I am writing from the Canada Council for the Arts, in response to yesterday’s opinion piece [*Thanks for nothing, Canada Council*](http://www.ottawacitizen.com/opinion/oped/Thanks%2Bnothing%2BCanada%2BCouncil/8208145/story.html) by sci-fi writer Robert J. Sawyer.

I would like your readers to know that Robert J. Sawyer received Canada Council funding in 2000 through the Professional Grants to Writers program, and travel grants in 1999, 2007 and 2010. This is public information and is accessible on our [website](http://www.canadacouncil.ca/grants/recipients/ol127245536828281250.htm) through our searchable grants listings.

Grants from the Canada Council for the Arts are awarded through a peer assessment process, which is widely recognized as fair and transparent.  The peer assessment committees are groups of artists from the same discipline, representing regional and cultural diversity, as well as various genres that exist within the discipline. They evaluate all grant applications and recommend funding based on artistic merit and excellence.  We award grants to Canadian authors of diverse literary genres, and content can be on a variety of subjects, not just Canadian topics.  More information on how we make our decisions can be found on the [Canada Council website](http://www.canadacouncil.ca/aboutus/Governance/PeerAssessment/default.htm).

It’s a very competitive process. Only a small percentage of writers who apply for a creative writing grant are successful. For our most recent competition, we received over 800 applications and were able to award under 150 grants. Over time, the Council has awarded grants to thousands of writers and would be happy to support many more if the funds were available.

Arash Mohtashami-Maali

Head, Writing and Publishing

Canada Council for the Arts