



ANIMATING HISTORIC SITES 2025 PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Application Deadline: July 8, 2025 for projects taking place in 2026

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 [Equity Framework](#).

Purpose

Toronto Arts Council is partnering with Toronto History Museums and Black Creek Pioneer Village on an initiative intended to create opportunities for Toronto artists to animate selected historic sites and museums located in Toronto outside of the downtown core. The goals of the program are to serve as a catalyst for people to see and think about historic places differently; to create avenues for deep engagement with the arts in neighbourhoods, with a focus on those outside the downtown core; to create new audiences for artists and for museums and historic sites; and to address the growing need for access to space for the arts. This program envisions historic sites as vital public spaces of social interaction, where the past provides creative context for the future.

What does this program support?

The *Animating Historic Sites* program provides funding to professional artists, arts organizations and collectives working in any artistic discipline (i.e.: theatre, dance, music, visual arts, media arts, community-engaged arts, Indigenous arts, Black arts, disability arts, arts education, literary arts, etc.) to pursue time-limited projects involving site-specific research, development, creation, production, presentation, and programming that responds to or interprets the selected site or museum.

Grant recipients will have the opportunity to conduct artistic research; explore the site and its exhibits, archives, surrounding landscape, historical and environmental context; engage with the local community; and present new site-responsive work in collaboration with the site or museum. The recipients will deliver free site-specific programming following research and development, which may vary in scope depending on the project. Programming may include activities such as: exhibitions, installations, performances, concerts, screenings, readings, workshops, presentations of work in progress, community-engaged arts activities, and other arts programming. Permanent exhibitions and installations are not eligible. All funded projects will be produced by the grant recipient and hosted and supported by the partnering site.

The maximum grant amount is \$30,000. This grant may cover up to 100% of project costs, applicants may but are not required to seek other sources of revenue. Applicants may receive less than the full amount requested. The grant request should reflect the scope of the project.

Budget: The budget may indicate a range of revenue sources, which may include donated goods and services. Expenses can include: artist fees, production and technical fees, marketing and outreach costs, administrative costs (recommended up to 10%), etc. This program requires the payment of artist fees at or above industry standards.

Insurance: Each of the partnering institutions has specific insurance requirements for General Commercial Liability insurance that the successful applicants must meet. Grant recipients will be provided with coverage under the TAC's liability insurance.

Partner staffing costs: The host site reserves the right to limit the in-kind services and resources (i.e.: space and staffing) it will provide for the project. Additional staffing costs may apply.

Ticketing: All projects must be free and open to the public. Partner sites and museums agree to waive admission for attendees. If ticketing is required due to capacity limits, ticketing will be free and open to the public and will be the responsibility of the grant recipient to facilitate.

Location: All public activities proposed for 2026 must follow public health guidelines of the day. They can take place indoors or outdoors, with possible digital components. Site booking must be arranged well in advance with the partnering institution and is subject to availability.

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).

Participating museums & sites

- Toronto History Museums:
 - Gibson House
 - Montgomery's Inn
 - Scarborough Museum
 - Spadina Museum
 - Todmorden Mills
- Black Creek Pioneer Village

Please review the site descriptions in this [document](#). You can apply to program only one site or museum. The proposal must clearly demonstrate why you are applying to work at a specific site, which might include personal or artistic connection to the site or the surrounding communities, interest in particular stories of the site, architectural or natural site specificity, etc. Note that sites have varying capacity limits, and not all spaces at a particular site will be available.

How do I find out more about participating sites?

Applicants are advised to research [Toronto History Museums](#) and [Black Creek Pioneer Village](#) online. Before applying, please also do a site visit and/or consult with site staff to discuss your project vision and its connection to the site, as well as resources and logistics required and available to support the project. Site staff will be able to talk about the feasibility and suitability of proposed projects and offer other helpful information.

Group site visits with the site staff will be offered for each location. Contact information for each location and the site visit dates and times can be found on the Toronto Arts Council [Animating Historic Sites](#) web page.

If you are unable to attend the offered site tours, please get in touch with the site staff and they may be able to schedule additional site visit or provide information over the phone or email, depending on

availability and timing. Please reach out **at least four weeks in advance of the deadline**. Applicants may also do a site visit on their own time.

When can the project happen?

All projects must be completed in the 2026 calendar year, and, in exceptional circumstances, no later than within two years of the date on the Notification Letter. The project cannot begin before the results are announced.

Duration and schedule of the project will depend on the scale of the proposed activities and the capacity/availability of the site. A creation and presentation schedule will need to be developed in consultation with the site staff. Grant recipients will need to coordinate with the site staff for any public presentation activities (space booking will be subject to availability). All public programming must be designed carefully with site/museum staff to align with existing programming.

Who can apply?

If you are a first-time applicant or have questions about your eligibility or your application, please contact the Strategic Programs Manager, Lena Golubtsova at lena@torontoartscouncil.org.

- This grant program is open to professional artists, not-for-profit arts organizations or artist collectives operating on a not-for-profit basis.
- A professional artist is someone who has developed their skills through training and/or practice; is recognized as such by artists working in the same artistic field; actively practices their art; seeks payment for their work; and has a history of public presentation.
- TAC recognizes that due to systemic barriers within the broader arts community (e.g., limited mainstream presentation opportunities for artists from equity-seeking communities) 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 applying.
- You may not apply as an individual and as a member of an organization or collective.
- You may not apply for the same project in different grants programs.
- You may not apply as an individual or as part of an organization if you are employed (full or part time) by City of Toronto Museum & Heritage Services or Black Creek Pioneer Village.

TAC has two distinct funding envelopes. Applicants may be eligible to apply for one grant in each category per year, so long as they have no overdue final reports. The two funding envelopes include:

1. **Arts Discipline:** project and operating grants in dance, visual arts, theatre, etc.
2. **Strategic Programs:** Artists in the Library, Open Door, etc.

With a few exceptions (TAC Leaders Lab, Newcomer & Refugee Artist Mentorship, TAC-CS Digital Solutions Incubator, Black Arts, Indigenous Arts), applicants can receive only one grant from each funding envelope per year. The Animating Historic Sites program falls within the Strategic Funding envelope. Any other Strategic Program grants must be completed with a final report filed and approved to meet eligibility criteria.

For Individuals:

- Individuals must be Canadian Citizens or Permanent Residents or have an application pending for Permanent Resident Status or be a Protected Person (approved refugee claimant) and, if requested, be able to provide documentation to verify this. (Grant recipients must have a Social Insurance Number.)
- Individuals must have been a resident of the City of Toronto for at least one year prior to the deadline, and live and work in Toronto for at least 8 months a year. A Post Office Box address cannot be used to meet the residency requirement.

- Professional artists pursuing graduate studies may not apply for work related to their program of study. A letter from the graduate program director specifying that the project is not related to the graduate student's program of studies must be submitted with the application.

For Organizations and Collectives:

- Organizations and collectives must be incorporated non-profit organizations or unincorporated collectives which operate on a non-profit basis. 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.
- Not-for-profit organizations that are not arts-based are eligible to apply to this grants program. Projects must include the collaborative involvement of professional artists with community members, as well as the payment of professional artist fees.
- Organizations and collectives must be located in the City of Toronto. A Post Office Box address cannot be used to meet this requirement.
- 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.

This program does not fund:

- Activities open only to a subscriber or membership base;
- Undergraduate students;
- Commercial businesses and for-profit organizations;
- Ongoing operating costs, such as permanent staff salaries and general administration of an organization. This program is not intended to support an organization or collective's ongoing activities. 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;
- Costs related to equipment purchase, capital projects (capital assets such as vehicles, computers or cameras to be used beyond the duration of the project), fundraising projects, deficit reduction, publishing and archiving projects, awards and award ceremonies, projects conceived for competitive purposes, art therapy, academic research;
- Activities taking place outside of the City of Toronto (such as research, touring, travel, accommodations);
- Schools that are part of Ontario's public or private education system;
- Educational and religious institutions, unless there is a clear separation in both programming and budget between their regular activities and their arts activities.

How do I apply?

Applicants register and submit the application on TAC Grants Online (<https://tac.smartsimple.ca>).

Applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 pm on July 8, 2025. 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 inbox.

Application Accessibility Support for Deaf Applicants and Applicants 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. Additional information [here](#).

What do I need to prepare?

The four main sections of the Animating Historic Sites grant application are: Project Details, Project Description, Budget Information, and Support Material.

- **Project Details:** amount requested, project site and why this site, project dates, project summary, project contributors form with brief bios for all contributors;
- **Project Description:** what do you want to do, why do you want to do it, how will you do it: space use and technical & production elements, workplan, outreach and audience development plan, access plan; access planning relates to measures taken to make the event accessible to audiences. For more information on how to create an access plan, please refer to our external resource list on [accessibility in the arts](#);
- **Budget Information:** budget table, supplementary budget PDF with detailed breakdown of artist fees and other expenses, contingency statement;
- **Support Material:** audio/visual examples of your work. Support Material is a critical component of the application. All applicants are required to submit examples of recent work that are relevant to the project. The support material should illustrate both the quality and nature of the artist's practice, and the artist's capacity to work in the context relevant to the proposed project.
 - Due to the number of applications submitted to this program, peer assessors will normally spend 5 minutes or less per application viewing support material. Works, therefore, may not be seen in their entirety.
 - You can upload your media files to TAC or provide links to an external website where your work has already been uploaded, such as Vimeo, YouTube, your personal website, etc. (recommended). Do not submit material through Google drive. If you provide a link, please also provide the password or any other instructions required to access the file.
 - For uploading, the maximum file size is 200 MB and files are accepted in the following formats. Video: QuickTime (MOV), AVI, JPEG, JPG, MPEG, WMV. Audio: AAC, MP3, WAV, WMA.
 - Written support material, including press clippings, writing samples, letters of recommendations, must be uploaded in PDF format. Six pages maximum.

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?

Grants are awarded on a competitive basis by an independent grant review panel of practicing artists with input from representatives from partnering institutions. Peer assessors are selected on the basis of their familiarity with and specialized expertise in a broad spectrum of artistic practices and their direct experience in the Toronto arts community. Grant review panels are composed to ensure equitable representation from TAC's Equity Priority Groups as well as geographical communities and artistic disciplines. The grant review panel's recommendations are approved by TAC Directors.

The Grant review panel makes an assessment based on the applicants' past and proposed work within the context of each competition. The grant review panel evaluates all eligible applications in a comparative context and makes funding decisions based on the availability of funds, the program objectives, and the following assessment criteria:

- Artistic merit;
- Extent to which the proposed project responds to or interprets the selected site or museum;
- Quality of experience the proposed activity will provide to site visitors and to the local community;
- Demonstrated ability of the applicant to carry out the project as outlined;
- Financial viability of the project, including adequate payment of artist fees.

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 or more of Toronto Arts Council's equity priority groups or that primarily involve or serve artists from these groups will be prioritized. Projects that involve local artists (or are proposed by artists with strong existing ties and partnerships with the local community) are prioritized in TAC's geographically specific Strategic Programs.

Project funding is recommended only at the discretion of the grant review panel. This is a competitive program. Applicants should be aware that meeting the general eligibility requirements does not guarantee that a grant will be recommended.

Decisions of the grant review panel are final.

As the peer assessors and the applications change with each deadline, peer assessor evaluation of relative artistic merit will also vary. Unsuccessful applicants may succeed with another grant review panel and are encouraged to reapply.

How and when do I find out the application results?

TAC will send you an email when the results are available and you will log in to TAC Grants Online to receive the results. Results are not released over the telephone. Notification will be issued within four months of the deadline date.

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 through TAC's granting portal. The due date for the final report will be included in the grant notification letter. Future applications to TAC Strategic Projects Programs* will not be accepted unless reports on previous funding have been received and approved by TAC.

*Exceptions include TAC Leaders Lab, Newcomer & Refugee Artist Mentorship, and TAC-CS Digital Solutions Incubator programs. Contact a TAC Program Manager if you have questions about these exceptions.

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.
- Acknowledgement of a Letter of Agreement (LOA), to be signed with the relevant partner (Toronto History Museums or Black Creek Pioneer Village).

- Grant recipients will be required to attend an **Animating Historic Sites Program Orientation Session in January 2026** (date TBA).
- Submission of a Social Insurance Number will be required for Individual grant recipients only. Individual grant recipients will receive a T4A for the grant amount.
- Recipients of TAC Animating Historic Sites funding must acknowledge TAC's support, as well as the partner with logo recognition of both Toronto Arts Council **and** the partnering institution. Logo information will be provided in the grant notification letter from TAC.
- 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.
- 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 e-mailed to the Strategic Programs Manager. Recipients may also be asked to provide information to the TAC Communications 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 programming, other sources of funding, etc.). Any specific conditions will be contained in the Letter of Understanding.

Further questions

Contact Strategic Programs Manager

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