



Associated  
Designers of  
Canada

Tuesday, March 17, 2020  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

To all designers,

We recognize this is an unprecedented time for all of us across the country. No designer or company is escaping the impacts of COVID-19 on our work and livelihoods. The Associated Designers of Canada stands with the whole of the design & theatre community in expressing our sympathy and compassion in this difficult time.

In an effort to mitigate the effects on our members, the ADC wants to provide designers with tools and resources to facilitate communication with their producers, and to open a dialogue with our members about the steps we're taking to advocate on their behalf.

Steps we are currently taking:

- We are making connections with various organizations across the country to try and set up collective action in advocating with government agencies for relief to artists.
- We are preparing open letters to governments, arts councils, and other funders, to lobby for gig workers, particularly designers.
- We are investigating ways to provide tools to facilitate designers' communications with their producers around cancelled or postponed work.
- We are in the process of creating a survey to gather information about lost income for designers nation-wide.
- We are preparing to develop mechanisms to provide specific support to members seeking financial assistance from government agencies, as those systems become available.
- In recognition of our status under the federal Status of the Artist Act, we are committed to advocating on behalf of all designers across the country, not just our members.

We recognize that companies may be slow to communicate with designers as they try to understand and respond to their own changing circumstances. We strongly encourage designers to take the initiative to start these discussions with their producers, if they haven't started already.

Some points to remember as you interact with producers:

- It is appropriate for you to ask producers if they have made decisions whether to cancel or postpone imminent productions, even if that news has not yet been made public.
- It is appropriate for you to ask that producers maintain an open dialogue with you as they make these decisions.
- If your production has not yet been affected (perhaps it is scheduled in May/June/July), it is appropriate to inquire when the company plans to make decisions about these productions.
- It is appropriate for you to ask producers to establish 'drop-dead' dates for cancellations, in the interests of establishing some measure of certainty for collaborators.

As the postponements and cancellations mount, we know many designers have been left to question if and/or when they will receive payments. Without a doubt, the circumstances will be unique to each designer and each company. The ADC has worked hard on a number of provisions in the contracts used by our members to help them through times like this, and we can advise members on how applicable clauses can assist them in navigating these exceptional circumstances.

There are numerous indications of companies across the country who are honouring the full value of contracts for designers affected by COVID-19 cancellations. We are grateful to them for their generosity and recognition of the difficult circumstances we all face.

Both the Canada Council and Ontario Arts Council have provided guidance to the recipients of project grants that they are expected to respect the contractual obligations to artists they have engaged. We believe this is good news for us as an indicator that the government is taking our position seriously. We encourage designers to ensure the producers see this guidance. We will be keeping a close eye on all provincial arts funding bodies for similar updates.

<https://canadacouncil.ca/covid-19-information>

<https://www.arts.on.ca/news-resources/news/2020/covid-19-oac-activity-updates-for-march-16.-2020>

As this is a constantly changing situation, we recognize that we may not yet have addressed all of your concerns. If you need some assistance in communication with producers, or if you have questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to the ADC office or to the Board Executive.

Most sincerely,

ADC Executive and Board of Directors

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