

Bonjour,

My name is Dawn and I wrote a blog 8 years ago about busking in Montreal. Every week I get a new email from English speakers who cannot understand the process of applying and cannot get a license because the application is not accessible in both languages.

I also want to point out that I became a street performer because I am Dyslexic. I did not know that at the time I started busking, but in hind sight I see many of my challenges with school, work and the french language comes from dyslexia. I am not the only artist who makes the choice to be an artist due to disability.

As an english speaker with a disability, street arts has been one of the best venues to build up my skills. I spent 20 years doing street arts and build up my repertoire before I earned a SSHRC scholarship for my Masters in Arts at York University. I earned this scholarship on my work experience as a street artist. I obtained my degree after decades of struggling in schools because of the accomodations available to me. This was only possible because I was able to work in my own way, as an artist.

In my studies, I studied dyslexia in Canada, and 1 in 5 people struggle with reading and writing in their language of origin, and most schools take children out of second language education. Not having the application process and the laws available in English means dyslexic street performers who speak english are not given the opportunity to learn french in schools, and then are shut out of the ability to participate in freedom of expression by the city. i find this exclusionary and it means other artists like me will never have a chance to overcome their challenges.

I would like to ask while you are planning for the arts that you consider creating a translation of the street performance application for people with disabilities like dyslexia, and other learning disabilities. Street Performers have a disproportional amount of learning disabilities, as stories like mine are common in my world. Many of us choose street art as a means to feel capable, contribute to society and participate in the activities as we failed to fit in in other institutions at best, and many of us have PTSD from the ableism at worst (I have the studies to back it up.) Making it impossible for them to have the opportunity to perform publicly means further oppression of their voices and ways of knowing.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Dawn