



Bringing the Arts to You



## SPARK: AN OVERVIEW

Spark is a program designed by OSAC to help Arts Councils **mentor and develop the next generation** of performing arts presenters in their communities. It was created in response to two issues consistently voiced by Arts Councils: **youth engagement** and **succession planning**. It aims to engage **teens and young adults under age 29** as audiences, participants, and decision-makers in presenting performing arts. Through this mentorship experience, participants develop new skills, bring new ideas, and have the gratifying experience of presenting a show in their community.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Through Spark, **one performance per season** will be presented by the Spark Coordinator (the mentee) under the guidance of the Arts Council's Performing Arts Coordinator (the mentor). Any community or Arts Council member under 29 is eligible as a Spark Coordinator. This demographic is very diverse; they may be a high school student looking to build their **skills and experience**, or a working professional who wants to pursue a **passion for the arts** through volunteering.

Arts Councils will have the option of including the Spark show in their season or market it as a stand-alone show.

*Mentors working with youth under the age of 18 are required to submit a Criminal Record Check, which shall be satisfactory to OSAC in its sole discretion.*

### BURSARY

OSAC recognizes that for organizations that have operated a certain way for a very long time, such a change may be daunting for various reasons, not the least of which is financial. Through the Spark Grant, OSAC will relieve some of the risk that the Arts Councils may face for trying something new.

The Spark Grant for the season is up to a **maximum of \$1000 per Arts Council**. If more applications than are budgeted for are approved, the grant amount will be pro-rated to make sure every Arts Council that applies and meets the requirements of the program will receive some funding. The artist fee is still eligible for the full PA Grant amount (or 5% grant if it is less than a three show season).

## TIMELINE

<b>Stage 1: Recruitment &amp; Artist Selection</b>	
*takes places one year ahead of start of the following season	
September	Arts Councils recruit a SPARK Coordinator
October	SPARK Coordinator attends OSAC Showcase with their local Arts Council. Artist selections are made.
November	Artist selections are due. Arts Councils submit the SPARK Application.
December-May	Regular OSAC booking cycle continues.
<b>Stage 2: Spark Show is promoted and presented</b>	
September-May	Season performances take place, one of which is the Spark show.
	The Spark Coordinator and Performing Arts Coordinator work together on all aspects of the presenting the show.
<b>Stage 3: Follow-Up</b>	
	Spark program evaluation is completed by the Spark Coordinator and Performing Arts Coordinator.
	Upon receiving the evaluation, OSAC disburses the Spark bursary to the Arts Council

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

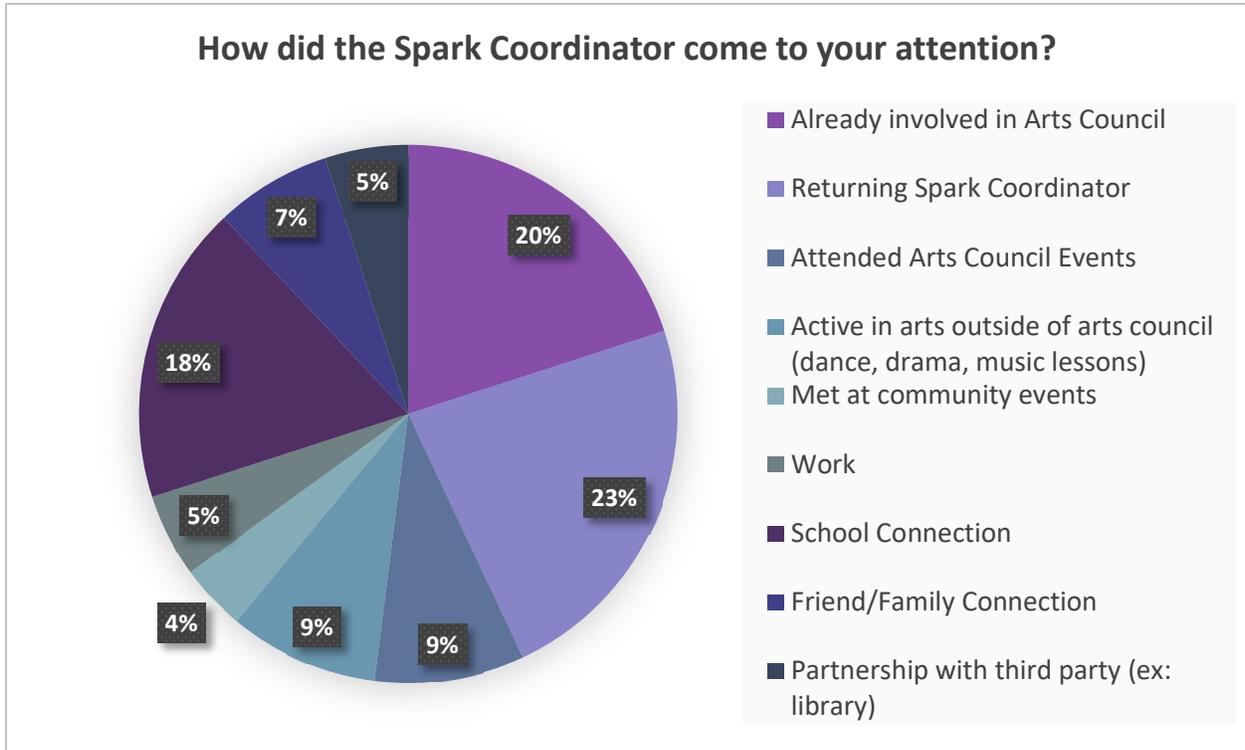
**Meaningful youth engagement** is more than seeing younger faces in the audience or having a token youth on the Arts Council; it is about genuine inclusion and allowing new members to participate in decision-making processes. The greater the sense of ownership and personal investment a person has in an endeavour, the more excited and engaged they are likely to be. This can translate into **continued involvement with the Arts Council** or other arts organizations well into the future. Working with a mentor, the Spark Coordinator will select and present a show which they believe they can market to their peers.

## MENTORSHIP

A mentor is an **experienced and knowledgeable guide** who works alongside an emerging person in the same field to help them in their professional development and to succeed in their goals. In the Spark program, the mentor would be the Arts Council's Performing Arts Coordinator or other qualified Arts Council member and the shared goal is to present a live performing arts show in the community. The mentor's role is not to delegate tasks but to serve as a trusted advisor, providing guidance, support, and practical help while the **Spark coordinator takes the lead**.

## FINDING A SPARK COORDINATOR

Recruitment can be challenging if your Arts Council does not have any current youth members. In reviewing past seasons, OSAC has identified some common ways Arts Councils have had success:



**Tip: Consider having two Spark Coordinators**, as some Arts Councils have found that young people, especially teens, may be more likely to join if they can do so with a friend.

A couple of places to start might be your **high school**, music, drama and arts classes, local music teachers, or any current youth members of your Arts Council. Some schools may offer a Volunteerism 30 credit for this program. Alternatively, there may be a **young adult** new to town who is looking to get involved in the community.

**Recruitment materials** are available for download on the OSAC website. The poster includes space for your contact information. There are three different social media images.

## MORE INFORMATION

More information can be found on the **Spark webpage**: <https://www.osac.ca/performing-arts/for-artscouncils/spark> Feel free to contact OSAC to discuss the program further.

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