

OTTAWA FRINGE

IMPACT REPORT 2026

OTTAWA
Fringe
FESTIVAL

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The 2026 Ottawa Fringe Festival was our largest and **LOUDEST** festival to date. We saw record-breaking artist payouts alongside record audience attendance, and connections to Ottawa's broader performing arts community were deepened through our free Community Series programming.

Through this work, Ottawa Fringe continues to cement itself as one of the most accessible, inclusive, and impactful arts festivals in Canada.



ALAIN RICHER

Executive and Artistic Director

11%

Increase in ticket sell since 2025

251

Artist performed in the 2025 Festival

100%

Ticket revenue given back to artists

Ottawa Fringe is a launchpad for independent artists, a platform for underrepresented voices, and a gathering place for communities to celebrate the magic of live theatre. Every ticket purchased, every hour volunteered, and every dollar donated directly fuels a stronger, more inclusive arts and culture landscape in Ottawa and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alain Richer".

Alain Richer

Executive & Artistic Director



Ottawa Fringe exists to ensure that bold, independent theatre is accessible to everyone, empowering artists, engaging audiences, and strengthening the cultural heartbeat of our city. We envision a community where every artist has the freedom to take risks, every story has a stage, and every audience feels they belong. Through accessibility, diversity, and creativity, we are building a festival that truly belongs to all.

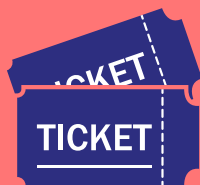
Our mission is to provide performing artists from all career levels the opportunity to produce their work, regardless of content, form, or style, while exposing audiences to a rich variety of performance and storytelling. We encourage artists to take risks, pursue their visions, and develop their skills in an environment where they are supported to succeed. Ottawa Fringe plays a vital role in the growth and sustainability of professional theatre in our city by connecting artists with audiences, resources, opportunities, and each other.

2026 FESTIVAL AT A GLANCE

2026 was a landmark year for the Ottawa Fringe Festival, breaking records and building new connections across the city. Over the span of eleven days, audiences purchased 16,280 tickets, marking a 11% increase from 2025. The festival featured 61 shows across 10 venues, including 8 French shows, with 388 performances delivered. Audiences flocked to see work from 251 artists, representing Ottawa (50%), the rest of Canada (30%), and international stages (20%). In total, 49 shows sold out, demonstrating a growing demand for bold and original performance. Beyond ticket sales, more than 1,100 people took part in free community events, while 115 volunteers contributed 1,481 hours to bring the festival to life. This year, with the support of a 37-person team and 18 seasonal positions, Ottawa Fringe thrived as a cornerstone of the city's cultural calendar.



388
Performances



16,280
Tickets Sold



50%
Local Artists



ARTIST IMPACT

At the heart of Ottawa Fringe is our commitment to artists. Unlike most cultural festivals, 100% of ticket revenue goes directly back to performers, ensuring their work is both seen and financially supported. Through initiatives like our newly introduced two-tiered lottery system and dedicated Francophone category, we continue to remove barriers and amplify marginalized voices. Ottawa Fringe is proud to be a launchpad for independent creators, both local and national, and a platform for building connections and springboarding careers.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- * Ottawa Fringe centres artists by removing financial barriers wherever possible. All artists benefit from subsidized venues, front-of-house and technical support, and marketing support.

\$4,840

Subsidized by Ottawa Fringe for each show



- * Every ticket sold is an investment in independent theatre, ensuring artists can continue to take risks, share new stories, and grow their careers. In 2026, Ottawa Fringe returned \$164,473 to artists.

\$164,473

Given Back to Artists



"Producing and directing a show at Ottawa Fringe was like being given an open door. It allowed me to take new creative risks along with a group of youth, it opened the door for us to perform for the widest range of theatre audiences in the Ottawa area, and it allowed us to create quality theatre within a low budget. Ottawa Fringe was like living on a 10-day island of artistic exploration and relationship-building -- extremely organized, abundant in genuine energy, and career-fulfilling."

- Kristina Watt Villegas, 100 Watt Productions (DNA, Fringe 2025)

COMMUNITY IMPACT



FREE COMMUNITY SERIES

Associate Artistic Director Emma Ferrante curates the Community Series: a lineup of free, accessible events that spotlight underrepresented voices, celebrate inclusion, and champion local collaborations. These gatherings, performances, and experiences highlight grassroots creativity and community-driven programming. In 2026, Ottawa Fringe invested directly in local artists, paying out \$6,700 to those performing in the Community Series. More than 1,100 people took part in these events, engaging with art, meeting artists, and connecting with one another, with many experiencing Fringe for the very first time.

1,118

Patrons participated for FREE

\$6,700

Paid to local artists presenting during the Community Series.

VENDORS

At Ottawa Fringe vendors thrive. In 2026 we had 8 different local vendors. The festival acts as an incubator for small businesses, giving them direct access to thousands of engaged patrons who get to enjoy delicious food as they relax in our Fringe courtyard.

“Being part of the Ottawa Fringe Festival was a wonderful experience, and we are so grateful for the opportunity to join such a warm, welcoming, and creative community.”

– Khatoon Catering, 2026 vendor

COMMUNITY IMPACT



JOBS

Seasonal Jobs
Created

18

Employed Staff

37

- * In 2026, the Ottawa Fringe Festival employed 37 staff across marketing, outreach, technical crews, front of house, access, administration, and artistic roles, a collaborative team working behind the scenes to bring the festival to life.
- * Each year, the Ottawa Fringe Festival generates meaningful seasonal job opportunities, giving emerging artists and administrators hands-on experience in the arts and culture sector. In 2026, the festival created 18 seasonal positions, fostering new pathways for professional growth and creative careers.



VOLUNTEERS

Number of
Volunteers

115

Total hours
volunteered

1481

- * 115 volunteers, with dozens returning from past years, formed the backbone of the festival by bringing experience, passion, and community spirit to every corner of Fringe.
- * Together they contributed 1,481.5 hours of incredible effort, ensuring smooth operations in venues, front of house, and special events.

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT



592,200
Social Media Views



146,000
Website Visitors



13,500
Content Interactions

In 2026, Ottawa Fringe reached more audience members than ever before. On social media, the festival saw remarkable growth, with content generating more than 592,200 views and a reach of over 58,400 unique accounts. Posts, stories, and reels amplified the energy of the festival well beyond downtown Ottawa, introducing new audiences to the excitement of Fringe and driving them to attend shows.

The buzz extended into traditional media as well, with media mentions across outlets including CBC Ottawa, CTV, Apt613, Radio Canada, Broadway World, Live 88.5, and more. From previews and reviews to artist interviews and feature stories, media coverage helped showcase the diversity of the festival lineup and spotlight artists to thousands of potential ticket buyers. Together, this mix of digital and media engagement positioned Ottawa Fringe not just as a festival, but as a major cultural event in the city, one that people are eager to talk about, share, and experience year after year.

ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES

* CAPTIONED PERFORMANCES

Captioned performances are a vital access initiative that ensure Deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences can experience theatre without barriers. At Ottawa Fringe, captions also make the festival more welcoming to our bilingual and multilingual community, allowing audiences to enjoy performances across languages. For artists, captioning opens their work to entirely new audiences, expanding their reach and impact. In 2026, we presented 26 captioned shows, affirming our commitment to a festival where everyone belongs.

* COMPLIMENTARY SUPPORT TICKETS

To ensure no one faces barriers to live performance, Ottawa Fringe offers complimentary tickets to personal support workers, respite workers, and attendants accompanying patrons with disabilities.



Audio-described performances

4

Captioned performances

26

Invested in Access Initiatives

\$13,600

"The Ottawa Fringe Festival supports Francophone plays by offering surtitles. This support allowed me to present my play to Francophones, to those learning French, and to Anglophones. Language is part of culture. Theatre fuels culture." - Sophie Twardus, 2025 Artist

* AUDIO DEESCRIBED PERFORMANCES

This year, Ottawa Fringe proudly offered four audio-described performances, complete with touch tours for blind and low vision audience members, expanding access and ensuring that more of our community could experience the festival's work in full.



WHY YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

FUEL BOLD CREATIVITY

By partnering with Ottawa Fringe, you make it possible for artists to take risks, share their stories, and connect with audiences in transformative ways. With 100% of ticket sales going directly to artists, your support ensures that creative voices are heard and sustained, helping shape the future of Canada's performing arts.



STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Becoming an Ottawa Fringe Partner goes far beyond a logo on a poster, it embeds you in one of Ottawa's most inclusive and vibrant cultural events. Your contribution supports free community programming, accessibility initiatives like captioning and audio described performances, and opportunities for underrepresented voices. Together, we build a festival that reflects and celebrates the diversity of our city.

AMPLIFY YOUR IMPACT

Ottawa Fringe reaches tens of thousands each year. From the 16,000+ ticket buyers and 1,100+ community event participants, to the 590,000+ social media viewers and dozens media mentions amplifying the festival's profile. By joining forces with us, your brand becomes part of this momentum, demonstrating leadership in supporting culture, accessibility, and community growth.

CONTACT US



OTTAWA FRINGE

Email

info@ottawafringe.com

Website

ottawafringe.com

Social Media

[@ottawafringe](https://www.instagram.com/ottawafringe)