

FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton Reopening Plan

DRAFT Recommendations

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Executive Summary

Staff recommend a phased reopening of the Arts Centre, which aligns with the **Town's Recovery Program Strategy and Framework** (ES-008-20), beginning in September 2020.

In the initial Phase of reopening (**Phase 2 Stage 2**, pp. 4, 7), staff recommend reducing arts programs to 50% of our typical fall programming with reduced capacity (max. 10 participants per program). As it relates to our theatre spaces, staff recommend limiting programming to small, Town-delivered programs, i.e. Laurier Milton Lecture Series, Milton Film Forum. **Initial facility hours and availability is detailed on p. 2.**

Reopening a performance venue is complex and there are additional risks due to the environment (enclosed space, shared equipment) and types of activities (events which include singing, instruments). As a result, staff recommend a phased, measured approach, to reopening that is executed and overseen by full time staff through **Phase 2 Stage 2**. Staff will scale up performance sizes as we develop methodologies and become comfortable with the new paradigm, industry best practices, and changing Public Health directives. The safety of staff, volunteers, artists, patrons and participants remains our primary concern and business driver.

The phased approach, as outlined in this Reopening Plan, supports:

- Ensuring that appropriate safety protocols are in place, tested and verified;
- Better data available in order to develop, test and verify safety plans in order to protect staff, artists, patrons (i.e. wind/brass instruments, singing in confined spaces);
- Testing and verifying functionality of ticket selling (i.e. physical distance seat mapping) and screening of patrons.

Anticipated dates and associated milestones:

Date	Milestone	Phase
Sep. 23	Box office/customer service desk open (limited hours)	Phase 2 Stage 2
Sept. 29	Fall Program Registration	Phase 2 Stage 2
Oct.	User Group Meeting	Phase 2 Stage 2
Oct. 19	Arts programs start, studio rentals available	Phase 2 Stage 2
Oct.	Limited theatre programs start	Phase 2 Stage 2
Nov. 1 - Dec. 31	Limited theatre rental available (and tickets will be put on sale, if applicable, in accordance with established timelines)	Phase 2 Stage 3
Jan. 1 - onwards	Resume operations governed by Provincially and Municipally endorsed safety protocols	Phase 3

All dates and milestones are subject to change based on outcomes in each phase as well as ongoing direction in light of the evolving public health situation.

1. Introduction

The following is intended to provide a road map for the safe reopening of the Arts Centre and its amenities including theatre, studios, programs and gallery. Staff are recommending a phased approach to reopening, which aligns with the **Town’s Recovery Program Strategy and Framework** (ES-008-20).

At the time of writing the Reopening Plan, there is no single document that is regarded as the guidelines for reopening a performance venue. Our recommendations are based on various guidelines for reopening performance venues (refer to pp. 13-14 for sources consulted), in addition to best practices gleaned from staff participation in industry-led working groups. As a result, some of the recommendations in this document err on the side of caution to mitigate associated risks with performances for the safety of staff, artists and patrons.

By taking a phased approach to reopening, it gives us an opportunity to review and learn from larger performance venues (i.e. The National Ballet of Canada, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Koerner Hall). And, as per the reopening of other Town facilities, our offerings will be limited at the onset of reopening and expanded based on community demand and capacity to support required service levels. Safety remains the primary consideration.

Staff circulated a **Readiness to Return Survey** to our rental clients, the results of which are included in the Appendix (26 respondents). Overall, the survey results align with the recommendations presented in this plan for reopening. While the feedback affirms a phased reopening, it also brings to staff’s attention other professional supports that may benefit Community Arts Groups more so than an expedited reopening, i.e. marketing, financial, programming, pivoting operations, etc. Staff plan to bring together rental clients for a second Arts Information Community Meeting in early October 2020 to share plans for reopening as well as to better understand their needs.

2. Facility Availability

- Open the facility Wednesday to Saturday in **Phase 2 Stage 2** (pp. 4, 7).

Hours		
Weekday	Facility Hours	Box Office Hours
Wednesday	9:30 am – 9:30 pm	9:30 – 4:30 pm
Thursday	4 pm – 9:30 pm	Closed
Friday	Open for performance*	Open for performance*
Saturday	9:30 am – 5:30 pm and open for performance*	Open for performance*

*Due to the extensive cleaning requirements, one show (either Friday or Saturday per weekend in the initial **Phases** of the Reopening Plan).

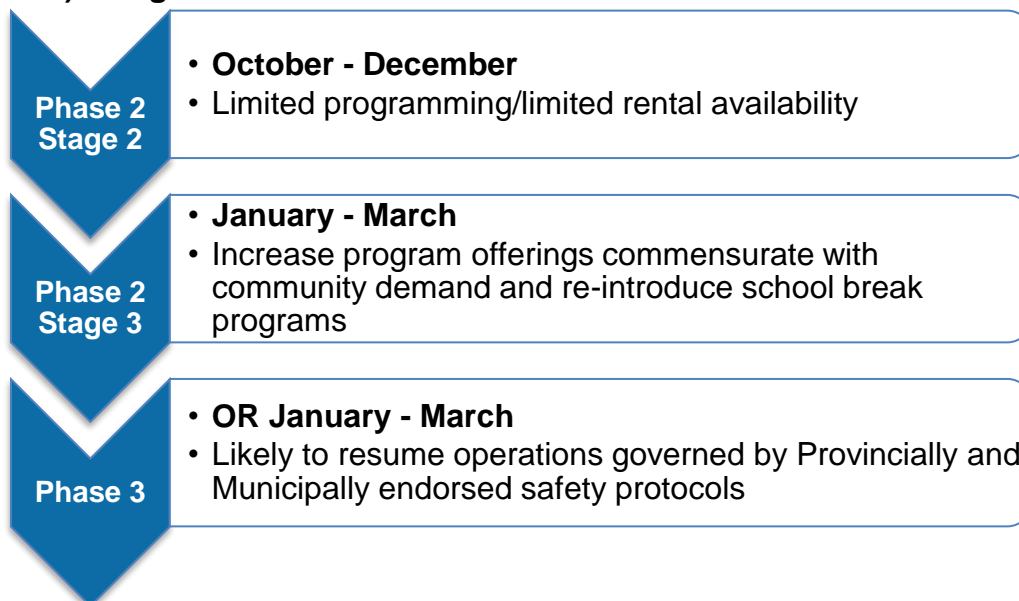
- Maximum capacity of 50 participants/patrons per amenity subject to establish capacities (p.11).
- Box Office staffed by full time staff.

3. Education and Communication

- Communication in advance (i.e. at point of purchase, website, via email) and reinforced on site per established protocols: signage and floor markings to reinforce behaviour (physical distancing, wearing of masks), self-screening procedures for staff, participants and performers.
- Screening measures for staff, participants and performers to be consistent with established Town protocols;
- Provide information to staff, participants and performers on:
 - The symptoms of COVID-19, and that they must stay home if they are unwell or symptomatic or have travelled out of Province or internationally within the past 14 days.
 - Preventative measures, including frequent handwashing, cough and sneeze etiquette, and frequent cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces.
 - Proper sanitation of public spaces.
 - Personal protective equipment requirements.
 - Adjustments to public areas and movement patterns and corresponding signage.
 - Adjustments to stage and backstage areas and corresponding signage.

4. Arts Programs and Studio Rentals

a) Programs



- Reduced class sizes and reduced program offerings focusing on programs that typically experience higher demand, while providing options for all demographics (preschool, child, youth and adult).
- Programs scheduled to commence week of October 12, 2020. Workshops will be periodic, with the potential to increase offerings in the fall relative to demand.
- At present, 20 programs and workshops are scheduled with a total capacity of 230. (This represents a 50% reduction in programming, and is subject to change.)

Revenue Projection*		
Revenue	Staffing	Net Revenue
\$24,445.00	\$10,073.53	\$14,371.47

- Implement changes to programming in order to limit sharing of materials and supplies, i.e. bring-your-own supplies, material kits included in cost of program, etc.

b) Facilities

- Hand sanitizing stations at entry and touch points for staff and participants.
- Occupancy limits will be posted on entryways to enclosed spaces such as studios, lobby area in front of studios, preparation room, storage areas, etc.
- Prop open doors to program areas to reduce contact with high-touch surfaces.

c) Sanitizing the Studios

- Implement cleaning processes before and after programs. All surfaces, doorknobs, light fixtures should be disinfected before and after the program.
- Programs that occur in the same space will be scheduled with as much time in between programs as possible to allow for enhanced cleaning (**1 hour minimum**).
- Educating staff on proper sanitation of shared spaces/equipment (i.e. prep room).

d) Recalling Staff

- Staff typically consult instructors regarding program offerings / changes to program offerings; however modifying programs based on safety protocols, higher performing programs et al. and will recall staff per protocols outlined by HR.
- Timelines/adherence to established protocols outlined by HR.

e) Renters of Studio Space

- **Fine Arts Society of Milton** (Request to use Robert Bateman Studio on Wednesday afternoons): Pending approval of Reopening Plan and adherence to established rental protocols, i.e. capacity limit, pre-registration.
- **Milton Philharmonic Orchestra** (historically recurring renters of Tim Hortons Studio on Monday evenings): Per Reopening Plan, Arts Centre will be inaccessible on Monday evenings, which is their typical rental timeslot. In addition, there is not enough information available about wind/brass instruments and singing in confined spaces to permit use of enclosed space in **Phase 2 Stage 2** (Source: [Public Health Ontario – What we know transmission risks singing wind instruments](#)). Staff will discuss next steps with Milton Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO).
- **Milton Show Choir** (Request for space on Tuesday/Wednesday evenings either at Arts Centre or Senior’s Centre): It would be for physically distant choreography only until there is better data available to develop plans in order to protect participants singing in enclosed spaces, or public health restrictions have been further loosened.

5. Customer Service/Box Office

a) Customer Service

Hours	
Weekday	Box Office Hours
Wednesday	9:30 am – 4:30 pm
Thursday	Closed
Friday	Open for performance*
Saturday	Open for performance*

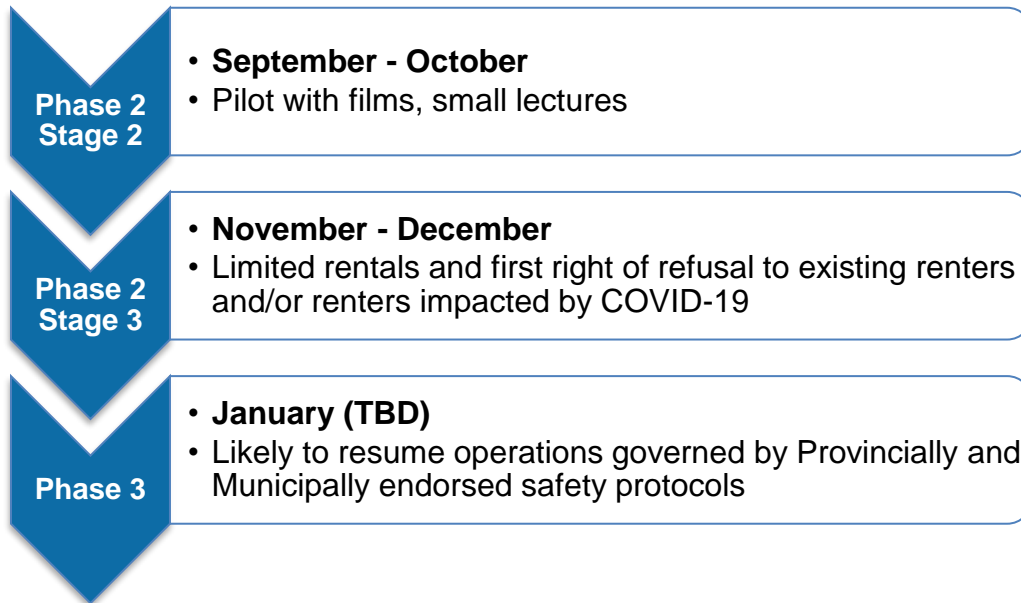
*Due to the extensive cleaning requirements, one show (either Friday or Saturday per weekend in the initial **Phases** of the Reopening Plan).

- Follow established customer service standard operating procedures i.e. provide customer service staff with appropriate PPE, protective barriers installed at customer service desks, encourage cash-free payments.
- ### b) Box Office
- Implement physical distancing floor plan management at point of purchase (supported by Ticketing Software);
 - Timed entry to manage capacity. Ingress/egress timing to be assigned at time of ticket purchase (Staff to investigate if this can be supported by Ticketing Software).
 - Reserved seating only (no General Admission). Contact information (email address and phone number) will be collected and kept on file with the seat number in the event it is required for contact tracing.
 - Patrons who are unwell must stay at home;

- Update ticket policy to allow for day of event returns and waive associated fees.
- Establish will-call pick-up time slots to control traffic, encourage ticket pick-up in advance of performance, paperless or print home tickets.
- Hearing assistive devices are required to be booked at time of ticket purchase (Staff to investigate if this can be supported by Ticketing Software), and hearing assistive device will be made available to patron at their seat on day of performance.

6. Theatre

a) Programs



- **Phase 2 Stage 2**
- Pilot with films (i.e. one film in September, one film in October), small lectures (i.e. Laurier Lectures), etc., for 4-6 weeks.

Revenue Projection		
Revenue	Expenses i.e. film rights	Net Revenue
\$1350.00	\$600.00	\$750.00

- If successful, move to **Phase 2 Stage 3**.
- **Phase 2 Stage 3** (4-6 weeks following successful outcomes of **Stage 2**).
- Prioritize access to existing rentals and/or those impacted by COVID-19.
- Limit usage to lower risk performances;
- Staff will address what constitutes a lower risk performance in a separate report, i.e. restricted cast sizes, performances to recorded track, lectures, small ensembles without brass/woodwind instruments, etc. in advance of progressing to **Stage 3**. Staff will look to scale up performance sizes as

- we develop methodologies and become comfortable with the new paradigm and changing Public Health directives.
- Review rental rates in late September commensurate with capacities. Rates to remain consistent in 2020 regardless of capacity/gathering-size restrictions.
 - **Phase 3** January 2021 (based on successful outcomes of **Stage 2**).

b) Facilities

- Maximum capacity of 50 audience members and only one theatre operational at any given time.
- Provide clear instructions/signage for distancing in line-ups and holding/waiting areas.
- Separate entry and exit points such that people are moving in the same direction (ingress/egress of theatre).
- Washroom access must be restricted to a limited number of people at one time so distancing can be maintained and clear signage posted. Follow established Town protocols with respect washroom availability and cleaning protocols.
- Review and communicate emergency action plans to patrons, artists and staff via signage.
- Hand sanitizing stations at the entrance and exit to the theatre and in the backstage area for staff and performers.
- Designate separate entrance and exit points for patrons, staff and artists, if possible and consider staggering entry times.
- Positive control over access to non-public areas of the building, i.e. having a staff member check people in-and-out against a previously supplied and agreed-upon list of participants to the backstage area..

c) Front of House

- Provide audience instruction prior to the show to emphasize changes and new expectations around audience behaviour, regular ingress (only applicable if there's an intermission)/egress, emergency egress and washroom use. Use a pre-recorded message.
- **Ticket scanning and building entry:**
 - Encourage uptake of touchless options for patrons as including print at home tickets.
 - Adopt touchless ticket scanning; patron retains the ticket or electronic device during scanning.
 - Relocate scanning locations away from doorway to increase physical distancing between patrons.
- **Ushering:**
 - Limit patron movement to designated seating area only.
 - Eliminate usher contact with patrons (in **Phase 2**, plan to reintroduce in **Phase 3**) and provide self-service seating and program pickup (if any).

- Increase floor marking and aisle signage to allow patrons to find their seats more easily.
- **Coat check:**
 - Suspend coat check services, to avoid queuing and the unnecessary handling of personal objects.
- **Concession, bar, food services (i.e. Green Room):**
 - Bar/concessions unavailable in **Phase 2 Stage 2**.
 - No “buffet style” catering and use individually packaged beverages/snacks, limit Green Room capacity and remove all lounge furniture.

d) Backstage

- Companies must be less than or equal to 17 individuals (performers and technical staff combined) This figure has been determined relative to the available square footage of backstage (limited occupancy based on physical distancing guidelines 144 square meters per person);
- A list of individuals must be presented to the Arts Centre for approval in advance of the rental date. No one other than the required Arts Centre staff and people on this list will be permitted in the backstage area. There will be only one point of access/egress and stage door codes will not be activated or distributed.
- The number and size of dressing stations will be reduced to comply with physical distancing requirements. Occupancy limits will be posted on entryways to enclosed spaces such as control/sound booths, dressing rooms, Green Room, etc.
- Performers may be required to abide by more stringent rules regarding distancing in light of the increased potential for breath droplet distribution in performance. This may include remaining at their dressing station until their entrance to the stage is imminent.
- Due to occupancy limits, Stage Management will not be permitted to call the show from the lighting booth for the time being.
- Companies may be required to provide their own equipment that the Arts Centre has provided in the past, particularly in instances where there is a high risk of contamination (i.e. vocal microphones).
- Ensure shared items and high-contact areas of the work area are included in established cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Due to the volume and nature of some equipment, complete disinfection may not be practicable or possible. The use of surgical gloves (in addition to proper hand hygiene) may be mandated when using or adjusting Arts Centre equipment.

e) Contracts

- Revised Rental Contract verbiage to align with clause in Town permits; Renters are required to comply with all applicable provincial orders and directives, guidelines of public health authorities for the Province of Ontario and Halton Region Public Health, and, if applicable, guidance

issued by the Contract / Permit Holder's industry or affiliate organization (i.e. Orchestras Canada).

- Artists/clients/participants must abide by the Centre's rules and applicable public health directives. Exceptions to directives will only be considered with the advance approval of Halton Public Health **and** where the same or greater level of protection is achievable through alternate measures.
- Include verbiage in Rental Contract in support of rental clients cancelling a show due to health reason (i.e. outbreak in cast) with no financial penalty. No impact in **Phase 2 Stage 2**.
- Rental clients required to provide their own PPE bearing in mind that higher quantities may be required/throughout the course of a performance more frequent changes of PPE may be required.
- Rental clients responsible for maintaining a record of daily attendance for rehearsals and performances including contact information in case the Town or Public Health needs to reach individuals for contact tracing. Best practice stipulates that these records must be kept on file for at least 14 days.

f) Recalling Staff

- Services in **Phase 2 Stage 2** will be provided by full time staff. This, in part, dictates the type of programming that is feasible in **Stage 2**. Note: house crew (technicians) recall will be earlier in order to de-install the orchestra shell and prepare the stage for future programming and rentals.
- Depending on increase(s) to service levels, part time workers may be recalled in line with HR policy, and further financial analysis required upon the conclusion of **Phase 2 Stage 2** prior to **Phase 2 Stage 3** (i.e. Staff will review needs in late September).

g) Sanitizing the Venue

- Implement cleaning processes before and after events. All surfaces, armrests, doorknobs, handrails disinfected before and after the performance.
- Masks and other PPE must be worn as prescribed by Arts Centre rules and by-law, i.e. requiring the use of gloves when handling Arts Centre equipment in order to avoid excessive wear-and-tear on equipment not designed to be sanitized.
- Schedule events that occur in the same space with as much time in between events as possible to allow for enhanced cleaning (ex. **3 hour minimum**).

7. Art Gallery

- Hours consistent with box office, i.e. Wednesdays and during performances. Define times for public access to the space and program/patron access only;

- Work with artists to accommodate longer hangings, i.e. three-to-four months (as opposed to three weeks), consider reduction to rental rates, taking into consideration decrease in attendance.
- Full time staff to support with hanging as opposed to utilizing volunteer complement.
- Separate entry and exit points such that people are moving in the same direction, and create a fixed path for individuals to physically distance to view the work.
- Post occupancy limits on entryways to enclosed spaces such as gallery, storage room.
- Reassess operations / service levels on a continuous basis through phased reopening.

8. Recalling Volunteers

- Staff recommend suspending the volunteer program in **Phase 2**, and put safety measures in place to reintroduce in **Phase 3** (if feasible). Staff will remain in contact with volunteers through virtual program (i.e. weekly socials). This decision is driven by the median age of volunteers, which is 70+, making them higher risk.

APPENDIX

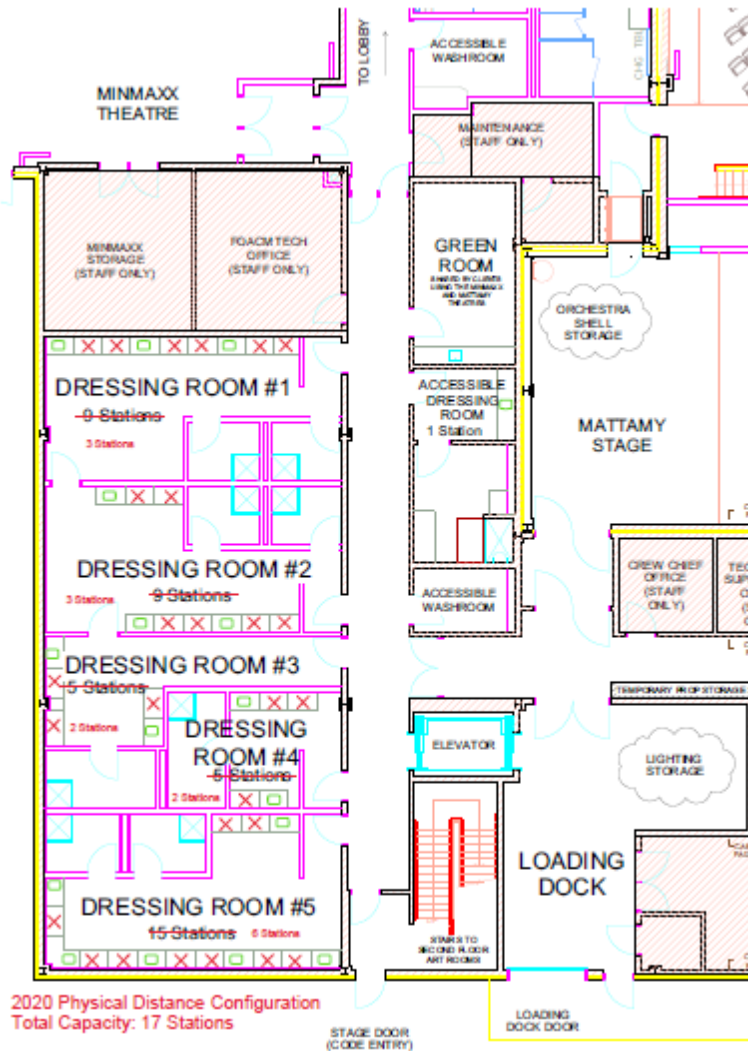
- Detailed capacity of spaces
- Dressing room floor plan (dressing stations)
- Sources consulted
- Results of user group survey

Detailed capacity of spaces:

FIRST FLOOR			
Room	Sqmm	sqft	Capacity
Dressing Room 5*	38688573	416	6
Dressing Room 4*	8478200	91	2
Dressing Room 3*	15671890	169	2
Dressing Room 2*	38895168	419	3
Dressing Room 1*	35266000	380	3
Accessible DR*	8629464	93	1
Green Room	21747869	234	1
Tech Office	28095300	302	2
Crew Room	22178575	239	2
Wardrobe	11766082	127	1
Mattamy Stage	189148716	2036	14
MinMaxx (no seats)	237642258	2558	17
Escarpment Lobby*	470894048	5069	35
Art Gallery	113186812	1218	8
Box Office	32430500	349	2
Coat Check	32879800	354	2
Maintenance Office	31240000	336	2
Loading Dock	54976751	592	4
Back Bar/Servery	33059729	356	2
Front Bar	10359606	112	1
Mattamy 1st Floor Audience*	383155728	4124	TBD
SECOND FLOOR			
Room	Sqmm	sqft	Reg. Capacity
Admin Office	105227257	1133	7
Lighting Booth	25877510	279	1
2nd Floor Audience Corridor	52551162	566	4
Mattamy 2nd Floor Audience*	188329184	2027	TBD
Volunteer Room	16417285	177	1
Del Ridge	71956152	775	5
Tim Hortons Studio	181332319	1952	13
Bateman Studio	197054890	2121	14
Art Room Lobby	42324428	456	3
Art Prep Room	56524998	608	4

*Exclusions based on determined occupancy and established physical distancing (i.e. dressing spaces allowing for physical distancing established/marked, and assigned seating).

Dressing room floorplan:



Sources consulted:

- [Work Safe BC – Performing arts: Protocols for returning to operation](#)
- [Performing Arts Center Consortium Guide to Reopening Theatrical Venues](#)
- [Theatre Alberta COVID-19 Resource Page](#)
- [Newfoundland Guidelines for Re-Opening Theatres and Performing Arts Venues](#)
- [The Event Safety Alliance Reopening Guide](#)
- [A framework for reopening our province: Phase 2: Restart — Stage 3 \(ON\)](#)

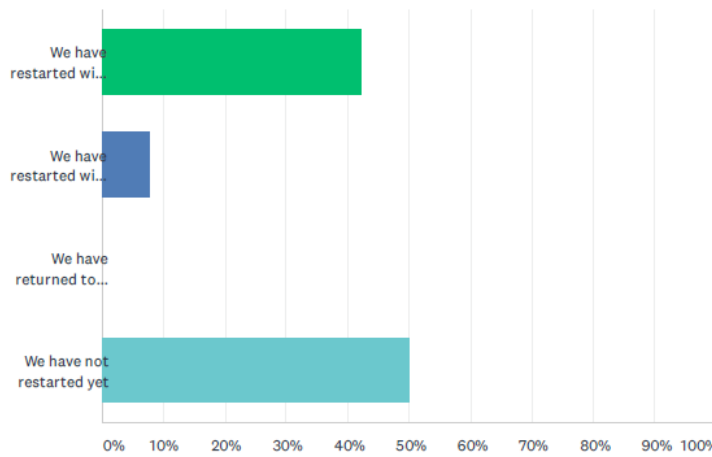
- [Public Health Ontario – What we know transmission risks singing wind instruments](#)

Client survey:

FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton Rental Clients

Q1 Has your operation restarted in some capacity?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

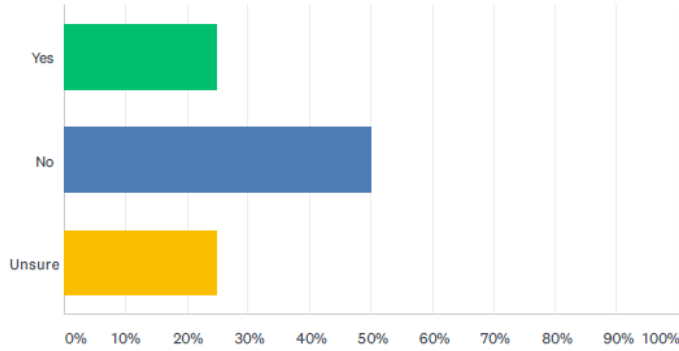


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
We have restarted with significant modifications	42.31%	11
We have restarted with minor modifications	7.69%	2
We have returned to normal operations	0.00%	0
We have not restarted yet	50.00%	13
TOTAL		26

FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton Rental Clients

Q2 Do you anticipate rescheduling a previously cancelled performance?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 2

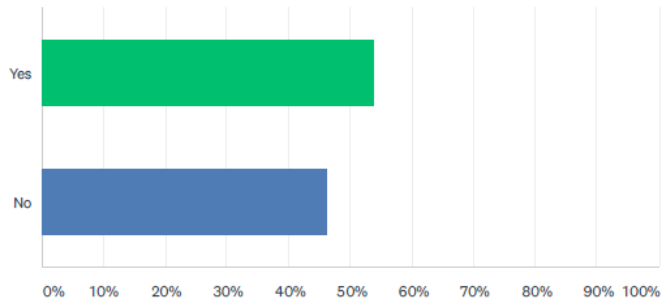


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	25.00%	6
No	50.00%	12
Unsure	25.00%	6
TOTAL		24

FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton Rental Clients

Q3 Do you have a target date for any upcoming performances?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

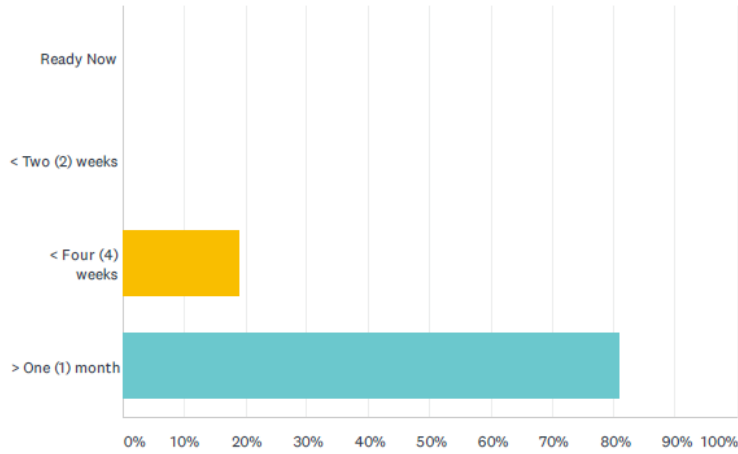


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	53.85%	14
No	46.15%	12
TOTAL		26

FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton Rental Clients

Q4 How much time do you anticipate you will need in order to be ready to perform a show for an audience?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 5

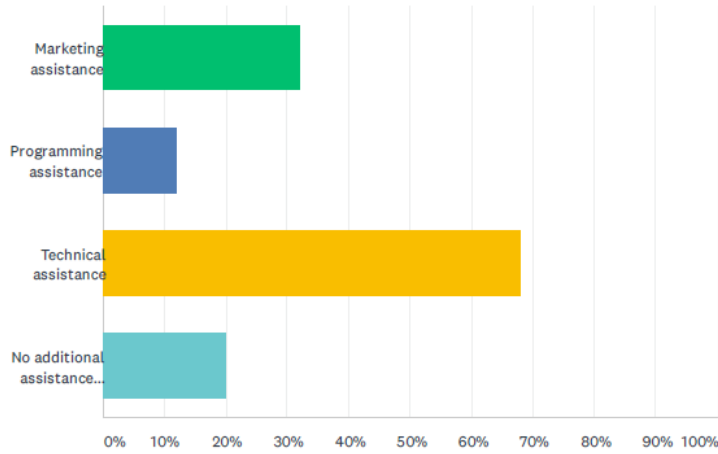


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Ready Now	0.00%	0
< Two (2) weeks	0.00%	0
< Four (4) weeks	19.05%	4
> One (1) month	80.95%	17
TOTAL		21

FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton Rental Clients

Q5 Is your performance contingent on additional Arts Centre resources?
(select all that apply)

Answered: 25 Skipped: 1

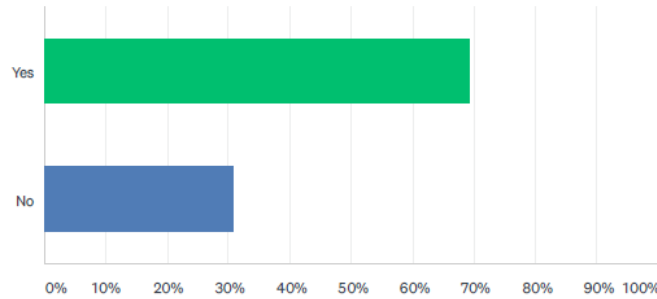


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Marketing assistance	32.00% 8
Programming assistance	12.00% 3
Technical assistance	68.00% 17
No additional assistance required	20.00% 5
Total Respondents: 25	

FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton Rental Clients

Q6 Given that, governments and public health authorities might place restrictions on audience size, would this affect your ability to put on a show?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

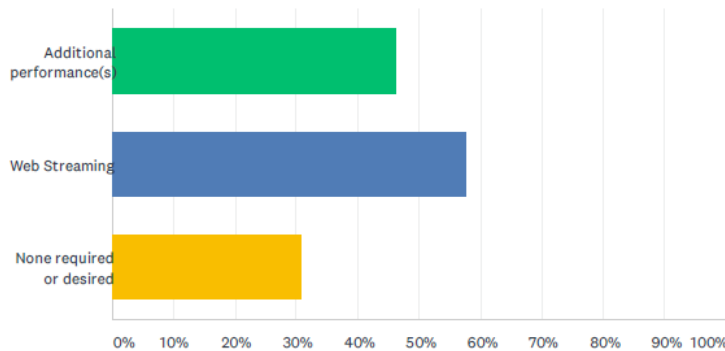


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	69.23%	18
No	30.77%	8
TOTAL		26

FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton Rental Clients

Q7 In light of restrictions to audience size, would you be interested in considering measures such as web streaming or multiple shows to increase your audience reach (please be aware that these measures may involve additional costs)? (select all that apply)

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

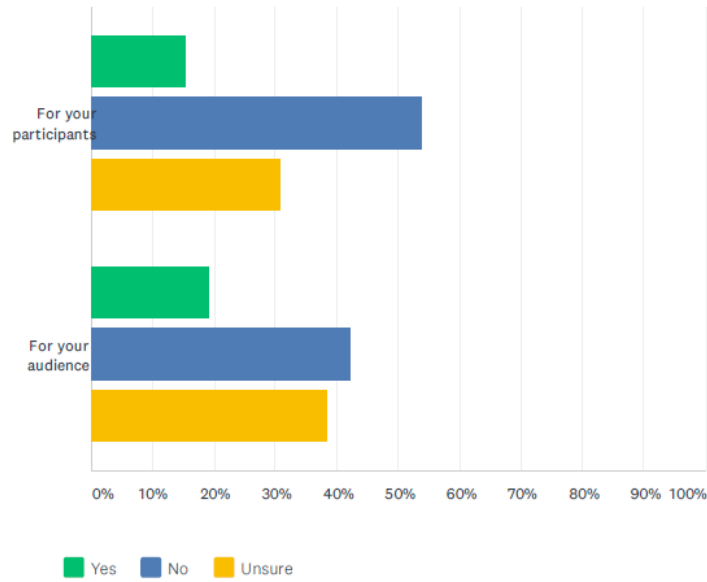


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Additional performance(s)	46.15%	12
Web Streaming	57.69%	15
None required or desired	30.77%	8
Total Respondents: 26		

FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton Rental Clients

Q8 Once live performing arts and other entertainment activities are allowed to resume by governments and public health authorities, do you have reservations about returning to the Arts Centre?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0



	YES	NO	UNSURE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
For your participants	15.38% 4	53.85% 14	30.77% 8	26	2.15
For your audience	19.23% 5	42.31% 11	38.46% 10	26	2.19

Q9 Do you have any comments or suggestions that Arts Centre staff should explore in order to make your transition back easier and successful?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 10

Summary of comments received

Capacity/Facility:

- Cannot operate at a reduced capacity, need full capacity/revenue stream.
- Unlikely to be able to put on profitable shows due to reduced capacity. Cost reductions may help, but safety is number one concern.
- Consider doing two performances (two consecutive evenings) rather than one performance;
- Two performances with half the performers in one and half in the other in order to accommodate audience.
- Concern about having sufficient dressing rooms for the number of performers;
- MinMaxx Hall as an additional change area to spread performers out, cannot afford any extra costs.

Ticketing:

- Implement physical distancing floor plan management so that people can choose to sit with their spouse/friend.

Protocols:

- Have discussed making changes to program to adapt to the new protocols and guidelines.
- Depends on how schools open and run in the fall.
- Events will need to run with significant modifications, which is dependent on gathering-size limits and physical distancing.

Audience:

- Shows are for school groups, so reliant on their willingness to attend.
- Care about safety of cast/crew and audience, and people being tight on discretionary spending. Costs become a challenge as anticipate income will be lower.

Other:

- Interest in partnerships.