



The Spirit of Alberta

Alberta's
Cultural Policy

Alberta

Freedom To Create. Spirit To Achieve.

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Culture is **the window**
through which the
rest of the world sees
our province.





ALBERTA'S CULTURAL POLICY

The Spirit of Alberta is the result of research and consultation with Albertans, cultural organizations and foundations, other jurisdictions and various ministries in the provincial government. Albertans have clearly expressed a desire for culture to be a priority and for the government to play a lead role in creating and sustaining the conditions in which culture can flourish.

They also said government should work in partnership with other levels of government, the private sector, non-profit organizations, other stakeholders and individuals. Albertans said that a vibrant culture is critical to enhancing our quality of life.

The Spirit of Alberta is the Alberta government's response to what we heard. In short, our government acknowledges that culture is vital to the individual, social and economic well-being of this province and we are committed to continuing to support and promote culture in Alberta's second century.





WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN ALBERTAN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY?

Alberta is a unique and distinctive part of the Canadian mosaic. We are a bold and freedom-loving people of many backgrounds. We cherish the land that is our legacy and hold dear our independent ways of thought and action.

Although our identity is based on our history and the heritage created by past generations, it continues to evolve and be enriched as our population changes and we consider what is important to bequeath to future generations.

We value the opportunity to enhance our quality of life by enjoying art, music, theatre, dance, crafts, literature, sporting events and recreational pursuits, the outdoors, language and food and our heritage.

Many of our residents participate in the cultural life of our communities by volunteering their time and expertise to the service and support of cultural organizations.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF CULTURE TO ALBERTANS?

Albertans view culture in a broad sense, to include not only the arts, but also heritage, sport and recreation, and the natural environment. Culture also includes creativity and innovation, especially in business and the arts.

At the heart of our understanding of culture is the idea of personal and provincial identity, of community, of shared heritage. Living our cultural choices and interests gives us a sense of where we came from and a confidence in who we are.

We believe that culture is the glue that connects us as individuals to our communities, fostering unity, civility and a sense of belonging, pride and caring for our fellow citizens. Experiencing the cultural expressions of our neighbours lets us understand each other better and makes the places we live in more interesting. We believe it is important to celebrate cultural distinctiveness as well as cultural similarities. We understand that by welcoming and sharing our diverse cultures we create something new and uniquely Albertan.

We value the natural heritage and human history of Alberta because they help us understand and value the past on which our present is built, and give us a deepened awareness of our common roots and shared identity.

Albertans have a deep connection to the land. We believe Alberta's natural glories are among the most beautiful and inspiring in the world. Our attachment to environment through our parks and wilderness areas is an important part of what constitutes our understanding of culture and quality of life.



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Our First Culture

In Alberta, our heritage embraces the traditions and practices of Aboriginal people and the great sites of pre-history. Among the Aboriginal peoples of Alberta, culture embraces not only dance, music, games and traditional dress, but values, beliefs and a deep spiritual relationship with the land. It is important to the way Aboriginal peoples live and also to the way in which Aboriginal communities continue to embrace the future.

The Economic and Social Benefits of Culture

We recognize that cultural activity provides benefits for the economy. Inherent in culture is creativity. It fosters and attracts fresh and innovative thinking. Cultural activity in schools helps to develop flexibility and openness of mind, enhances the ability to question and to solve problems and builds confidence, leadership, self-discipline and self-respect – all skills that are prized in the knowledge economy. A vibrant cultural environment will help Alberta to develop, attract and retain skilled and innovative individuals and their families.


Cultural activity in Alberta also has a host of other social benefits that we value, such as countering juvenile crime, contributing to improved physical and mental health and building more harmonious communities.

A Cultural Policy for Alberta – Why now?

As society becomes more complex, Alberta needs to decide what role culture should play in our communities. *The Spirit of Alberta* provides a framework to help Albertans address these challenges and seize the opportunity to create a better quality of life through increased access to cultural activities.

Fundamental to *The Spirit of Alberta* is a more effective and strategic use of our existing cultural resources and increased collaboration among the Government of Alberta and its many partners in fostering a strong and vibrant culture.

The focus of this policy is on fostering and supporting the aspects of culture and quality of life that include professional and amateur individuals and organizations, community enjoyment of creative and recreational activities, cultural industries, cultural institutions and natural and built heritage.



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KEYSTONES

The Spirit of Alberta is designed around four important keystones:

Access - Albertans, no matter where they live or what their income is, have the opportunity to experience a wide range of cultural activities.

Capacity - Communities have the resources they need to support culture.

Excellence - Our cultural professionals and organizations are striving to be the best they can be.

Cultural Industry - Government policy will encourage cultural industry capacity, sustainability and development.

The goals and strategies of this policy provide a base of action to support cultural activity through many areas of government. These areas include education, health, children's services, and Aboriginal affairs, among others.

Through combining our strengths to foster, develop and sustain the greatest of all our natural resources – Albertans' creative energy, a resource as natural and as limitless as our horizons – we will keep the Alberta spirit strong.



A woman in traditional Korean Hanbok (white top and blue skirt) is performing a dance. She is wearing a large, elaborate headpiece and holding up large, flowing fabric wings in shades of purple and pink. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. Other dancers in similar costumes are visible in the background, some playing drums. The scene is outdoors on a street.

FRAMEWORK

Alberta is a dynamic multicultural province, and it is vital that *The Spirit of Alberta* reflect this. The policy will evolve and be modified when necessary to reflect the changing priorities of Albertans. Regular research and consultation will be undertaken to monitor the needs and priorities of Albertans and our diverse cultural organizations.

The Spirit of Alberta is comprised of the following key elements:

- Vision
- Mission
- Guiding Principles
- Goals and Strategies
- Outcomes
- Implementation

Our Vision *is an Alberta where all citizens feel a sense of belonging and pride, and participate in cultural activities that reflect their diverse heritage and enrich their lives.*

The Spirit of Alberta is built on the fundamental principle that culture is vital to the individual, social and economic well-being of the province and that the Government of Alberta is committed to supporting provincial culture.

Our Mission *ensures Albertans have the opportunity to share, express and experience culture in a province that respects the past, celebrates the present and welcomes the future.*

An important priority for the Government of Alberta is ensuring that present and future generations of Albertans benefit from a healthy and inspiring cultural environment that builds on our province's unique heritage and evokes feelings of pride and achievement and contributes to a better quality of life. It is in this spirit that we adopt our mission.

Guiding Principles

Albertans have expressed a desire for a broad view of culture, founded on a number of key principles that inform the policy and guide the province in setting goals and developing cultural strategies, initiatives and programs.

Quality of Life

Quality of life is measured not only by economic prosperity, but by the benefits incurred from participation in cultural activities: a sense of identity and belonging, of confidence, of community and of shared heritage. It is the sum of the physical, mental, social and spiritual components that make up our humanity. It is what will make Alberta an even more attractive place in which to live and visit.

Partnership and Collaboration

The successful development of a thriving cultural community requires a healthy social capital marked by active volunteerism and a strong non-profit sector, solid partnerships and a sharing of responsibility among the Government of Alberta, the private sector, cultural organizations, other government agencies and Albertans. Through this collaborative approach, positive and powerful commitments can be made and realized.

Diversity

It is by celebrating the diversity of our cultural heritage and creative expression, building on the values and experiences that we share, and welcoming newcomers to our province that we will be able to know each other better, and make Alberta an even more attractive place to live, where all citizens can feel a sense of pride and belonging.

A Valued Cultural and Creative Community

Culture is vital to the individual, social and economic prosperity of the province and the Government of Alberta is committed to continuing to support and promote cultural growth in Alberta's second century.

As creativity is a key driver in a positive and thriving society, we must continue to nurture an environment that supports the development of creative ideas, work and products and where innovation can continue to pioneer our province's growth and prosperity. Our artists and creators need to have access to local, national and international markets.

Education and Lifelong Learning

It is essential that the education system, from early childhood development to post secondary, contribute to Alberta's cultural development. Our schools have a valuable role to play in transmitting cultural values and in enabling cultural and creative exploration for young people. Investment in lifelong learning institutions such as schools, post-secondary institutions, interpretative centres, historic sites, libraries and museums will ensure the long-term viability of our important cultural resources.

Stewardship and Sustainability

Government and citizens share the important responsibility of safeguarding and enhancing culture for future generations. The restoration, preservation and protection of the tangible objects and intangible elements of our culture and identity are paramount to the sustainability of Alberta's strong and vibrant cultural heritage. The government also recognizes and

encourages the important role played by volunteers and non-profit organizations in governing, managing and supporting our cultural resources and continues to support provincial cultural facilities and its foundations.

Economic Development

Culture contributes to a diversified economy through the financial impacts associated with both resident and visitor experiences. Direct economic benefits include employment, tax revenues, local spending and income from tourism. Consequently, Albertans will benefit from a supportive environment for the growth of the province's cultural sector.

Access

Albertans must have the opportunity to join in the full range of cultural experiences in the province. Since the *The Spirit of Alberta* encourages a wide range of cultural and creative expression, Albertans will contribute to and benefit from cultural activities no matter where they live, whether in urban or rural settings. Beyond ensuring that location is not a limiting factor, there needs to be a focus on removing barriers that prevent some Albertans from participating fully in the cultural life of the province. Improving access, particularly for disadvantaged Albertans, will help to improve the quality of life throughout the province.





GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The vision, mission and guiding principles of Alberta's cultural policy provide a base of action for support of cultural activity in a number of areas. These include not only performance and fine arts, cultural industries, museums and historic sites, but also education, health, Aboriginal affairs, sport and recreation, parks and rural development.

In all these areas, the Government of Alberta will demonstrate its commitment through actions and partnerships designed both to strengthen the resilience of the cultural community and to ensure that the cultural legacy of Alberta is protected, preserved and enhanced for future generations. Informed by the guiding principles, the vision will be achieved by successfully attaining four basic goals.



GOAL A

Ensure Albertans, throughout the province, have access to a wide range of cultural experiences and opportunities.

In support of Goal A, the government commits to:

- Ensure stable and predictable funding for the provincial government's cultural facilities and foundations.
- Use new technology to strengthen our ability to share and experience culture.
- Increase public awareness of Alberta's natural heritage and history through innovative education, interpretive and outreach programming.
- Provide support to communities, municipalities and individuals for the conservation of historic places and for heritage education.
- Provide support for arts festivals, post-secondary artist-in-residence programs, community presenters, Aboriginal arts camps, traveling exhibitions, public galleries and the acquisition of Alberta art.

GOAL B

Enhance community capacity to support and promote cultural activity.

In support of Goal B, the government commits to:

- Encourage greater private charitable giving to non-profit organizations.
- Provide funding for communities to plan, build and upgrade cultural facilities.
- Explore opportunities to enhance partnerships among all three levels of government, the private sector, non-profit organizations, cultural and educational institutions and individuals for the promotion and support of culture in Alberta.
- Encourage ministries of the Government of Alberta to work together in implementing initiatives that fall under the umbrella of the Alberta's cultural policy.
- Reinforce the critical role of volunteers in our community.
- Facilitate First Nations, Métis and other distinct communities in expressing and sharing their culture and perspectives.
- Promote awareness of the beneficial role of culture in health, wellness, education, human rights, youth development, tourism and community.

GOAL C

Encourage excellence in the work of Alberta's cultural professionals and organizations.

In support of Goal C, the government commits to:

- Provide support for individual artists, cultural service organizations and community support organizations.
- Provide support for Alberta's heritage, arts, and non-profit organizations.
- Promote and support provincial, federal, and international opportunities for Alberta's cultural professionals.
- Review existing cultural programs with a view to ensuring continued relevance and effectiveness.



GOAL D

Foster growth, sustainability and investment in Alberta's cultural industries.

In support of Goal D, the government commits to:

- Explore and identify alternative funding models to enhance the sustainability and growth of Alberta's film, television and new media production industry.
- Explore and consider options for a cultural industries development program to enhance support for Alberta's sound recording, and book and magazine publishing industries.
- Improve collaboration with cultural industry stakeholders to align government and industry efforts to increase industry capacity, sustainability and development.
- Continue to promote and market Alberta's cultural industries.

OUTCOMES

Albertans are proud of their culture and their heritage, and believe that a strong policy accompanied by a committed and supportive government will create an even better Alberta.

The desired outcomes include:

- Alberta offers a high quality of life and is recognized nationally and internationally as innovative, competitive and able to attract visitors and retain new residents.
- Albertans explore and express their culture and that of their neighbours, communities, province and country.
- Albertans have a greater awareness and appreciation for culture and its benefits to society and the economy.
- Albertans are proud of their culture and participate in cultural activities that shape and define who they are as Albertans and Canadians.
- Culture in Alberta is vibrant, growing and strong. And, our artists and creators are recognized as leaders in Canada.



MANDATE

- Coordinate the support and promotion of the cultural policy within the Government of Alberta.
- On an ongoing basis and working with other ministries, identify linkages among programs and opportunities to leverage support for the cultural policy within the Government of Alberta.
- Act as cultural policy liaison between the Government of Alberta and cultural groups and organizations in Alberta.
- Develop partnerships involving government, the private sector, the voluntary sector, the non-profit sector and other groups interested in supporting and promoting culture and explore and recommend new ways of supporting Alberta's cultural policy beyond the provision of grants.
- Identify and encourage opportunities for Albertans to share, experience and express our culture and creativity.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Government of Alberta has actively encouraged and supported culture for many years by establishing foundations, providing financial support to cultural groups and individuals and operating cultural facilities and institutions.

Our broad view of culture impacts many government areas and support for culture is widespread through a number of departments, foundations, funds and commissions. In order to maximize return on investment, leverage the existing programs and initiatives, effectively communicate the benefits of culture both internally and externally and ensure the successful implementation of *The Spirit of Alberta*, a coordinating team has been created by reallocating and refocusing existing resources.

This team is responsible for ensuring that government's support for, and promotion of *The Spirit of Alberta* is coordinated and effective. The need for an on going coordinating team will be evaluated after three years.

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Effectiveness of the coordinating team will be assessed based on the achievement of the following:

- The goals and strategies of *The Spirit of Alberta* are successfully implemented.
- An effective communications strategy for *The Spirit of Alberta* is developed, implemented and updated as needed.
- New opportunities for the Government of Alberta to support and promote culture are identified.
- Government support for the *The Spirit of Alberta* is effective, efficient, collaborative and coordinated.
- In support of Alberta's cultural policy, partnerships are developed among governments, the private sector, the non-profit sector, the voluntary sector and other groups interested in culture.



Culture is **who we are**,
what we value,
what we consider beautiful,
how we spend our leisure time
and **how we think** about
and treat others.

**Government
of Alberta** ■

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