

# MEMBERSHIP FEE RESTRUCTURE PROPOSAL – AGM 2017

## PROPOSED FEE STRUCTURE: PAY WHAT YOU CAN (PWYC)

### Professional

- PWYC with a suggested fee (\$30)
- Emerging artists and cultural workers are included in this category

### Organizational

- PWYC with a suggested fee based on budget; no proof required
  - Annual budget under \$150 000: suggested fee \$30
  - Annual budget \$150 001 - \$300 000: suggested fee \$60
  - Annual budget \$300 001+: suggested fee \$90
- Artist collectives are included in this category

### Student

- PWYC with a lower suggested fee (\$15)
- Part-time students, and students not studying in the arts, are included in this category

### Friend

- PWYC with a lower suggested fee (\$20)

## WHY?

ELAN provides a strong support network for artists, something that is very important for emerging and marginalized artists in particular. Members, staff, and Board have suggested improvements to ELAN's membership structure to make it **more accessible to current and potential members**.

Suggested improvements include:

- More flexible pricing for **emerging/newly graduated** artists (definitions of "emerging" vary; essentially, artists who are still establishing their careers).
- More flexible pricing for **artists who experience marginalization** or economic disadvantage.
- Allowing **part-time students** to join as student members.
- More flexible pricing for **organizations**, whose budgets vary greatly.
- Including **cultural workers** (broadly defined as those who work in the cultural sector) as Professionals and **artist collectives** (as Organizations).

Some advantages of making ELAN membership more accessible:

- It will **ensure our work remains informed** by realities on the ground.
- It will **strengthen our advocacy** by ensuring ELAN represents a more inclusive membership.
- It will help us connect with, and listen to, **groups whose points of view are underrepresented** in our work, and better serve their needs.
- Further, ensuring accessibility will help us **spread the word about the value of our work** to the public, funders, and partners.

## TARGET IMPLEMENTATION: 2018

With this change, ELAN will:

- **Communicate clearly** about the new membership structure.
  - Explain our process, reasons, and intentions to our members and community.
  - Encourage people to reflect honestly on what they can contribute.
  - Clearly demonstrate the value of ELAN membership.
- **Engage and retain our members:** we want a livelier, not just larger, membership.
- **Anticipate members' changing needs** in terms of our services (e.g. info sessions for low-income or emerging artists, more grant-writing workshops for marginalized artists).
- **Inform current members** about any changes.
  - Implement clear and fair onboard/transition procedures.
  - Target initial implementation for a slow renewal month.

## FAQ

**Do you have evidence that people can't afford the current fee?**

- Yes. Five to eight artists per year say membership fees are out of their financial reach.
- Many people would feel uncomfortable saying "I can't afford it," so there are likely more people who encounter the same barrier.

**Shouldn't student memberships remain free?**

- Based on anecdotal evidence and ELAN staff research, students may actually value free memberships less and therefore may not be as engaged as they otherwise could be.
- Students will still have the option to pay a minimal amount with PWYC.

**Wouldn't everyone just choose to pay nothing?**

- If we communicate clearly, and provide suggested fees along with examples of the value of membership (i.e. money saved through benefits/services), this will be less likely.
- Some members may even contribute more than the suggested fee.

**Why are we holding on to the current categories?**

- They help us track and communicate with our members effectively and efficiently.
- They help us collect meaningful information about who we serve.

**Why aren't Friend members paying a flat rate, if they are not artists?**

- Friend members are not professional artists, but they support ELAN's work. This category allows us to involve non-artists in ELAN while keeping our focus on service to artists.
- Some Friend members may be able donate beyond the cost of their membership. We want to allow Friend members to choose how much they wish to give.