDF (12)	USA
7	ArtReach Toronto (via Toronto Arts Foundation)	Data Collection	Toolkit (PDF)	86	Canada
7	Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector (via The Philanthropist Journal)	Reporting Data	Website	N/A	USA
7	The Commonwealth Fund	Diversity Data	Website	N/A	USA
8	The Ford Foundation	Misconceptions and Assumptions regarding Abilities / Disabilities	Report (PDF)	25	USA

8	The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada (The Circle)	Donor Challenges	Report (PDF)	56	Canada
8	Medium Article: <i>8 Ways Peoples of Color are Tokenized in Nonprofits</i> by Kim Ho, Helen	Tokenism	Web Article	N/A	USA
8	Harvard Business Review	Diversity Measurement Risks	Web Article	N/A	USA

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE (LEADING EQUITY FUNDING PRACTICES SECTION)

1. What are some innovative policies/initiatives (including operational policies) your organization is using to advance inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility?
2. How is your organization ensuring funding decisions are equitable? What governance processes are being used to advance the principles IDEA?
3. What operational policies are being put into place to support IDEA?
4. What are leading practices in reaching underserved potential applicants? What actions is your organization taking to raise awareness of IDEA/ supporting organizations that advance more inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible projects?
5. How is your organization measuring the impact of funding as it relates to IDEA/ measuring the impact of changes as a result of advancing IDEA?
6. What are some potential risks?