



# ANIMATING TORONTO PARKS

## PROGRAM GUIDELINES

### For activities happening in 2026

***Application Deadline: June 3, 2025***

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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](#).

#### **What does this program support?**

The *Animating Toronto Parks* grants program provides funding to professional artists, arts organizations, artist collectives, and non-profit organizations to create and present free arts programming in selected Toronto parks located in Etobicoke, York, North York, East York, and Scarborough. For the purposes of this program, “arts programming” may include the presentation of dance, literary arts, music, theatre, visual and media arts, community-engaged arts, Indigenous arts, and other fields of artistic practice.

Animating Toronto Parks is a Strategic Funding Program managed by Toronto Arts Council (TAC), in partnership with Toronto Arts Foundation’s Arts in the Parks initiative, City of Toronto Arts & Culture Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PF&R), Black Creek Community Farm, and community partner Park People.

**The maximum grant in this program is \$25,000.** Grants awarded may be less than the full amount requested. Applicants are not required to secure other sources of funding. The payment of artists’ fees is a requirement of this program.

Grant recipients will be provided with:

- funding toward artist fees and production elements
- access to the park space (permit dates subject to approval by TAC and PF&R)
- coverage under the TAC’s liability insurance
- information regarding additional requirements, such as emergency action plan, waste and recycling diversion plan, etc., or additional permits, noise exemption, building permit, etc.
- an introduction to City of Toronto PF&R permit staff and park supervisors, Park People, and local community/parks groups
- support under Toronto Arts Foundation’s Arts in the Parks initiative, including marketing, promotion, inclusion on the [artsintheparksto.org](#) website, wayfinding signage, onsite volunteers, assistance with local community outreach, and other support; participation in Arts in the Parks is a requirement of the program.

Community consultation and/or engagement is a requirement of the program.

## **What is Arts in the Parks?**

Arts in the Parks is a free city-wide initiative managed by Toronto Arts Foundation (TAF), in partnership with Toronto Arts Council (TAC), Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PF&R), and community partner Park People. Arts in the Parks offers a wide range of in-kind supports to artists and arts organizations working in parks across the city, such as support with marketing, community engagement, on-site wayfinding signage, and volunteer coordination. Arts in the Parks is a core resource for Animating Toronto Parks grants recipients. To learn more about Arts in the Parks please visit <https://artsintheparksto.org/>.

## **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?**

The Project Start Date must be no earlier than January 1, 2026. This includes planning activities leading up to events in parks.

For activities in the parks, it is recommended they fall within Arts in the Parks season: June to September 2025. Outside of those months, on-site support from Arts in the Parks and community groups will be limited. For **first time applicants to the program**, it is strongly recommended to have events planned for **no earlier than June 15, 2026**.

All projects must be completed within two years of the date on the Notification Letter.

## **Who can apply?**

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

This grants program is open to **professional artists, not-for-profit arts organizations, artist collectives** operating on a not-for-profit basis, and **not-for-profit organizations**. Not-for-profit organizations that are not arts-based may only apply to undertake projects that involve the artistic leadership of professional artists.

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 or exhibition.

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 submitting an application.

You may not apply as an individual and be part of an organization or collective applying in the same competition.

You may not apply for the same project in different grants programs.

**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 incomplete projects or outstanding final reports. The two funding envelopes include:

1. **Arts Discipline:** project and operating grants in dance, visual arts, theatre, etc.
2. **Strategic Programs:** Animating Historic Sites, 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 Toronto Parks 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.

**2025 Exception: If you received an Animating Toronto Parks grant for activities happening in summer 2025, you can still apply in this round for activities in summer 2026. This exception is only for the Animating Toronto Parks program. Funds for recommended grants will not be released until 2026.**

### ***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, must 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. 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.

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.

Collectives must be prepared to submit bank account information (in the name of the collective as listed in the application) if the application is successful.

### **This program does not fund:**

Undergraduate students;

Permanent installations, such as permanent sculpture;

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 the creation of a film or for competitive purposes, art therapy, academic research, commercial activities (i.e.: the sale of art);

Activities taking place outside of the City of Toronto (such as events, rehearsals, 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?**

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. Additional information [here](#).

### **Choose your park**

Following is a list of parks that have been pre-approved by City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation for this program. You can choose one or more parks in the "Parks Selection" section of the grant application. Build your application around your preferred park(s). List your alternative park preferences. The grant review panel may assign a different park (or parks) for your project, where necessary. Be prepared to be flexible. It is strongly recommended that the first-time applicants select one park. For all applicants: if you want to program multiple parks, consider outreach for each of the local communities, obtaining permits for each park, site visits, etc. and include it in your work plan and budget.

**Parks list:** *list of available parks is subject to change; an alternative park may be assigned for your project.*

- Alexmuir Park (Scarborough)
- Amos Waites Park (Etobicoke)
- Bell Manor Park (Etobicoke)
- Black Creek Community Farm (North York)
- Cedar Brook Park (Scarborough)
- Dentonia Park (East York)
- Earl Bales Park (North York)
- Flagstaff Park (Etobicoke)
- Fountainhead Park (North York)
- Fred Johnson Park (Scarborough)
- Fundy Bay Park (Scarborough)
- Guild Park and Gardens (Scarborough)
- Lee Lifeson Art Park (North York)
- Maidavale Park (Scarborough)
- Memorial Park (York)
- Milliken Park (Scarborough)
- Morningside Park (Scarborough)
- Neilson Park (Etobicoke)
- Neilson Park (Scarborough)
- Parkway Forest Park (North York)
- Prairie Drive Park (Scarborough)
- Raymore Park (Etobicoke)
- Rowntree Mills Park (Etobicoke)
- R.V. Burgess Park (East York)
- Shawn Blu Rose Park (Scarborough)
- Summerlea Park (Etobicoke)
- Taylor Creek Park (East York)
- Thomson Memorial Park (Scarborough)
- Walter Saunders Memorial Park (North York)
- Wincott Park (Etobicoke)

**Parks map:** [here](#)

Parks descriptions can be found at [Animating Toronto Parks Descriptions](#).

## **Park permits**

Any activity in a City park (including rehearsals) will require a permit from Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PF&R). Park permits are all subject to approval by PF&R, taking into consideration existing permits and limitations on some parks. If you receive an Animating Toronto Parks grant, you will still need to apply to PF&R for a special event permit. The special event permit fee will be waived so you do not need to budget for that, but there may be other costs associated with your activity in the park, such as noise exemptions or building permits. Be prepared to budget for these expenses. If your special events permit application is not approved by PF&R, TAC, TAF and PF&R staff will work with you to find an alternative park for your project. Be prepared to be patient and flexible.

The above park permit information does not apply to Black Creek Community Farm, where there is no permitting process, but the applicants for this location will still need to work out the details of their projects and the schedule with the farm's staff.

## **What do I need to prepare?**

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

Project Details: amount requested, project dates, park permit dates, park selection and why this park(s), weather contingency plan, access plan, and project summary.

Project Description: project overview, technical requirements, workplan, outreach and community engagement plan, and project contributors form with brief bios for all contributors.

Budget: budget form and supplementary budget notes.

Support Material: audio/visual examples of your work.

## **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 will my application be assessed?**

Grants are awarded on a competitive basis by an independent grant review panel of practicing artists with input from the program partners. Representatives from TAC partner organizations, City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Toronto Arts Foundation, Black Creek Community Farm, and Park People, will participate in the assessment process to provide contextual information to the peer assessors. 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 and with outdoor programming. 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 will engage and include local communities;

Quality of experience the proposed activity will provide to community;

Demonstrated capacity 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 this program.

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 will I find out the application results?**

TAC will send you an email when the results are available and will be able to log in to TAC Grants Online to receive their results. Notification will be sent approximately four months after the application deadline. 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 your 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 requirements & conditions of this funding?**

#### **Funding requirements:**

Successful applicants will receive a **Letter of Understanding (LOU)**. The LOA will detail the terms and conditions of the funding and **must be signed and uploaded to TAC Grants Online before funding can be released.**

Grant recipients will be required to **sign and upload a signed Declaration of Compliance with Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Legislation and City Policy** and a City of Toronto Release, Waiver and Indemnity form **before funding can be released.**

#### **Funding conditions:**

**Funds for recommended grants will not be released until 2026.**

Grant recipients will work with PF&R to book their dates for any activities in the park. All grant recipients will **submit a special event permit application** to PF&R. Grant recipients will be required to **submit the signed Permit Notice** (and any other conditional permits or permissions) via your TAC Grants Online account, or upload proof of permit application, **before funding can be released.** Any additional

permitting costs should be included in the grant budget. Grant recipients will be required to submit an **Emergency Action Plan** to PF&R.

Grant recipients will work with Arts in the Parks and community groups to ensure success of their projects. Participation in Arts in the Parks is a requirement of the program.

- Grant recipients will be required to attend an Animating Toronto Parks / Arts in the Parks Program Orientation Session (date TBA).
- Grant amounts are designed to cover portable washroom costs. Where washroom facilities are not available or accessible, **grants recipients will be required to provide bathrooms** for any public activities. Portable washrooms must be AODA compliant. Washroom costs should be included in the grant budget for parks without washroom facilities.
- All arts programming **must be free and open to the public**. Donations or fees from audience members may not be solicited. Tickets may be reserved for capacity but must be free and accessible to local communities.
- Park space may only be used during the agreed permit dates and times, and solely for the agreed activity.
- The park must be clean and clear of damage following the event.
- Grant recipients must include **visual acknowledgement of TAC and Arts in the Parks** support in all promotional materials, advertising and programs related to the project. The TAC logo is available on our website; specifications for the size and placement of the logo should be commensurate with that of other donors or sponsors that have provided similar financial support. The Arts in the Parks logo will be provided by TAF staff. Arts in the Parks wayfinding signage will be provided by Arts in the Parks staff.
- 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. You will be required to submit your individual, organizational or collective's Bank information along with your Letter of Understanding and other Notification Letter Conditions and Requirements.
- In addition to the aforementioned general conditions of funding, TAC reserves the right to place other conditions on the release of the grant. Any specific conditions will be contained in the Letter of Understanding.

### **Further questions**

Contact Strategic Programs Manager,

Lena Golubtsova (she/her)

[lana@torontoartscouncil.org](mailto:lana@torontoartscouncil.org), 416-392-6802 x 219