



Nova Scotia Talent Trust

2024-2026 Strategic Plan

March 2024

Contributions

Executive Director, Andrea Urquhart, and the Nova Scotia Talent Trust Board of Directors worked together with Strategic Arts Management marketing communications consultant, Krista Keough, to create the Nova Scotia Talent Trust 2024-2026 Strategic Plan. We are grateful for our recipients, donors and stakeholders for supporting our efforts.

Nova Scotia Talent Trust Board of Directors

- **Executive:** His Honour, The Honourable Arthur J. LeBlanc, ONS, KC, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Honorary Chair; Victoria Hines, Chair; Adrian Hoffman, Past Chair; Susan Hanrahan, Vice Chair; Natalie Wells, Treasurer; Breagh MacKinnon, Secretary and Pamela Ritchie, Development Chair.
- **Directors:** Wallace Smith Jr., Michelle Lahey, Andrea Pottyondy, Jeff Joudrey and Alexis Muscat.
- **Honorary Lifetime Directors:** The Honourable Myra A. Freeman; Janice Merritt Flemming; Timothy C. Matthews; Robert Geraghty; Barbara Butler; Ninette Babineau; Alexander (Ted) Fraser; Charlotte Wilson-Hammond, RCA and Jacqueline Steudler.

For more information about Nova Scotia Talent Trust, visit nscalenttrust.ns.ca.

Vision and Mission

Our **vision** is to support the development of talented Nova Scotians in the pursuit of a professional career in the arts. Our **mission** is that Nova Scotian artists will enrich the cultural vibrancy of our province, country and the world.

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Introduction

The Nova Scotia Talent Trust has contributed over \$2.5 million toward scholarships and prizes for emerging artists since its inception on May 2, 1944. As the only charitable organisation of its kind in Canada, part of what makes the Talent Trust unique is our support for students' education and furthering their studies in a diverse range of artistic disciplines and settings. Many of our recipients have attended prestigious institutions in Canada and abroad, and have established meaningful careers in the arts.

In the fall of 2020, our Board of Directors collaborated with stakeholders to develop the [Nova Scotia Talent Trust Strategic Plan 2021-2023](#). Today, we have reached and exceeded many of our goals and celebrated significant milestones, including hiring our first full-time Executive Director, Andrea Urquhart; completing an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) assessment; and receiving a multi-million dollar legacy bequest for our scholarship program.

The Nova Scotia Talent Trust 2024-2026 Strategic Plan takes a look at the past, present and future. Andrea, along with the Board of Directors and consultant, Krista Keough, conducted market research and a SWOT analysis of the Talent Trust's current internal and external environments. The results of these collaborative efforts have informed new strategic priorities, goals and action items that will guide our organisation for the next three years.

The 2024-26 strategic priorities in summary are:

- 1. Operational Capacity:** Fund development, including leveraging our 80th anniversary milestone in May 2024, is key to growing our operational capacity and impact in a sustainable way.
- 2. Implementation of EDIA Report Recommendations:** Implement foundational improvements to processes and make broader organisational changes in EDIA.
- 3. Scholarship Program Expansion and Development:** Establish a distribution plan for the \$2.8 million bequest and ensure effective, equitable distribution of new and existing scholarships.

In reflecting on the Talent Trust's nearly 80-year journey of supporting emerging artists, we have not only achieved remarkable milestones, but we have evolved with a clear vision for the future.

As we embark on the implementation of our strategic plan for 2024-26, we are poised to build on past successes, address current challenges and shape an even more inclusive and impactful arts organisation moving forward. With a focus on operational capacity, EDIA and growing our scholarship program, we are enthusiastic about the possibilities and remain committed to fostering the next generation of talented artists.

Re-cap 2021-23

The Talent Trust made tremendous progress over the past three years on many fronts, despite the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, we began the fiscal year with our 2021-23 strategic plan, which identified four priorities: Fundraising, Staff and Board Development, Awareness and Communication Engagement, and Core Service Development.

In January 2022, the Talent Trust hired its first full-time Executive Director to lead the organisation with guidance from the Board of Directors. Andrea studied piano through the Royal Conservatory of Music and has a strong family connection to the arts. Having worked in the non-profit sector throughout her entire career, she is passionate about supporting emerging artists on their path to success.

The Talent Trust engaged with Senior Equity Evaluation Advisor, Bernadette A. Melita, and Placemaking 4G, a social enterprise community interest company, to assess our scholarship program selection process through an equity lens in September 2023. Their final report is an expansive 28-page document with many valuable recommendations regarding ways we can make improvements relating to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility throughout the organisation.

The most significant fundraising accomplishment for the Talent Trust during this period, and possibly in its recent history, is the bequest received in October 2023. The generous donation of \$2.8 million from the estate of arts philanthropist Judith A. Grant allowed us to establish the Judith A. Grant Bursaries. Each bursary offers up to \$5,000 to any Nova Scotian student studying music at an Atlantic Canadian college or university who applies. Four new scholarships will be awarded in the first year and we plan to increase to 15 annual scholarships by 2026. In 2024, we will also introduce the Judith A. Grant Special Award, valued at \$10,000.

Other significant milestones from our 2021-23 strategic priorities include:

- New fundraising initiatives included raffles, community events and donation campaigns.
- The Talent Trust became a client of Strategic Arts Management in Halifax, a non-profit that subsidises some costs for consulting services from arts industry professionals.
- Developed new community connections with public institutions and deepened existing relationships with corporate sponsors and arts organisations.
- Our social media followers and reach increased by almost 50%.
- Andrea met with members from the BIPOC and disabled communities to make improvements to the scholarship application and selection process.

In February 2024, Andrea produced an Activity Report for the most recent fiscal year that outlines the Talent Trust's progress on the goals set forth in the plan. You can view the document in the attached [Appendix: Activity Report 2023-24](#).

Market Research

Stakeholder Surveys

In February 2024, we developed surveys for two different groups of stakeholders: (1) artists who have applied for a Talent Trust scholarship, and (2) current and potential individual donors, corporate sponsors and community partners. A total of 39 people responded to the surveys and you can see a fulsome analysis of the data in [Appendix: Artist Survey](#) and [Appendix: Supporters' Survey](#).

The purpose of the Artist Survey was to collect feedback about the scholarship program. We asked artists to share their experience applying for a scholarship, suggestions for improving the application process, their satisfaction with the scholarship amount and the best channels to reach them.

Regarding the application process, participants chose the words straight-forward [55%], time-consuming [32%] and helpful [27%] most often to describe their experience. Suggestions for improving support included providing thorough feedback, examples (of complete applications) and ways to make it easier to apply. The data showed 18% of respondents did not receive a scholarship, while the others found the amount they received somewhat met their needs [59%].

For impactful scholarship amounts, 50% felt that \$2,501 - \$5,000 and 18% felt that \$5,001 - \$7,500 would make a big impact on an artist's early career. The top preferred channels for reaching emerging artists included Instagram [68%], email newsletters [64%] and at school [54%]. Some respondents recommended reaching out through music teachers, arts teachers, festivals and at community events.

To help us better understand if we're reaching emerging artists in all communities, we invited them to share any identifying details about themselves that they felt comfortable with. Among the selections, we reached individuals who identify as First Nations, Inuit, or Metis; African Nova Scotian; Acadian; minorities of African, Asian, Latin American, Middle Eastern or mixed racial descents; Jewish; LGBTQIA2S+; and those living with the challenges related to mental illness and ADHD.

For the Supporters' Survey, we gathered feedback and insights from respondents regarding our performance and engagement in various areas. We wanted to assess what the organisation is doing well, understand trends related to charitable giving for the arts, identify motivations for donating to non-profit arts organisations, determine the most effective ways for the Talent Trust to connect with potential donors and sponsors and gauge awareness regarding the opportunity for individuals or businesses to sponsor and name a scholarship for a minimum of \$1,000.

We learned 100% of participants recognise Nova Scotia Talent Trust for providing valuable scholarships, awards and bursaries to emerging artists, while 59% agreed we are doing well at building a diverse and inclusive community of arts supporters and 53% believe we are doing well in contributing to the growth and development of the arts sector in Nova Scotia. Regarding trends related to donations or sponsorships for the arts, most respondents noticed there is an increased focus on diversity and inclusion [76%]. Individuals or businesses are giving less donations or sponsorships in general, but there is an increased interest to support community-based initiatives, cited 41% of participants respectively.

The top three motivators for donating money to non-profit arts organisations are: demonstrating their commitment to community [88%], their values align with the organisation [65%], and tax benefits [29%]. In terms of connecting with potential donors and sponsors, live events [77%], email [53%] and in-person meetings [47%] were deemed most effective, followed by social media [41%]. Additionally, [53%] of respondents were aware that any person or business can sponsor and name a Nova Scotia Talent Trust scholarship for a minimum of \$1,000.

Survey Analysis

Based on the artist participants' feedback, we have learned new ways to make improvements to the scholarship program. We can provide more thorough feedback, offer demonstration videos and examples of successful applications, and simplify the application process to address the concerns of the participants who found it time-consuming.

Our market research supports the data regarding the scholarship amounts most popular in the survey. We are planning to increase the amount to better meet the needs of emerging artists, and will take into account the survey findings that indicate a preference for impactful amounts in the range of \$2,501 to \$7,500.

For our communication and outreach, we can focus on the preferred channels identified by emerging artists, such as Instagram, email newsletters and school engagements, to share information about the scholarship program, application updates and opportunities for support. In our plans, we will act on the suggestion to reach emerging artists through music teachers, arts teachers and by participating in festivals and community events to ensure we are present and engaging in various educational settings.

To see the positive themes of support for EDIA in our supporters' survey findings reinforced for us that our strategic priorities are aligned with the greater community of donors and sponsors. We will continue to build on the positive recognition we received for our EDIA efforts by further enhancing these initiatives within the organisation. In our outreach, we will incorporate a focus on reaching and supporting artists from diverse backgrounds and communities, ensuring inclusivity in scholarship opportunities and representation within the organisation.

Learning about the different motivations for donating to non-profit arts organisations was very insightful, too. We can leverage this by demonstrating our commitment to the arts community, clearly communicating our values in promotional materials and outreach efforts, and our charitable status to entice those who take advantage of tax incentives.

We recognise the importance of live events and in-person meetings as key strategies for engaging potential donors and sponsors, and will promote our online presence through email and social media to reach them and our broader audience. Based on the number of respondents who did not know individuals or businesses can sponsor and name a Nova Scotia Talent Trust scholarship [47%], conducting an awareness campaign to highlight this could encourage more participation in the initiative.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis is used for identifying internal strengths and weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats that shape current and future operations.

Strengths

- **Established commitment:** The main priority for the Talent Trust is to provide funding to Nova Scotia's emerging artists. Over the past three years, we have maintained an annual scholarship amount of \$70,000, despite rising expenses year-after-year.
- **Full-time Executive Director:** In 2022, the Talent Trust hired its first full-time executive director to ensure the organisation continues to grow.
- **Expansion of scholarship program:** The 2023-24 fiscal year marked an important time in the Talent Trust's history with a major expansion of our scholarship program due to a very generous bequest of over \$2.8 million. While this greatly increases the support we can now offer, the impact of a bequest this size for a small organisation is significant.
- **Investment in EDIA:** In September 2023, we invested in a third-party report to further enhance our efforts in equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility. The *Selection Process Equity Evaluation Final Report* by Placemaking 4G and Melita Consulting has provided the Talent Trust with clear findings and recommendations for improvements.
- **Awareness and engagement:** The Talent Trust focused heavily on social media in the 2022-23 fiscal year and, as a result, we increased our followers by 48% and website users increased by 19.5%. Our Executive Director made new connections with arts and media organisations, public libraries and museums in Nova Scotia.

Weaknesses

- **Workload management:** With one full-time staff, the risk of heavy workloads and burnout is high. The funds generated from the \$2.8 million bequest will more than double the scholarships we offer, which also doubles the resources required to administer them.
- **Operational funding:** Arts Nova Scotia has provided the Talent Trust with funding for

the amount of \$100,000 since 2010. During this 13-year time period, our organisational expenses have increased by 47%. This amount was increased to \$115,000 in 2023, however it is not guaranteed that this level of funding will continue indefinitely.

Opportunities

- **Corporate partnerships:** Corporate donations and sponsorships comprised less than 3% of our fundraising revenue in 2021-22. This presents the opportunity to explore more corporate partnerships for expenses that are difficult to fund through grant programs, including operational funding, recruitment and retention, and to commemorate the Talent Trusts's 80th anniversary in May 2024.
- **Community partnerships:** Collaborating with other nonprofits to share information and resources can help manage workload management and organisational capacity.
- **Crowdfunding:** Engaging the public to raise funds through crowdfunding is a cost-effective way to increase general individual donations, which made up over 30% of total fundraising revenue for 2021-22.
- **Reaching under-represented markets:** Implementing the recommendations from the EDIA report will create new opportunities to engage with audiences in under-represented markets.

Threats

- **Access to funding :** Access to government funding is a major problem in the nonprofit sector and, among many issues, negatively impacts attraction and retention efforts. Labour shortages lead to a competitive labour market and data suggests organisations should explore non-financial measures to recruit and retain talent. (1)
- **Increase in poverty :** Food Banks Canada gave Nova Scotia a failing grade on its poverty reduction efforts and reported more than half of the population feels worse off compared to the previous year. (2) Difficult economic times impact fundraising; families have less time and disposable income to participate in and support the arts.
- **Inflation and interest rates :** With increases in inflation and interest rates, young people may not pursue educational opportunities in the arts or they may delay enrolling. Without students, the Talent Trust is at risk of losing its relevance for supporting emerging artists. The scholarship amount of \$1,000 has devalued over time, also due to inflation.
- **Concerns about healthcare and other critical issues :** donors may perceive their contributions as better spent on more immediate societal concerns. The Talent Trust must effectively communicate the intrinsic value of arts and culture to mitigate the risk of decreased funding and ensure continued support for nurturing emerging artistic talent.

(1) Data sourced from the *"2022 State of the Sector Survey Report, Nova Scotia's Community Impact Sector"* published in June 2022 by Impact Organizations of Nova Scotia.

(2) Data sourced from *"Poverty Report Cards"* published in September 2023 by Food Banks Canada.

2024-26 Strategic Priorities

The Talent Trust Board of Directors met in November 2023 and reviewed the prior strategic plan. Board members and the Executive Director gave feedback to help establish new priorities.

Strategic Priority 1: Operational Capacity

To enhance our operational capacity by 2025, we aim to leverage the 80th-anniversary milestone to attract new funding sources and strengthen partnerships with existing and potential donors and sponsors. A targeted fundraising campaign will be developed, utilising the significance of the anniversary to appeal to these groups. Various channels, including social media, email campaigns and events, will be used to maximise outreach and encourage contributions.

Additionally, our efforts will focus on engaging potential corporate and community partners who align with our values, emphasising collaborative opportunities associated with the 80th anniversary. Operational funding to increase our organisational capacity, and exploring internships and volunteer engagement strategies, are essential components of our plan to sustain growth.

Strategic Priority 2: Implementation of EDIA Report Recommendations

With our goals for implementing foundational improvements and fostering inclusivity, the Talent Trust will evaluate the eligibility and scoring criteria for the scholarship program from an EDIA perspective. To address barriers, the application process will be simplified, incorporating alternative methods and individual support. Organisational operations will align with EDIA recommendations through the review and revision of mission statements and language, with a focus on diversifying Board and committee memberships. Strategic outreach initiatives will intentionally recruit from under-represented communities, while collaborating with other organisations and organising community events will enhance inclusivity.

Strategic Priority 3: Scholarship Program Expansion and Development

To ensure effective and equitable scholarship distribution, the Talent Trust set goals for 2025 to establish a plan for the \$2.8 million bequest and scholarship amounts, and implement a communication plan to raise awareness of the expanded scholarship program. Seeking opportunities for new scholarships involves creating a strategy to engage potential sponsors, and leveraging the 80th anniversary and community events is a way to build relationships. These initiatives and others aim to support our plans for an inclusive and impactful scholarship program that meets the evolving needs of emerging artists.

An action plan for the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan follows in the [Appendix: Action Plan](#).

Appendix: Action Plan

Nova Scotia Talent Trust 2024-2026 Strategic Plan

Approved March 2024

Key Considerations		
Operational funding. Create opportunities for engagement to diversify our funding sources and strengthen partnerships.	Market research. Feedback from the EDIA report and surveys will be used to adapt eligibility, scoring and application process.	Donor and sponsorship trends. Increased focus on arts organisations that prioritise diversity, equity and inclusion.
Vision		
To support the development of talented Nova Scotians in the pursuit of a professional career in the arts.		
Mission		
Nova Scotian artists will enrich the cultural vibrancy of our province, country and the world.		
Mandate		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide scholarships and special awards to talented Nova Scotians in the formative stages of their artistic development in all disciplines • Build awareness of the Talent Trust and its aims • Raise funds to support the ongoing awarding of scholarships • Attract funds to support the awards program • Promote recipients of Talent Trust funding 		
Strategic Priorities/Goals		
Operational capacity: Leverage 80th anniversary milestone to attract new sources of funding and strengthen partnerships.	Implementation of EDIA Report Recommendations: Implement foundational improvements to processes, laying the groundwork for broader organisational changes.	Scholarship Program Expansion and Development: Ensure effective, equitable distribution of new and existing scholarships.
Action Items		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Targeted fundraising campaign leveraging the significance of the 80th anniversary milestone. 2. Engage corporate and community partners, maximise outreach and contributions and increase organisational capacity by adding staff and volunteers. 3. Create an automated donor / sponsor lead funnel to increase donor base. 4. Explore new opportunities for donor stewardship and recognition. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review eligibility, scoring and scholarship application process and address and eliminate barriers to apply. 2. Revise our organisational operations to align with the EDIA recommendations and expand our reach into under-represented communities. 3. Build partnerships with organisations serving under-represented communities. 4. Establish mentorship or peer support programs within the organisation to provide ongoing guidance, support, and networking opportunities for individuals from under-represented backgrounds. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a communications plan to increase awareness for the scholarship program and ensure eligible applicants continue to apply. 2. Create a strategy to increase named awards from individual donors and sponsors. 3. Seek opportunities for the Talent Trust to connect with the community through live events. 4. Establish new connections with other provincial organisations to increase impact.
Measures		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of donors and amount fundraised for the 80th anniversary. - Number of corporate and community partners and their contributions. - Hire a new staff person. - Number of volunteers. - Number of new donors / sponsors. - Stewardship plan that acknowledges donors and attracts new donors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gather feedback from applicants regarding their experiences with the application process and any recommendations for improvements. - Number of people in and organisations serving under-represented communities who engage with us. - Number of new partnerships / projects with other organisations. - Create a mentorship program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of applicants who apply to the scholarship program. - Number of named awards from individual donors and sponsors. - Number of community events attended / hosted. - Number of new connections with provincial organisations.

Strategic Priority 1: Operational Capacity		
Goal by 2025: Leverage 80th anniversary milestone to attract new sources of funding and strengthen partnerships.		
2024 Actions	2025 Actions	2026 Actions
Fund Development		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a targeted fundraising campaign, leveraging the significance of the 80th anniversary milestone, to appeal to donors and potential supporters. 2. Share fundraisers and donation appeals on social media, email campaigns and events to maximise outreach and encourage contributions. 3. Identify and engage potential corporate and community partners aligned with the organisation's mission, and communicate the unique opportunities presented by the 80th anniversary to invite collaboration. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and map out the different donor journeys, including first-time donors, monthly or returning donors, corporate sponsorships, and named scholarship sponsors. 2. Develop a semi-automated system online that will collect the potential donor's contact information and provide information about options available to support the Talent Trust. 3. Create customised communication strategies for each donor journey that can be used in follow-up discussions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a thorough analysis of current donor stewardship practices and recognition methods. 2. Research industry best practices and innovative approaches to donor recognition and stewardship. 3. Integrate new ideas into the overall donor stewardship strategy.
Staff Capacity		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore operational funding opportunities through government grants, foundations and philanthropic organisations. 2. Leverage the significance of the 80th anniversary milestone and bequest to communicate how additional staffing will contribute to sustained growth and impact. 3. Explore opportunities to host interns or work training participants who can contribute to the organisation's activities while gaining valuable experience. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to diversify funding streams through government grants, foundations and philanthropic organisations. 2. Conduct an assessment of current organisational needs to identify areas where additional staff support would have the greatest impact. 3. Pursue targeted fundraising campaigns or grant opportunities specifically aimed at funding additional staff positions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a more targeted approach to securing funding from government grants, foundations, and philanthropic organisations, focusing on high-potential opportunities. 2. Develop action plans to address identified needs, allocating resources and personnel accordingly. 3. Utilise a data-driven approach to ensure that volunteer and staff resources are deployed strategically to maximise impact and efficiency.
Board & Volunteer Engagement		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify specific strengths and areas where each Board member can contribute effectively towards achieving goals for the 80th-anniversary and beyond. 2. Conduct a volunteer recruitment campaign and create a database that outlines the diverse talents and expertise within the volunteer base. This will enable the Executive Director to delegate specific responsibilities as needed. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilise the attention garnered from the 80th anniversary to promote the opportunity to join the Board of Directors. 2. Develop training materials or resources to support volunteers in their roles and provide ongoing guidance and support as needed to maximise their impact and satisfaction. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement a Board succession plan that outlines a clear process for identifying, recruiting, and onboarding new Board members to ensure continuity of leadership and diverse perspectives. 2. Establish a centralised database that catalogues volunteers' skills, interests, and availability, facilitating efficient deployment and matching of volunteers to specific roles and responsibilities.

Strategic Priority 2: Implementation of EDIA Report Recommendations		
Goal by 2025: Implement foundational improvements to processes, laying the groundwork for broader organisational changes.		
2024 Actions	2025 Actions	2026 Actions
Scholarship Eligibility and Scoring		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate eligibility criteria with an EDIA perspective to ensure alignment with inclusive principles and identify areas for improvement. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a comparative analysis of eligibility criteria used by similar organisations, including those serving diverse cultural communities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement a structured process for regular review and improvement of eligibility criteria and scoring process with an EDIA focus.

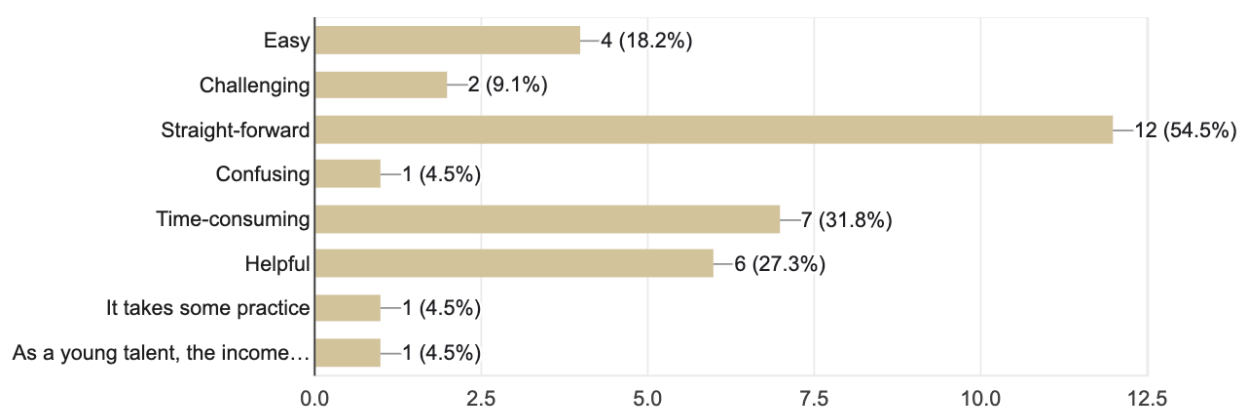
2. Review scholarship scoring criteria to address and eliminate barriers related to financial, cultural, or regional challenges in the pursuit of artistic studies.	2. Create opportunities for applicants to provide feedback and insights on potential biases or barriers.	
Scholarship Application Process		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simplify the application process by improving the accessibility of our website and online application form, ensuring a more user-friendly experience for all applicants. 2. Offer alternative methods of applying and provide individual support to applicants as needed to ensure each applicant has an equal opportunity to submit an application. 3. Gather feedback from applicants regarding their experiences with the application process and any recommendations for improvements. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor the impact of enhancements made to the application process on applicant satisfaction, diversity of applicant pool, and equitable access to scholarship opportunities. 2. Engage with stakeholders, including scholarship recipients, community partners, and funders, to solicit feedback and input on EDIA initiatives and identify areas for further improvement and innovation. 3. Regularly review and refine EDIA-related strategies based on feedback and evaluation findings to continuously improve the scholarship application process. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and implement targeted strategies to address identified issues and enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of the application process, such as providing language translation services, offering culturally sensitive support resources, and ensuring accommodations for applicants with disabilities. 2. Foster a culture of accountability and transparency by reporting on EDIA-related outcomes and progress toward achieving equity and inclusion goals in the scholarship program.
Organisational Operations		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and revise mission, vision and mandate statements to align with the recommendations outlined in the EDIA report. 2. Review and revise language on the website and in promotional materials to effectively convey the Talent Trust's commitment to being inclusive and welcoming to all emerging artists. 3. Review and update recruitment processes with the goal to diversify Board and scholarship selection committee (SSC) membership scholarship application process. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrate Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) principles into organisational policies, procedures, and decision-making frameworks 2. Develop and implement training programs for staff, Board members, and volunteers to increase awareness and understanding of EDIA principles and their application in daily operations. 3. Strengthen partnerships with EDIA-focused organisations and community groups to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and collaborate on initiatives aimed at advancing equity and inclusion within the organisation and the broader community. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand EDIA efforts beyond internal operations to encompass external-facing activities, such as programming, partnerships, and community engagement, to extend the organisation's reach and influence in promoting equity and inclusion within the arts sector. 2. Regularly assess and communicate EDIA-related outcomes and achievements to stakeholders, demonstrating accountability, transparency, and progress toward organisational EDIA goals.
Outreach		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intentionally recruit applicants from under-represented communities with the goal to increase diversity among scholarship recipients. 2. Partner with other community organisations to collaborate on projects and extend reach throughout the province. 3. As part of the 80th-anniversary celebration, organise community outreach events in rural and under-represented areas across the province to engage and connect with diverse communities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct regular reviews and adjustments of outreach strategies based on feedback from community partners and stakeholders to ensure alignment with community needs and priorities. 2. Collaborate with cultural community leaders to gain deeper understanding in crafting messaging that resonates with diverse audiences. 3. Integrate EDIA considerations into all aspects of outreach planning to ensure that efforts are inclusive and culturally responsive. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand partnerships with community organisations and stakeholders representing underrepresented communities to collaborate on outreach initiatives that address specific barriers to participation and promote inclusivity. 2. Implement culturally sensitive and inclusive messaging and materials in outreach campaigns to resonate with diverse audiences and foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity.

Strategic Priority 3: Scholarship Program Expansion and Development		
Goal by 2025: Ensure effective, equitable distribution of new and existing scholarships.		
2024 Actions	2025 Actions	2026 Actions
Establish distribution plan for \$2.8 million bequest		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure a sufficient number of eligible applicants to support the growing distribution of Judith A Grant Bursaries, which will increase annually from \$19k in 2023 to \$44k in 2025 and \$96k in 2026. 2. Perform yearly assessments of scholarship amounts to ensure they adequately meet the needs of applicants. 3. Implement a communication plan to increase awareness of the recently expanded scholarship program, to both applicants and stakeholders with clear information on eligibility criteria and scholarship amounts. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborate with academic advisors, student services offices, and financial aid departments to identify eligible students, promote scholarship opportunities, and provide targeted support to applicants throughout the application process. 2. Highlight the impact and importance of the Judith A Grant Bursaries in facilitating access to education, and contributing to the rich arts culture in Nova Scotia to attract major gift donors. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen partnerships with post-secondary Institutions to enhance scholarship outreach and recruitment. 2. Collect feedback from scholarship recipients to assess the adequacy of scholarship amounts. Use data-driven analysis to inform decisions about adjusting scholarship amounts, ensuring they remain responsive to evolving student demographics and financial circumstances.
Seek opportunities to establish new scholarships and Special Awards		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a strategy to engage potential scholarship sponsors and donors, outlining various approaches for them to establish a named scholarship or special award. 2. Leverage opportunities created during the 80th anniversary and community events to find new potential sponsors. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create opportunities for donors to directly interact with scholarship recipients, share their stories, and witness the impact of their philanthropy first-hand. 2. Organise information sessions, workshops, or webinars to educate community members about the benefits of sponsoring scholarships and special awards, and provide guidance on how to get involved. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore opportunities for co-funding or matching scholarship programs with institutional contributions to maximise impact and sustainability. 2. Develop customised sponsorship packages with a range of sponsorship options, including named scholarships, endowed funds, programmatic support, and targeted initiatives, to accommodate different levels of giving and donor preferences.

Appendix: Artist Survey

The Talent Trust has a distribution list with 1,200 email addresses that receive our newsletter, which includes all artists who applied for a scholarship from 2020 - 2023. We sent the Artist Survey to the newsletter distribution list on February 20, 2024 and made it available for responses for three weeks. Twenty-two (22) artists responded to the survey and a summary of their responses are below. To view the survey responses in full, see the [Nova Scotia Talent Trust Artist Survey online](#).

1. What words best describe your experience with the application process?

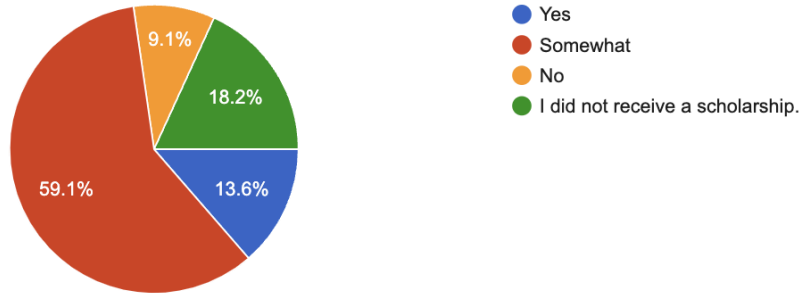


Other responses: (1) It takes some practice (2) As a young talent, the income parts were somewhat challenging to complete

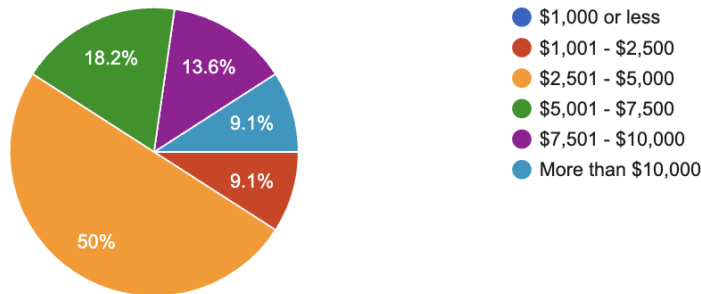
2. How can the Nova Scotia Talent Trust better support emerging artists with the application process?

Responses: (1) Talent Trust was very supportive (2) Thorough feedback or perhaps examples. (3) Also considering financial needs with achievements. (4) Perhaps a video showing someone applying would help? (5) NSTT has always been very helpful to me with the application process (6) I found the website to be very straightforward and helpful, so I don't think any change is necessary. (7) Give examples of how support persons might help with their work. FAQs they receive, etc (8) Have an application form that can be worked on in stages, not all at once. (9) Focus on the quality of projects/applicants rather than so-called equity. (10) Make it simple as possible (11) Give more helpful and constructive feedback (12) I felt the application process was very straightforward and clear, there was plenty of explanations and examples to follow through, It was a while back but I remember a slight technical difficulty and the the staff was very responsive and helped me right away. (13) honestly just be more known out there. it was hard to find you guys.

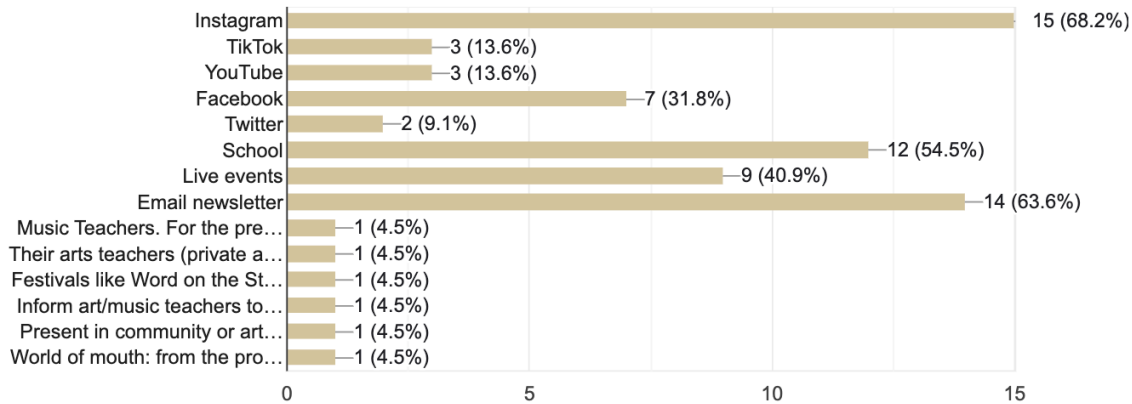
3. If you received a scholarship, did the dollar amount (\$) meet your educational or artistic needs?



4. What dollar amount (\$) provided by a scholarship would make a big impact on an artists' early career?

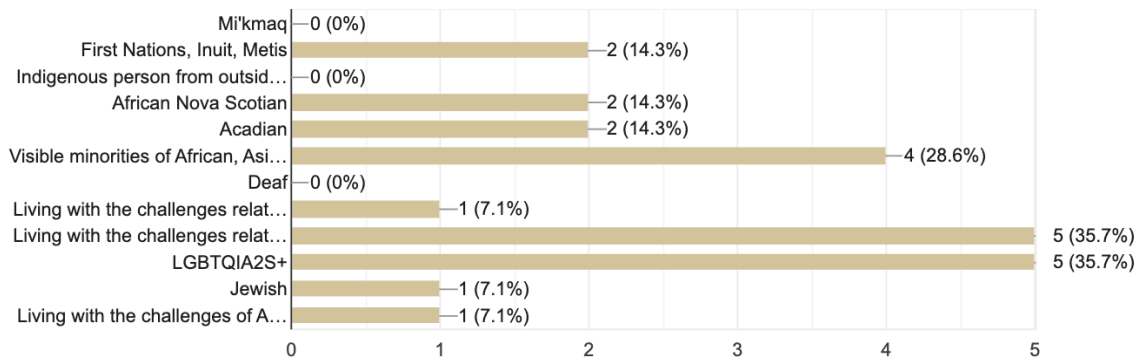


5. What is the best way for us to reach emerging artists, to tell them about Nova Scotia Talent Trust scholarships?



Other responses: (1) Music Teachers. For the previous question, it really depends on how early the education is. Is it from 5 year old? Or in the early stage of being a professional? Or is a professional but still developing? Some pre-professionals actually really need financial support to pursue their career. They are the students who needs most because the expenses are high but they are not able to make good money to support themselves (2) Their arts teachers (private and public/school system) (3) Festivals like Word on the Street, LinkedIn (4) Inform art/music teachers to tell their students. Advertise in Kiwanis, NSCAD and MCPA fliers (5) Present in community or art settings (6) Word of mouth: from the professionals in the field of arts.

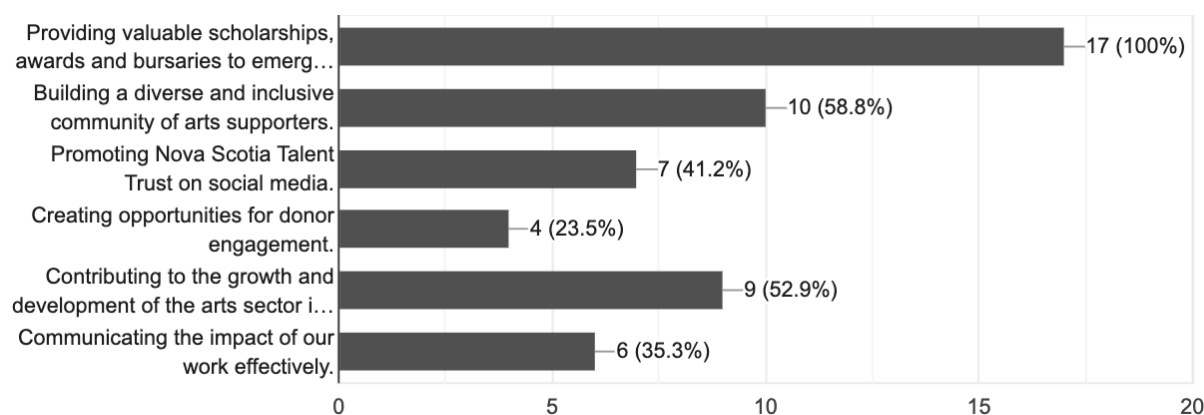
To help us better understand if we're reaching emerging artists in all communities, we invite you to share any details about yourself that you feel comfortable with.



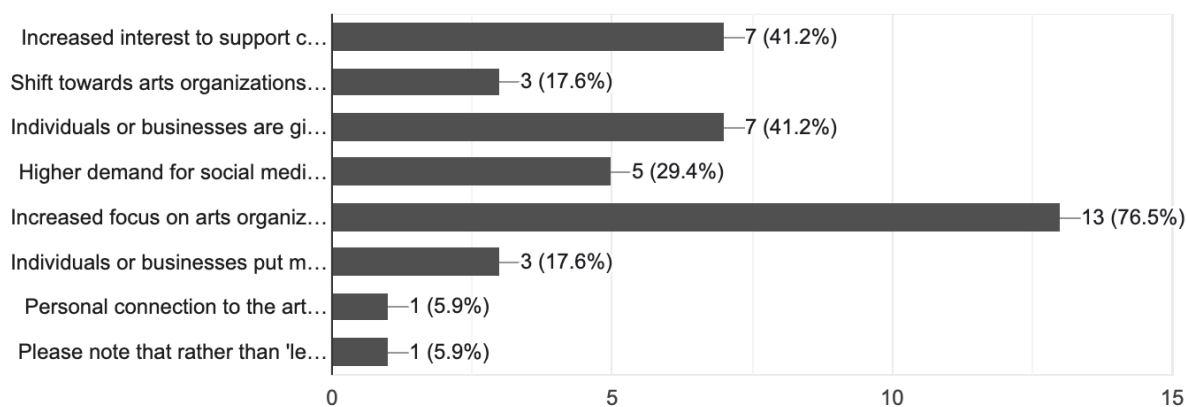
Appendix: Supporters' Survey

The Talent Trust has a distribution list with 1,200 email addresses that receive our newsletter, which includes individual donors, corporate sponsors, and community partners. We sent the Supporters' Survey to the newsletter distribution list on February 20, 2024 and made it available for responses for three weeks. Seventeen (17) people responded to the survey and a summary of their responses are below. To view the survey responses in full, see the [Nova Scotia Talent Trust Supporters' Survey online](#).

1. What is the Nova Scotia Talent Trust doing well?

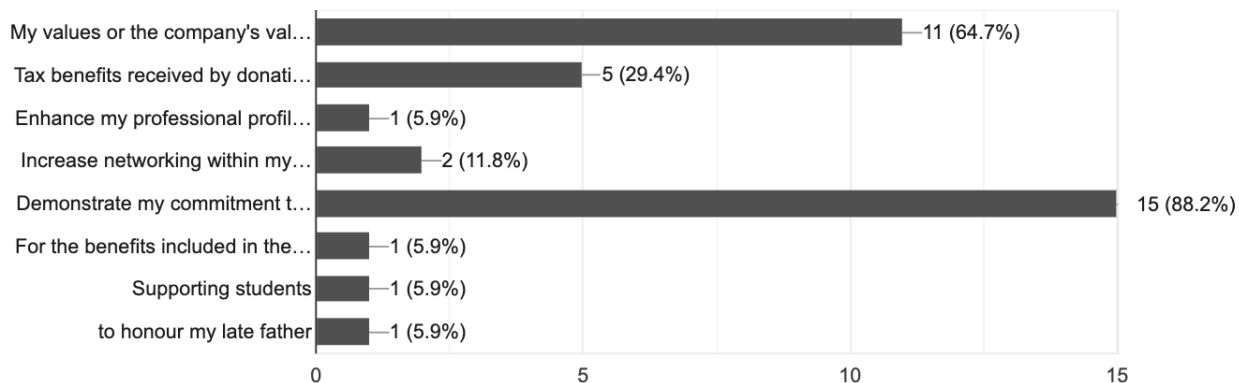


2. What are some trends you're noticing related to donations or sponsorships for the arts?



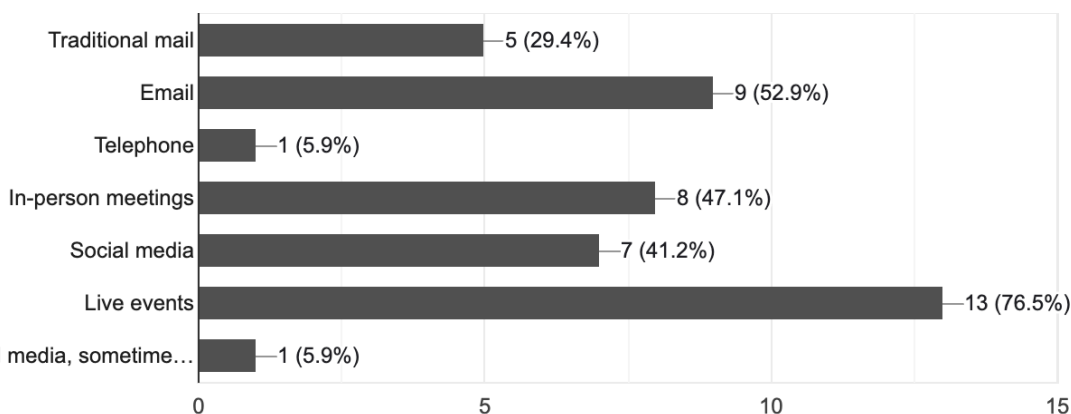
Other responses: (1) Personal connection to the art organisation like being a relative or friend of a scholarship recipient. Or having a friend sitting on the board of the NSTT.

3. What motivates you to donate money to non-profit arts organisations?



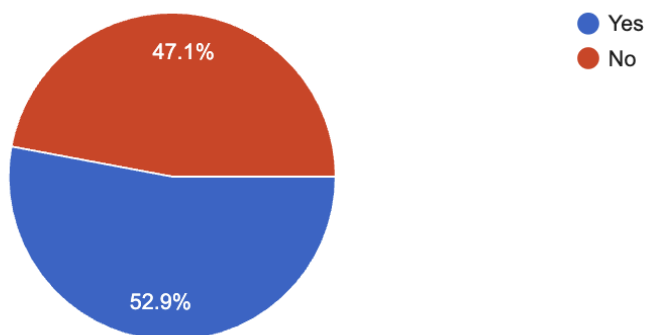
Other responses: (1) Supporting students (2) to honour my late father

4. What is the most effective way for the Nova Scotia Talent Trust to connect with potential donors and sponsors?



Other responses: (1) Maybe social media, sometimes that can be off-putting

5. Did you know, any person or business can sponsor and name a Nova Scotia Talent Trust scholarship for a minimum of \$1,000?



Appendix: Activity Report 2023-24

Strategic Priority 1: Fundraising		Report for Fiscal Year 2023/24
Goal by 2023: Increase the endowment to \$6 million		
2023 Actions	Responsibility	
Set up fundraising infrastructure to ensure success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase internal capacity by seeking fundraising training opportunities focused on major gifts and endowment fundraising Explore opportunities for in-person community engagement (art fairs, shows, festivals) to seek new community and corporate connections 	<p><u>Responsibility</u> – Executive Director, NSTT & Foundation Boards</p> <p><u>Accountability</u> – Board Chair</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In response to the unexpected bequest, emphasis shifted towards refining the communication strategy to align with the immediate priority of sharing news of the expanded scholarship program. The Talent Trust was present at many community events to make new connections and spread awareness, including the Designer Craft Show, Hal-Con, and the ECMA's.
Fundraising strategy and implementation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a fundraising action plan that includes specific roles, tasks and timelines for each strategy: grant writing, community fundraisers, major and planned giving, and corporate sponsorship. Explore opportunities for peer-to-peer fundraising through Canada Helps (for a Special Award or for a specific discipline) and develop a communication plan to create awareness Engage recent recipients and alumni in marketing to create emotional connection 	<p><u>Responsibility</u> – Executive Director & Development Committee</p> <p><u>Accountability</u> – Executive Director</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fundraising calendar and corporate package were developed. In response to the news of the bequest, a committee was formed to develop a PR strategy and announcement event. Two specialized campaigns were established for the Anne-Marie Woods Travel Scholarship and Hal-Con Scholarship funds. This was communicated through community events, social media, and email campaigns. The 2023 Talent Trust Ambassador shared her testimonial and artistic process as part of our annual donation campaign. The artwork of a scholarship recipient was featured in the holiday campaign. The bequest announcement included scholarship alumni from past and present. All recipients are promoted regularly on the Talent Trust social media channels.
Donor cultivation and stewardship		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultivate relationships with major donors via calls, meetings, and sponsorship slide deck Approach non-traditional funders (ie. Airbnb) 	<p><u>Responsibility</u> – Executive Director & Board</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sponsorship slide deck was created and new connections made through community events. Although focus was shifted to the bequest, this indirectly attracted new potential donors and sponsors.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct ongoing research • Maintain and strengthen existing donor relationships with phone calls, emails, thank you cards 	<u>Accountability</u> – Executive Director (ongoing reporting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New scholarships are being created with 100+ Women Who Care Halifax and the Hal-Con Sci-Fi and Fantasy Association. Outreach is ongoing. • Relationships with existing donors were strengthened through in-person interactions at community events, the Bequest Announcement, and the Special Awards Ceremony.
Marketing campaigns to support fundraising success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing campaign strategy to support fundraising • Ensure consistent branding and messaging throughout website and collateral 	<u>Responsibility</u> – Executive Director, Development Committee <u>Accountability</u> – Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A PR Consultant was contracted to support the communication strategy for the bequest announcement. The momentum and new contacts gained from the announcement will be leveraged for ongoing fundraising efforts. • The main website has been updated and refreshed; branding is consistent online and on info materials

Strategic Priority 2: Staff and Board Development Goal by 2023: A full time ED and fundraiser and part time social/communications and scholarship program coordinator		Report for Fiscal Year 2023/24
2023 Actions	Responsibility	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek funding to facilitate hiring a part-time Scholarship Program Coordinator. This position will support the significant growth in the scholarship program anticipated in 2024. • Engage an EDI consultant to review scholarship application and selection processes and provide recommendations • Develop EDI best practices for staff, Board, and Scholarship Selection Committee 	<u>Responsibility</u> – Executive Director, NSTT Board, Executive Committee <u>Accountability</u> – Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community grant provided funding to cover the Scholarship Program Coordinator during peak times of application submissions and review. • The Talent Trust worked with Bernadette Melita and Placemaking 4G to conduct an EDI review of the scholarship application and selection process. • The recommendations in the EDI report were used to provide direction for the 3-year Strategic Plan 2024-27.
Board Development to support strategic priorities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 • Review NSTT's policies and articles 	<u>Responsibility</u> – Executive Director, NSTT Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive Director and Board of Directors collaborated with consultant Krista Keough, Strategic Arts Management to create the new Strategic Plan.

	<u>Accountability</u> – Board Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSTT’s governance documents were reviewed and updated in September 2023.
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Strategic Priority 3: Awareness & Community Engagement		Report for Fiscal Year 2023/24
Goal by 2023: Develop new partnerships and deepen existing partnerships		
2023 Actions	Responsibilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to live events in 2023: Spring gala and Special Awards Ceremony Ongoing social media engagement with alumni, arts organizations, sponsors, and supporters. Engage current recipients in awareness and fundraising campaign Develop communication strategy for bequest and 80th anniversary celebrations 	<p><u>Responsibility</u> – Executive Director & Development Committee</p> <p><u>Accountability</u> – Executive Director</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Spring gala was replaced with the Bequest Announcement event held on October 17, 2023. The Special Awards Ceremony was held live for the first time since 2019 on December 5, 2023. Social media engagement continues to increase on Facebook and Instagram with the promotion of Talent Trust alumni and community news/events. A TikTok account was created to respond to current trends and reach a younger generation of emerging artists. A communication strategy was developed with the support of PR Consultant Peggy Walt, Cultural Affairs Promotion.

Strategic Priority 4: Core Service/Scholarship Development		Report for Fiscal Year 2023/24
Goal by 2023: Bigger scholarships, more outreach in the long term		
2023 Actions	Responsibilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a Bequest sub-committee to develop a public relations strategy in relation to the bequest and new scholarships Create a plan to disperse existing scholarship funds and the new music scholarships from the bequest in a way that balances funding between disciplines. Continue outreach to schools, arts organizations, community and cultural organizations 	<p><u>Responsibility</u> – Executive Director, NSTT Board</p> <p><u>Accountability</u> – Executive Director</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee was formed and worked with Peggy Walt to develop a communication strategy and plan the announcement event. A scholarship planning committee was formed to discuss and make recommendations to the Board regarding the disbursement plan for the new Judith A Grant Bursaries. Outreach is ongoing. 30-minute presentations on the scholarship application process have been made available to schools and instructors.

		Several presentations were done, including an information panel at Hal-Con.
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