



**TAC–FCAD DIGITAL SOLUTIONS INCUBATOR
2020 Program Guidelines**

Application deadline: April 15, 2020

TAC is committed to equity and inclusion. We welcome and encourage applications from all Toronto artists, arts organizations and artist collectives. Specific equity measures or targeted programs are in place to ensure full access and participation by Indigenous artists, artists of colour, artists who are Deaf, have disabilities or are living with mental illness, artists who self-identify as 2SLGBTQIAP, newcomer and refugee artists, young and emerging artists and artists working outside the downtown core. Learn more about what we are doing to make TAC more accessible and inclusive in our recently adopted [**Equity Framework**](#)

PURPOSE

The TAC-FCAD Digital Solutions Incubator aims to:

- Address organizational challenges within the arts sector using digital-enabled approaches.
- Facilitate creative, collaborative and unexpected solutions with the potential to benefit the arts sector as a whole.
- Provide arts organizations and collectives access to design and technological expertise.
- Enhance organizational capacity in the arts sector around digital technology

This pilot program was created through a partnership between TAC and Ryerson University’s Faculty of Communications and Design (FCAD) to encourage arts organizations to consider the creative possibilities unlocked by the use of technology. The partnership provides arts organizations with access to design and technological expertise to explore solutions to the challenges they face, as well as practical, hands-on projects for the participants of the Ryerson Design Solutions Super Course. The Super Course is an educational experience that challenges students from different programs to work with external partners to conceive and develop solutions using a design thinking process.

For the purposes of this grant, “digital” refers to any user-centered design process involving significant use of mobile, web, augmented/virtual reality or computer-based technology.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE & REQUIREMENTS

The TAC-FCAD DSI funds an 8-month experience between September and April. The program is divided into two stages, corresponding with academic semesters.

First Stage: From September to December, successful applicant organizations will work 10-15 hours a month, meeting regularly with a team of Ryerson Design Solutions Super Course 1 students to address their identified problem, with the aim of creating a prototype of the proposed solution. The prototype will be

shared with the wider community during a “demo day” at FCAD which the whole team will attend.

Second Stage: From January to April, successful applicant organizations will continue on in one of two ways:

- 1) Design Solutions Super Course 2: Teams selected to continue with Super Course 2 will have a chance to further develop their prototype with FCAD students.
- 2) Self-directed: Teams may be asked to continue development of their prototype with a partner of their choosing or on their own, independent of Ryerson FCAD.

Successful applicants are required to sign an agreement with FCAD before beginning the project and attend a program evaluation meeting to be scheduled in 2020. Please see Appendix A for a description of the Design Solutions Super Course, past projects and terms of intellectual property.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

All applicants must meet the following criteria:

- be located in the City of Toronto;
- be an incorporated non-profit **arts** organization or a non-profit **arts** collective (individuals are not eligible for this program). A collective is defined as two or more artists working together under a group name, either on a single project (ad hoc) or on an ongoing basis. For collectives of two artists, both must be City of Toronto residents. For collectives of more than two artists, the majority of members must be City of Toronto residents.
- Organizations and collectives must be located in the City of Toronto. A Post Office Box address cannot be used to meet this requirement.
- have a strong track record of arts activity

Applicants may receive a grant through the TAC-FCAD Digital Solutions Incubator only once every two years. Applicants who have already received or applied for both Discipline and Strategic Funding from TAC in 2020 are still eligible to apply to this program.

If Ryerson faculty or staff (full or part-time) are employed by/members of your organization or collective, you are not eligible to apply.

TAC recognizes that due to systemic barriers within the broader arts community (e.g. limited mainstream presentation opportunities for artists from equity-seeking communities) that some flexibility may be required in interpreting eligibility criteria to take into account equivalent professional experience and contexts. Potential applicants from equity-seeking communities are encouraged to discuss their eligibility with the program officer in advance of submitting an application.

PROPOSAL ELIGIBILITY

Successful proposals will articulate a challenge or pose a question pertaining to a broad, current organizational challenge. The identified challenge may pertain to any aspect of your operations including programming, administration, outreach, marketing, etc. Applications must acknowledge the relevance of their identified challenge to other members of their community, other arts organizations or the arts sector as a whole. Organizational leadership (if different than project leads) must be actively involved in the project, attending and participating when appropriate.

The goal is to address a significant organizational challenge through digital technologies and creative design skills, in whatever form is appropriate. We are seeking to foster innovative ideas for the creation of new capacity within Toronto arts organizations and collectives. The goal of this program is not to develop company websites, digital content or build digital communications plans for the applicant organizations.

The following activity is not eligible for funding through this program:

- activities included in TAC operating grants
- activities included in TAC project grants
- capital projects or expenses
- renovations or repairs
- research or feasibility studies
- projects previously funded through another TAC project grant

VALUE OF GRANT

The grant amount is **\$15,000**. As a guideline, please plan for approximately \$10,000 in fees for the project leads and \$5,000 for any materials and expenses related directly to the project. This grant is not intended to fund office computers, production equipment or any general operating expenses.

*****TAC Accessibility grant *** Projects involving Deaf artists and artists with disabilities** may apply for an additional TAC grant by completing the Accessibility Expenses section of the application and including the requisite information in their budget. A **TAC Accessibility grant** will provide up to a maximum of \$5,000 towards accessibility costs for artists incurred during the project. Accessibility costs include but are not limited to: ASL interpretation, audio description, closed captioning, communications assistants, attendant care (including helpers for Elders), support workers and equipment rentals or other supports required to meet artists' accessibility needs).

SCHEDULING AND DURATION OF PROJECT

Projects will take place between September 2020 and April 2021.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are required to speak to Rupal Shah, Strategic Programs Manager, before submitting an application. Please contact Rupal to schedule an appointment to discuss your proposal: rupal@torontoartscouncil.org.

Applicants are required to register on *TAC Grants Online* (<https://tac.smartsimple.ca>) and submit the application **no later than 11:59 pm on the deadline date**. TAC does not accept applications by any other means of delivery. You will receive a confirmation email when your application is submitted. Check your spam/junk mail folder if it doesn't arrive in your in-box.

Application Accessibility Support for Deaf persons or persons with disabilities:

Applicants who are Deaf or have a disability and need support to complete their grant applications can apply for funds to cover the costs of assistance from **Application Support Service Providers. Up to \$500 is available per eligible applicant in each calendar year.** Please contact your Grant Program Manager at least six weeks before the grant program deadline to determine eligibility, request application support funding, and to review the process for payment to be made to your Service Provider. Requests for application support require approval from the Grant Program Manager. For additional information please visit the TAC website > Grant Programs > Application Accessibility Support.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Applications are assessed through a peer review process: a panel of practicing artists, arts workers and a representative from Ryerson University's Faculty of Communications and Design decides which applications will be recommended for funding. Funding recommendations are approved by TAC Directors.

Peer assessors are selected because of their direct experience and knowledge of the Toronto arts sector as well as to ensure fair representation from TAC's identified equity priority groups.

Applications are assessed in a comparative context and funding decisions are based on the availability of

funds, the program objectives, and the following assessment criteria:

- The capacity of the organization to undertake the project.
- The potential of the project and the challenge it addresses to benefit the applicant organization and Toronto's arts ecology
- Suitability of the project leads to the project
- The extent to which the project will help the organization's staff to better use, interact with, and gain confidence working with digital technologies

Included in the **Equity Framework** is an **Equity Priority Policy**, which states that if there are multiple well-assessed applications of equal merit in an adjudication round but insufficient funds in the grants budget to support all deserving candidates, applications proposed by applicants that self-identify as belonging to one of Toronto Arts Council's equity priority groups or that primarily involve or serve artists from these groups will be prioritized.

NOTIFICATION

Applicants will be notified by email when the results are available, and will be able to log in to *TAC Grants Online* to receive their results. Notification will be received within three months of the deadline date.

Results are not released over the telephone.

CITY OF TORONTO ANTI-RACISM, ACCESS AND EQUITY POLICY

The City of Toronto requires that all organizations and individuals adopt a policy of non-discrimination as a condition of receiving a grant or other support from the City.

All successful applicants will be required to submit a signed Declaration of Compliance with Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Legislation and City Policy.

A copy of the following City documents can be downloaded from TAC's website, www.torontoartscouncil.org: *Anti-Racism, Access and Equity Policy Guidelines, Hate Activity Policy and Procedures and Human Rights and Harassment Policy and Procedures.*

CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

Successful applicants will be required to sign a Letter of Understanding that details the terms and conditions of their grant. The Letter of Understanding will be made available when you receive your grant results. Successful applicants will also sign a Letter of Agreement with Ryerson FCAD. Cheques will be released when the Letter of Understanding is signed and submitted to Toronto Arts Council and when the Letter of Agreement is signed and returned to Ryerson FCAD.

***** DIRECT-DEPOSIT PAYMENT ***** Toronto Arts Council has moved to electronic payments. If your application is approved, you will be required to enter the bank account information of the grant recipient that corresponds to the Applicant Name on your Notification Letter. Bank information is submitted along with your Letter of Understanding and other Notification Letter Requirements.

Recipients of TAC Strategic Funding must acknowledge TAC's support with both logo recognition **and** the following statement on promotional materials related to the funded activity: ***This project was supported through Toronto Arts Council Strategic Funding.***

Grants may only be used for the purposes outlined in the application. Material changes to the nature or scope of the project must be reported promptly to TAC. In such cases, TAC may require full or partial repayment of the grant. Changes to project dates must be reported to your grants officer. **All projects must be completed within two years of the date of your grant notification letter.**

Grant recipients are required to file an artistic and financial report at the end of the project. The due date for the final report will be included in the grant notification letter. Failure to submit the report will disqualify the

applicant from submitting future TAC applications or receiving further funding. TAC may also request repayment of the grant.

In addition to the aforementioned general conditions of funding, TAC reserves the right to place conditions on the release of grants (e.g. confirmation of venues, programming, performances, other sources of funding, etc.). Any specific conditions associated with a grant will be specified through Notification process.

REPAYMENT OF GRANT

The grant must, on the request of TAC, be repaid, in whole or in part, to TAC, if the grant recipient:

- breaches any of the terms and conditions of the grant
- knowingly provides false information in the grant application
- uses the grant for purposes not approved by TAC
- breaches any of the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code in its operations
- ceases operating prior to completion of the project
- ceases to operate as a non-profit organization or collective prior to completion of the project
- winds up or dissolves prior to completion of the project
- merges or amalgamates with any other party prior to completion of the project
- commences or has commenced against it any proceedings in bankruptcy, or is adjudged a bankrupt, prior to completion of the project

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on this program, please contact **Rupal Shah, Strategic Programs Manager** at:

Toronto Arts Council

200-26 Grand Trunk Crescent

Toronto, Ontario M5J 3A9

416.392.6802 x209

rupal@torontoartscouncil.org

APPENDIX A:

TAC–FCAD DIGITAL SOLUTIONS INCUBATOR

What is the Ryerson FCAD Design Solutions Super Course?

In the Design Solutions Super Course, multi-disciplinary teams of students work on real-world problems presented by industry and community partners in a practice-based, knowledge-building environment. Working across disciplinary boundaries, student teams employ a design-thinking process to address partners' needs with innovative and creative approaches to a solution. Students are supported in their proposed solutions with industry, community and academic mentorship.

Through Super Course 1 (September-December) and Super Course 2 (January-April), student teams will collaboratively move from problem identification, to solution visioning, to solution concept -- culminating in the creation of a working prototype by each team that addresses a meaningful social, economic or policy challenge.

The Super Course presents students with unparalleled opportunities to solve a real challenge, with the tools of their discipline, strategic thinking, and the collaboration of diverse peers from design, media, computer science, and communications. Students from all schools at FCAD are represented including: Fashion, Interior Design, Media Production, Image Arts, Professional Communications, Creative Industries including students both past and present from Engineering, Computer Science, Business and Entrepreneurship.

At the end of Super Course 1, projects will be reviewed by members of FCAD faculty, the applicant organization and the TAC grant program manager. The decision to move a project to Super Course 2 will be based on factors including: interest and availability of both the applicant organization and the student teams; and viability of the prototype in the wider arts sector.

What kinds of projects have Super Course participants worked on in the past?

Ryerson FCAD Design Solutions Super Course students have worked with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation on a video-game version of the Driver's Education Handbook, and a personal concierge app for hotel guests that allows them to access concierge services at their convenience. Arts projects have included the following:

A community-engaged arts collective asked for help maintaining digital and in-person connections with their volunteer staff. Students interviewed volunteers and prototyped a retreat process, monthly support sessions, and an online tool for sharing updates and information among their volunteer community. One of the students was then hired by the collective outside of the course to coordinate community involvement and communications.

An arts service organization identified the need for emerging artists to document their work in an archival, longer-lasting format above and beyond more transient online representations. The student team interviewed organizations and emerging artists and designed an awareness campaign. The organization then hired a graphic design and marketing team to implement the campaign.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property arising from the funded project will be owned by the people who created it. Intellectual property that is jointly created by the successful applicant organization and students or faculty of Ryerson University will be jointly owned. Successful applicants to this program will be granted a non-exclusive, royalty-free right to use the results of the funded project for non-commercial purposes, including sharing the results with other Toronto-based not-for-profit arts organizations on a non-commercial basis. Any activities involving the sale or licensing of the results of the funded project will require an additional legal agreement.