

## 2025 Program Guidelines

### Black Arts Annual Operating Funding

*Application Deadline: March 12, 2025*

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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 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](#)

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The Black Arts Annual Operating Program is a new funding initiative created to support Black-led, Black-focused and Black-serving<sup>1</sup> organizations seeking support with operating expenses. For the purpose of this program, “Black” refers to African descendant people across the diaspora including but not limited to African Canadian, Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latinx, East African, West African, Southern and Central African, Afro-Arab, Afro-Indigenous, etc. This funding program is intended to support the development, continuation, and flourishing of Black arts organizations.

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

The Black Arts Program provides Annual Operating support to non-profit Toronto Black arts organizations (both incorporated and unincorporated). Organizations qualifying for funding will be Black-led, Black-focused, and Black-serving; with the requirement for a majority of the leadership (including but not limited to board members, founders, and staff) to identify as Black (Black-led), the primary goals of the organization to meaningfully support the Black community (Black-focused), as well as a significant portion of program activities prioritizing serving the Black community (Black-serving). 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.

TAC recognizes the need to respond to barriers that Black arts communities face due to anti-Black racism. The program seeks to address these barriers by providing pathways to sustainable support to Toronto’s Black-led arts organizations serving Black artists. This program also seeks to encourage the development and sustainability of Black arts communities by increasing availability of dedicated resources and support provided to Black artists and communities through Black arts organizations.

#### **What activities does this program fund?**

Professional, Black-led arts organization that supports the work of professional Black artists in a variety of arts disciplines. This can include:

- multidisciplinary arts organizations that serve and support artist-members with a focus on Black artists-members
- organizations whose primary purpose is to support the professional practice of Black artists

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**Black-led:** majority of leadership at all levels is Black

**Black-focused:** primary goal of the organization is to meaningfully support and engage Black communities

**Black-serving:** a significant portion of program activities prioritize serving Black communities

**Please note:** organizations are not required to exclusively support Black artists to be eligible, rather must have a consistent history of meaningful engagement of Black artists and a focus on Black artists in a significant component of their planned programming

Operating costs covered by this funding could include staff retention, research and development, communications and donor relations, facility management, etc.

### **Who can apply?**

To be eligible for this Annual Operating funding, an applicant must<sup>2</sup>:

- be a non-profit professional arts organization;
- be Black-led, Black-focused, and Black-serving
- 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 recent history of sustained arts activity of at least two years;
- have a viable administrative structure;
- demonstrate a range of revenue sources on an annual basis, which may include earned, government and private sector revenues;
- provide **audited financial statements** or internally prepared statements including a balance sheet, statement of income and expenses (if audited financial statements or review engagement is unavailable)
- be governed by a majority Black-led Board of Directors or other body responsible for the organization.

Please consult with Program Manager to discuss your organization's eligibility

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

Organizations must conduct their activities on an annual, ongoing basis either throughout the year or on a seasonal basis. Organizations, whose level of activity varies from season to season, in keeping with their mandate, must describe their production cycle.

### **Can I Apply to Other TAC Grants?**

Organizations may receive only one grant per calendar year through the Black Arts program and may not apply to other TAC operating programs. However, organizations who receive a Black Arts Operating grant below \$20,000 may still apply to other *discipline programs* as well as *strategic initiatives programs* that TAC offers. In this case, the organization may receive up to one project grant in each funding stream and two project grants total per calendar year. Organizations receiving a Black Arts Operating grant above \$20,000 can only apply to grants in the *strategic initiatives programs*. In this case, the organization may receive up to one project grant in addition to their operating grant per calendar year. Please visit [TAC's website](#) for other granting opportunities.

### **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

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<sup>2</sup> TAC recognizes that due to systemic barriers within the broader arts community (e.g. limited mainstream presentation opportunities for Black artists) that some flexibility may be required in interpreting eligibility criteria to take into account equivalent professional experience and contexts. Potential applicants are encouraged to discuss their eligibility with the Program Manager in advance of submitting an application.

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.

Your application will be reviewed and assessed by a Grant Review Panel and staff. Returning operating clients requesting over \$50,000 must provide **audited financial statements** or **review engagement** with their application.

### **How do I apply?**

**Step 1:** Discuss eligibility with the Program Manager - *mandatory for all new applicants*

**Step 2:** Register at TAC Grants Online ([/tac.smartsimple.ca](https://tac.smartsimple.ca))

**Step 3:** Enter your Financial and Statistical data online at CADAC (Canadian Arts Database/Données sur les arts au Canada) [www.cadac.ca](http://www.cadac.ca) Financial statements must also be submitted to CADAC and a copy uploaded in PDF form with your application

**Step 4:** Add support material

- includes promotional materials in relation to the last active year's activities (e.g. programs, brochures, catalogues, etc.) and/or press clippings (maximum 6 pages, PDF)
- you may also upload (200 MB maximum) or provide a link to audio/visual support material. If required, provide the password or any special directions required to access the file

**Step 5:** Submit the application using [this online grants](#) management system **no later than 11:59 pm on the deadline date**

**Please note:** 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.

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

Applications are reviewed first for eligibility by TAC staff. A Grant Review Panel of Black artists and cultural workers then assesses all eligible arts applications. Grant recommendations are approved by the TAC Board of Directors.

TAC strives to ensure fair representation of gender and diverse cultural communities on its adjudication committees and grant review panels. 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. Annual Operating funding is recommended only at the discretion of the Grant Review Panel. Included in the [Equity Framework](#) is an **Equity Priority Policy**, which states that if there are multiple well-assessed applications of equal strength 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 Grant Review Committee will evaluate 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 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 and in its operations, particularly with regards to the inclusion and engagement of Black people, Indigenous people, persons of color, persons who are Deaf, have disabilities or are living with mental illness, and persons who self-identify as 2SLGBTQIAP.

TAC's equity focused criteria represent 20% of an applicant's overall assessment in the evaluation process for operating grants.

## **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(s)**

In assessing the contribution, the organization makes to the development of the art form(s), 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(s).

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

In assessing the organization's role 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, with a focus on Black artists, by providing opportunities for performance, exhibition, screenings, networking, professional development, and/or other types of support.

### **IV. Equity Implementation**

In assessing Artistic Equity Implementation, consideration is given to:

- The alignment of equity and inclusion goals with mandate and programming, and the ways goals are evaluated.
- The demonstration of accountability regarding equity and inclusion goals, and recognition that equity and inclusion work is an ongoing process.
- The level of commitment to engaging artists from TAC equity priority groups in programming, and the development of production or distribution networks with people from priority groups.
- The extent to which programming is inclusive and accessible to a broad community.
- An awareness of potential issues of cultural appropriation.
- An intersectional approach to inclusion

## **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

- The organization's ability to gain support from the wider community in the form of partnerships, volunteers, sponsorships, etc.

## II. Financial and Administrative Viability

TAC recognizes economic disadvantages that disproportionately affect Black communities in Toronto that may have created barriers to financial and administrative viability. Emphasis will be placed on efforts made towards stability in these areas and applicants will have an opportunity to share any challenges that they may have experienced in doing so. The panel will consider these statements in their assessments.

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.
- 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.
- 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

In assessing Organizational Equity Implementation, consideration is given to:

- Equity related organizational goals that recognize equity and inclusion as an ongoing process.
- A commitment to the intersectional representation of TAC equity priority groups in the senior leadership, staff and board, and articulation of how the goals were developed.
- An awareness of systemic barriers – physical, economic, cultural, social or artistic - that may prevent participation in the activities or the organization, and the articulation of goals to address barriers.
- Partnerships with other organizations belonging to TAC equity priority groups.
- The level of commitment to engaging audiences from TAC equity priority groups.
- Efforts to create an inclusive environment, and particularly for people requiring accessibility accommodations
- The integration of anti-oppression frameworks and non-colonial or non-Eurocentric lenses applied to organizational activities.

## **Are there requirements and guidelines for paying artists and arts workers?**

- 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](#)
- Toronto Arts Council recognizes that increasing levels of compensation for artists and arts workers may require organizations to review programming levels – TAC will not penalize organizations making necessary adjustments, including reducing programming.

## **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 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 <https://torontoartscouncil.org/>: *Anti-racism, Access and Equity Policy Guidelines, Hate Activity Policy, and Human Rights and Harassment Policy and Procedures*

## **Contact your Program Manager**

For further information on this program contact Program Manager.

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