



OPEN DOOR

2023 PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Application Deadline: September 7, 2023

TAC is committed to equity and inclusion and welcomes applications from diverse cultural and geographic communities within the City of Toronto. Specific equity measures or targeted programs are in place to ensure full access and participation by Black artists, 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](#)

What does this program support?

The Open Door granting program supports projects that demonstrate innovation, experimentation, risk-taking, partnership, sharing of knowledge, and leadership. Open Door provides catalyst funding for ideas with the potential to create transformative change in the arts sector.

Open Door supports the following types of projects:

- Ambitious, timely projects with the potential to transform an artistic discipline, inspire a community of artists or elevate the arts sector.
- Large-scale collaborative initiatives that create meaningful engagement for artists and audiences, with the potential to significantly benefit TAC equity priority groups.
- Projects designed to address organizational transitions. These may include restructuring or succession planning, with an emphasis on community access and engagement.
- Projects that explore new opportunities for Toronto arts work. Projects taking place outside Toronto must explain the impact on the City's artists and/or arts sector.
- Projects with the capacity to solve sector-wide challenges in new or innovative ways.

There is no set grant amount or maximum request for this program. This grant may cover up to 100% of project costs. Grants awarded may be less than the full amount requested.

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).

When can the project happen?

All projects must be completed within two years of the date on the notification letter. Project activities may not start until 3 months after the application deadline.

Who can apply?

Applicants are encouraged to speak to the Strategic Programs Manager, before applying. Please contact the Program Manager to discuss your proposal:

- To apply to Open Door applicants must be either an incorporated non-profit arts organization or an artist collective operating on a not-for-profit basis (two or more artists working together under a group name with a bank account held in that name).
- Applicants must be located in the City of Toronto. A post office box cannot be used to meet the residency requirement.
- Applicants must have a viable administrative and financial plan for the proposed activities.
- Applicants may receive a grant through the Open Door program only once every two years.
- 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 consider equivalent professional experience and contexts. Potential applicants from equity-seeking communities are encouraged to discuss their eligibility with the grant program manager in advance of applying.
- TAC has two distinct funding envelopes:
 1. Arts Discipline funding (e.g. discipline-specific project grants and operating grants) and
 2. Strategic funding (e.g. Artists in the Library, Open Door, etc.)

Applicants are eligible to receive only one grant from each funding category per calendar year. For example, you may not apply to a Strategic Program if you have another Strategic Program grant application pending OR Final Report pending. Open Door is a Strategic Program.

This program does not fund:

- Individuals.
- Activities included in TAC operating grants.
- Activities included in TAC project grants.
- Capital projects or expenses, renovations, or repairs.
- Research, feasibility studies or training programs.
- Projects previously funded through Open Door.
- Print or online publishing.
- This program does not support schools, tuition-funded training programs, curriculum-based programs, or research projects. Projects with a school as the venue cannot take place during school hours.

- Organizations receiving operating funding directly from the City of Toronto's Economic Development and Culture Division or from another City of Toronto Division.
- Funding cannot be used to support an organization's ongoing staff or faculty salaries. Where a portion of permanent staff or administrative resources are dedicated to the project, you may estimate the value of these resources and include a detailed breakdown in the budget as in-kind revenue.
- Educational and religious institutions, unless there is a clear separation at both the program and budget level between their regular activities (i.e. religious/congregation activities or educational/student body activities) and their arts activities.

How do I apply?

Applicants are required to register and submit the application on *TAC Grants Online* <https://tac.smartsimple.ca>. Applications must be submitted 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.

What do I need to prepare?

The three main sections of the Open Door grant application are: *Project Description*, *Budget*, and *Support Material*.

- The *Project Description* section asks about: the inspiration for the project; how it may be transformative for Toronto artists, the sector, or for the applicant; and how the project demonstrates creative collaboration and partnership and sharing of knowledge or leadership.
- The *Budget* section asks you to fill out the budget form and upload supplementary budget notes which break down the budget totals in the form. For requests over \$30,000 you will also be asked to provide a copy of your most recent financial statements (either audited, or internally prepared with a balance sheet and statement of revenues and expenses).
- An optional *Support Material* section allows you to include material or information beyond what is included in the text of the grant application. Video/Audio: provide a URL link and password (if required) to your file. Video and audio files should be no longer than 3 minutes in length. Do not submit material through Google drive. Images: you can provide a link or upload JPEGs. Writing samples, press clippings and letters of support: upload a PDF file.

Are there requirements and guidelines for paying artists?

Grant recipients are required to pay artists' fees for professional artists, and encouraged to bring these fees into line with sector standards or, at a minimum, living wage benchmarks:

- arts sector guidelines
 - [Carfac \(visual arts\)](#)
 - [Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists](#)
 - [Canadian Actors Equity – Independent Theatre Agreement](#)
 - [Canadian Federation of Musicians](#)
- the Ontario Living Wage as a minimum standard for artists/arts workers' salaries and fees: [Ontario Living Wage by Region](#)

How is my application assessed?

Applications are assessed through a peer review process: a review panel of practicing artists and arts workers decides which applications will be recommended for funding. The grant review panel's 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.

The grant review panel assesses projects according to the following criteria:

- The extent to which the proposed project relates to the purpose of the Open Door program (as described on page 1 of these guidelines under *What does this program support?*)
- The extent to which the project invests in community partnerships, collaborative leadership, and the sharing of knowledge.
- The financial and administrative viability of the proposed project.

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.

How and when will I find out the application results?

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.

What if my project changes?

Grants may be used only for the purposes outlined in the application. Changes to the scale, activities and timeframe 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 the Grant Program Manager.

What do I do when I have completed the project?

Recipients are required to file a final report on their project. The final report is filled out and submitted online, just like the application. Future applications will not be accepted unless reports on previous funding have been received and approved by TAC.

What are the rules or requirements for this funding?

- Successful applicants will receive a Letter of Understanding. The Letter of Understanding will detail the terms and conditions of the funding. The Letter of Understanding must be signed and uploaded to *TAC Grants Online* before funding can be released. The Letter of Understanding also describes situations that would require grant repayment.
- 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.***
- 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.
- The City of Toronto requires that all organizations and individuals adopt a policy of non-discrimination as a condition of receiving a grant 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: Anti-Racism, Access and Equity Policy Guidelines, Hate Activity Policy and Procedures and Human Rights and Harassment Policy and Procedures.](#)
- TAC staff attends client performances and events. Grant recipients are required to send TAC information on any public performances or events presented in the context of their grant-supported projects. This information should be emailed to the Grant Program Manager.
- In addition to the aforementioned general conditions of funding, TAC reserves the right to place other conditions on the release of the grant (such as confirmation of venue, programming, other sources of funding, etc.). Any specific conditions will be contained in the Letter of Understanding.

Further questions

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