

## **CCCO Advocacy and Consultation Activities in 2007**

CCCO gives high priority to advocacy in support of meeting the human resources and career development needs of Ontario's cultural sector. In 2007 we've continued to push for such increased and reliable support.

A key component of these representations has been a proposal for an Ontario Cultural Sector Training Fund to be created out of resources that will flow to Ontario under the recently signed Federal-Provincial Agreements on Labour Market Development (LMDA) and Labour Market Partnership (LMPA). LMDA has now been implemented and delivery of programs under this agreement now resides with the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities (the programs having been transferred from the Federal Department of Human Resources and Social Development).

However, support for training under LMDA continues to be restricted to those workers who are EI eligible, which is a serious drawback for our sector where so many workers are self-employed. For this reason we continue to push for implementation of LMPA and have lobbied Federal and Provincial Ministers about this. Ontario Ministers of Finance and of Training, Colleges & Universities have regularly urged the Federal Government to implement LMPA.

The March 2007 Federal Budget contained an item that stated "*The government is setting aside \$500 million a year, starting in 2008-09, to provide labour market training for those who are not eligible for employment insurance training*". It is to be hoped that this may, in fact, be the beginning of implementing LMPA or its equivalent. Discussions between the federal and provincial governments about this initiative have recently commenced.

### **Cultural Strategy**

In 2006 CCCO participated in the Ontario Ministry of Culture's consultations concerning the Development of a Cultural Strategy for Ontario. It is important that this strategy include addressing the human resource and career development issues and needs of all the cultural sector which includes performing arts (theatre, dance, music); visual arts, crafts and design; writing and publishing; museums, heritage, and libraries; media arts (film, broadcasting, radio, television, recording, new media). We await some indication as to the Ministry's progress in finalizing this strategy and/or a Cultural Policy for Ontario.

### **Status of the Artist**

CCCO participated in two of the 2006 Roundtables convened by the Status of the Artist Sub-Committee of the Minister of Culture's Advisory Council for Arts and Culture (MACAC), chaired by Aaron Milrad, and was invited to meet with members and staff of the Committee. Our emphasis was on the need for more support for professional development for Ontario's cultural workers.

The Sub-Committee's "*Report on the Socio-Economic Status of the Artist in Ontario in the 21st Century*" was tabled with the Minister of Culture in October 2006 and released in late December. In the Ontario Budget of March 22, 2007 a response to the recommendation for new funding for the Ontario Arts Council included a \$15

million increase, spread over 3 years, in funding for the OAC.

As well, an omnibus Bill to implement the Budget included a "*Status of Ontario's Artists Act, 2007*". The Act which has come into force, includes a Government Undertaking to "facilitate the creation of training and professional development opportunities for artists". CCCO will continue to press for specific initiatives that will give meaning to the aforementioned Government Undertaking. Leading up to the October 2007 Ontario election CCCO participated with a number of provincial arts service organizations in promoting political support for implementation of the Act's specific undertakings, including the one related to professional development.