



## 2021 Program Guidelines

### CREATIVE COMMUNITIES\*: ANNUAL OPERATING FUNDING

Application deadline: March 1, 2021

*\*formerly Community Arts*

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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 [Equity Framework](#)

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The pandemic has widely disrupted the programming and organizational plans of organizations receiving operating grants. Efforts and capacities to continue or adapt activities and to plan for 2021-22 vary greatly from company to company. In order to support operating companies, the 2021 operating grant program provides two application options:

#### **Application Option 1 - Full Grant Request**

Application for a grant based on 100% or more of the 2020 operating grant amount.

This option is meant for returning applicants with significant activities planned for their 2021-22 request year as well as new applicants to the operating program.

Selecting Option 1 means that:

- i) Your application or mid-cycle report will be reviewed and assessed for merit by the relevant TAC committee and staff, and your grant level may or may not change in 2021. Assessments will recognize an organization's history of work and will not be negatively influenced by disruption of activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Application Option 2 - Voluntary Reduced Grant Request**

Application for a grant based on 50% of the 2020 operating grant amount.

This option is meant for returning applicants without public activities planned for their 2021-22 request year, that are not entirely ceasing operations, and will resume public activities in 2022-23.

Selecting Option 2 means that:

- i) Your application or mid-cycle report will not be reviewed and assessed for merit by the relevant TAC committee and staff, and your organization would receive a grant in 2021 based on 50% of the 2020 operating grant amount.
- ii) TAC funds for your request year can be applied to costs required for staff retention, research and development, communications and donor relations, facility management etc.
- iii) In 2022 your organization may apply for a grant based on 100% or more of the 2020 operating grant amount.

## GOALS

Toronto Arts Council provides funding support to outstanding artists and arts organizations that contribute to the cultural life of the City of Toronto. TAC is committed to artistic excellence, innovation, and accessibility, and supports a wide spectrum of artistic endeavour and a range of activity that makes the City of Toronto one of the leading cultural centres in Canada. Through its support, TAC cultivates a richer engagement between artists and audiences and reflects the City of Toronto through the diversity of artists, arts communities and audiences that it serves.

## OBJECTIVES

The Creative Communities Program provides Annual Operating support to non-profit Toronto arts organizations (both incorporated and unincorporated) engaged on an ongoing basis in work that enables public participation in arts and culture. Funding through this program supports both operations and programming. The City of Toronto supports this program through a funding allocation approved annually by Toronto City Council.

Art practiced at a community level creates a powerful sense of inclusion, understanding, and the possibility of self-expression among participants. It can involve one or more art practices, such as music, dance, theatre, visual arts, and storytelling. The collaborative involvement of professional artists with community members is a necessary component.

TAC contributes to the development of community arts in Toronto by supporting community-engaged arts activity that demonstrates vision and excellence. In addition to funding professional<sup>1</sup> arts organizations and community groups engaged in community arts activities, TAC recognizes the vital contribution emerging arts organizations make to the cultural life of Toronto and provides funding opportunities to assist these groups to access professional artistic leadership.

## GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for Annual Operating funding, an applicant must:

- be non-profit;
- have professional artistic leadership and pay appropriate professional fees to artists;
- be located in the City of Toronto and have a significant portion of its activities occurring within the City;
- have a history of sustained community arts activity over the two years prior to this application;
- have received a minimum of two project grants through TAC's Arts Discipline or Strategic programs;
- have a viable administrative structure;
- have sound financial management;
- submit verification of financial results of the last completed fiscal year:
  - for requests over \$30,000, **audited financial statements** are required;
  - for requests of \$30,000 or less, if annual operating revenues are \$100,000 or more, a **review engagement** is required, (or, if available, audited financial statements);

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<sup>1</sup> 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 Manager in advance of submitting an application.

- for requests of \$30,000 or less, if annual operating revenues are under \$100,000, **unaudited financial statements** that include a balance sheet and a statement of income and expenses is required, (or, if available, audited financial statements or a review engagement);
- demonstrate a range of revenue sources on an annual basis, including earned, government and private sector revenues;
- be governed by a Board of Directors or other body responsible for the organization.

Schools, tuition-funded training programs and curriculum-based programs are not eligible to apply to this program.

Organizations must conduct their community arts activities on an annual, ongoing basis either throughout the year or on a seasonal basis. A single project does not constitute annual or seasonal activity.

Organizations, whose level of activity varies from season to season, in keeping with their mandate, must describe their multi-year creation and production cycle. Annual and biennial festivals that have completed a minimum of two editions are also eligible.

Organizations may receive only one grant per calendar year through the Creative Communities program and may not apply to other TAC discipline programs. However, TAC offers other types of granting opportunities through its *Strategic Initiatives* envelope, and operating grant recipients may be eligible to apply to one of these programs. Please consult TAC's website for other granting opportunities. Operating grant recipients may receive a maximum of one additional grant per calendar year and must submit a final report on that project before applying to another program in the *Strategic Initiatives* envelope.

### FIRST-TIME APPLICANTS

First-time applicants are organizations that did not receive an operating grant last year.

- First-time applicants must consult with the Creative Communities Program Manager before submitting an operating grant application.
- **Additional eligibility requirement.** First-time applicants must have at least \$75,000 in total revenues for the last completed year, and in projected revenues for the current and request years.
- First-time applicants to the Annual Operating program may only apply in the first year of a multi-year cycle. The next year first-time applicants may apply is **2021**.

### ACTIVITY FUNDED

**Community Engaged Arts:** This program funds professional arts organizations that bring artists and communities together to do creative and participatory work. The engagement can be through programs such as:

- storefront and neighbourhood-based arts centres
- artist residencies
- collaborative creation and presentation/exhibition of artwork
- workshops and mentoring
- exploration of community issues through art
- sustaining of traditional, culturally-based art forms

The organizations must include Toronto-based professional artists in its programs. Please note that, although teaching and learning (from group workshops to one-on-one mentoring) can be an important part of the community arts process, this program does not fund faculty salaries.

**Arts Service Organizations:** This program funds professional arts organization that supports the work of professional artists working at a community level. This can include:

- organizations that provide booking/promotional services to professional artists working in schools, parks, libraries and community centres
- multidisciplinary arts organizations that serve and support artist-members
- organizations whose primary purpose is to support the professional practice of community arts

### VALUE OF GRANT

TAC does not fund 100% of an applicant's budget. Applicants may receive less than the full amount requested. TAC does not provide funding for capital projects (e.g. equipment, renovations, purchase of buildings), fundraising events/projects or deficit reduction. Exception: TAC funds may be used towards the purchase of equipment and software to achieve the goals of the organization during the COVID pandemic. This may include but is not limited to electronics, workspace materials and health and safety items.

### APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are required to register at TAC Grants Online (<https://tac.smartsimple.ca>) and submit the application using this online grants management system

**Applications must be submitted on TAC Grants Online 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.

You will enter your Financial and Statistical data online at CADAC (Canadian Arts Database/Données sur les arts au Canada) [www.thecadac.ca](http://www.thecadac.ca). Financial statements must also be submitted to CADAC and a copy uploaded in PDF form with your application.

### SUPPORT MATERIAL

In addition to the information requested in the application form, applicants may upload promotional materials produced by their organization in relation to its last year's activities (e.g. programs, brochures, catalogues, etc.) and/or press clippings (maximum 6 pages). Accepted file format – PDF

New applicants to this program may provide a link to audio/visual support material. If required, provide the password or any special directions required to access the file. Applicants currently receiving TAC Annual Operating support should not submit audio/visual support material. The assessment committee will review audio/visual support material from first-time Annual Operating applicants only.

### ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Applications are reviewed first for eligibility by TAC staff. TAC's Creative Communities Committee then assesses all eligible community arts applications. Grant recommendations are approved by the TAC board of directors.

TAC's Creative Communities Committee is a volunteer committee of practicing artists, other arts professionals and individuals involved in community-based arts activities in communities and neighbourhoods across the city. Members are selected on the basis of their familiarity with and specialized expertise in a broad spectrum of arts styles/practices and their direct experience in the Toronto arts community. TAC strives to ensure fair representation of gender and diverse cultural communities on its adjudication committees and grant review panels. Creative Communities organizations are invited to nominate peers interested in serving on TAC's Creative Communities Committee. These nominations should be submitted in writing. Committee members serve maximum three-year terms.

Annual Operating funding is recommended only at the discretion of the Creative Communities Committee. First-time applicants should be aware that approval is not automatic solely on the basis of meeting the general eligibility requirements. (Unsuccessful applicants are eligible to apply to the next Project application deadline.) For organizations currently receiving Annual Operating support, the Creative Communities

Committee may recommend maintaining, increasing or decreasing current funding levels or it may recommend that organizations no longer meeting the standard required be phased out of the program.

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.

## **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

The Creative Communities Committee evaluates all organizations applying for Annual Operating funding using the following assessment criteria in the context of each applicant's stated mandate and direction, available resources and stage of development, and the geographic, cultural and artistic environments in which it works. TAC's equity focused criteria represent 20% of an applicant's overall assessment in the evaluation process for operating grants.

### **1. Artistic Assessment Criteria:**

#### **I. Artistic Quality**

In assessing Artistic Quality, consideration is given to:

- The vitality of the organization's mandate and vision.
- The relationship of the mandate and vision to the organization's achievements, initiatives and goals.
- The levels of artistry achieved through the organization's artistic activities, which may include creation, production, presentation, performance, design, writing, exhibition, programming, etc.

#### **II. Development of the Art Form**

In assessing the contribution the organization makes to the development of the art form, consideration is given to:

- The level of commitment to the development of Canadian work through creation, production, presentation, exhibition and/or programming.
- The role of the organization in the development of the artistic field.

#### **III. Role and Relevance in the Artistic Community**

In assessing the organization's role and relevance in the artistic community, consideration is given to:

- The organization's relationships with artists and/or other arts organizations, which may include resource-sharing, creative collaborations, providing opportunities for networking and professional development, etc.
- The support the organization gives to artists in Toronto by providing opportunities for performance, exhibition, screenings, networking, professional development, and/or other types of support.

#### **IV. Equity Implementation**

TAC has further adopted specific equity-focused assessment criteria to evaluate the extent to which an applicant organization reflects the diversity of its local community and the City of Toronto in its artistic programming, particularly with regards to the inclusion and engagement of Indigenous people, persons of colour, persons who are Deaf, have disabilities or are living with mental illness, and persons who self-identify as 2SLGBTQIAP.

### **2. Organizational Assessment Criteria:**

#### **I. Public Impact**

In assessing the organization's public impact, consideration is given to:

- The organization's ability to describe its current audience and its level of commitment to develop an audience that reflects the community it serves.
- The organization's ability to recognize and cultivate potential new audiences and develop marketing plans to support this.
- The ways in which the organization engages its audience through outreach and audience development activities such as artists' talks, Q&As, pre- and post-performance talks, lecture-demonstrations, etc.
- The organization's ability to gain support from the wider community in the form of sponsorships, partnerships, volunteers, etc.

## **II. Financial and Administrative Viability**

In assessing the organization's financial and administrative health and operations, consideration is given to:

- An appropriate allocation of human and financial resources to fulfill the organization's plans.
- The stability of the organization, demonstrated by its retention of staff and strategies for ensuring succession planning.
- A budget that is realistic and shows a range of earned, private and government revenue.
- A demonstration through past performance of the organization's ability to secure the resources necessary to carry out its work.
- A demonstration through past performance that the organization can respond to changes in its financial circumstances.
- If the organization has a deficit, the effectiveness of the plans that are in place to reduce the deficit and to improve and strengthen financial planning.
- A governing body of the organization that reflects the community served by the organization and is committed to the well-being of the organization.

## **III. Equity Implementation**

TAC has further adopted specific equity-focused assessment criteria to evaluate the extent to which an applicant organization reflects the diversity of its local community and the City of Toronto in its operations, particularly with regards to the inclusion and engagement of Indigenous people, persons of colour, persons who are Deaf, have disabilities or are living with mental illness, and persons who self-identify as 2SLGBTQIAP.

### **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 four months of the deadline date.

### **PAYMENT OF GRANTS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Grant recipients 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. Grant payment will not be released until the signed Letter of Understanding has been uploaded to TAC Grants Online.

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.

Grant recipients must report on the activities for which they received TAC support within their next TAC application. Under normal circumstances, mid-year or interim reports are not required. However, grant recipients are expected to notify TAC immediately of any material changes in their administrative or artistic

plans or of any serious disruptions to their activities. Grant recipients are also required to send TAC information on all upcoming performances and events in a timely manner. Information should be mailed, faxed or emailed to the Creative Communities Program Manager.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TORONTO ARTS COUNCIL SUPPORT**

Grant recipients must include visual acknowledgement of TAC support in all promotional materials, advertising and programs of performances or works related to the grant. The TAC logo may be downloaded from TAC's website; specifications for the size and placement of the logo should be commensurate with that of other donors or sponsors that have provided comparable financial support.

### **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.
- ceases operating.
- ceases to operate as a non-profit organization.
- winds up or dissolves.
- commences or has commenced against it any proceedings in bankruptcy, or is adjudged a bankrupt.
- breaches any of the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code in its operations.

### **CITY OF TORONTO ANTI-RACISM, ACCESS AND EQUITY POLICY**

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

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

A copy of the following City of Toronto documents can be downloaded from TAC website at [www.torontoartscouncil.org](http://www.torontoartscouncil.org): *Anti-racism, Access and Equity Policy Guidelines, Hate Activity Policy, and Human Rights and Harassment Policy and Procedures*

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information on this program contact Creative Communities Program Manager:

Kevin Reigh

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