TORONTO ARTS COUNCIL

INDIGENOUS ARTS PROJECTS

2025 PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis until October 15, 2025

TAC is committed to equity and inclusion. We welcome and encourage applications from all Toronto artists, including but not limited to: 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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What does this program support?

The Indigenous Arts Projects program is an annual multi-disciplinary project grant specifically for Indigenous artists, collectives and organizations. **For this program, "Indigenous" refers to people who self-define as a First Nations (Status or Non-status), Inuit, or Métis person of Canada.** TAC recognizes Indigenous peoples are the original inhabitants of what is now known as Toronto, which has great historical and cultural significance as a place for ceremony, gathering, trade, and exchange. This program is designed to increase participation in and access to Toronto Arts Council funding by Indigenous artists, while increasing the creation and presentation of high-quality Indigenous art in the City. The City of Toronto supports this program through a funding allocation approved annually by Toronto City Council.

The program recognizes a diverse range of art practices. You may apply in one of the four categories described below. Grants awarded may be less than the full amount requested. Except for the Project Development and Creation categories, TAC will not fund 100% of a project: applicants must indicate other revenue sources, which may include donated goods and services.

1. Project Development: supports the development of an arts-based project in the beginning stage. It is designed to support artists in researching Indigenous ways of knowing, processes, seeking collaborative relationships, creating a body of research/support material, accessing knowledge or language keepers and archival and documentary materials to build on a component or the scope of a project.

The maximum grant in this category is $3,000. TAC may fund 100% of a project in the Project Development category.

Expenses can include:

- Mentor/Elder/Knowledge Keeper honoraria.

- Costs of networking or professional development events; visiting sites of significance.

- Rental of space or software to conduct interviews, accessing support materials, i.e., archives.

2. Creation: supports artistic creation in any artistic discipline, including research and development, film and media production, and commissions. If your project requires the work to be done in stages, you

may apply for funding for different stages of creation but note that you can only receive one grant in a calendar year from this program.

The maximum grant in this category is $10,000. TAC may fund 100% of a project in the Creation category.

Expenses can include:

- Fees paid to collaborators, mentors and creative resources.
- Studio costs, materials and production elements essential to creation.

3. Exhibition, Presentation and Dissemination: supports the exhibition, presentation and dissemination of Indigenous artistic work in any artistic discipline.

The maximum grant in this category is $15,000.

Expenses can include:

- Artistic, presentation, exhibition and administrative fees and costs, including installation, rehearsal, venue and production costs (not including film production).
- Dissemination costs including publicity, marketing and outreach.

4. Indigenous Arts Sector Development: supports projects that develop and advance the practice of Indigenous arts and Indigenous artists in Toronto. Projects can include:

- Workshops and conferences
- Events designed to further develop or expand Indigenous arts practices
- The development of toolkits and resources to support Indigenous arts practices

*Development projects must either benefit a group of Indigenous arts professionals or be an arts education project led by an Indigenous artist(s); individual professional development projects are not eligible.

The maximum grant in this category is $15,000.

Eligible expenses include:

- Artistic, production and administrative fees and costs, including venue, publicity, marketing and outreach.

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 a minimum of 4 months after the submission date.
- 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 if you have any questions about your eligibility or the eligibility of your project, please contact the Indigenous Arts Program Manager.

- To apply to the Indigenous Arts Program, applicants must identify as an Indigenous (Status or Non-Status First Nations, Métis, or Inuit) professional artist or incorporated or unincorporated not-for-profit organizations or collectives. The payment of artists' fees is a requirement of all categories in this program.

- TAC recognizes that Indigenous Peoples may have experienced intergenerational grief and trauma due to Ancestral dispersal, disruption, incomplete or inaccurate records, or enfranchisement/loss of status. TAC does not make determinations about an applicant's Indigeneity, rather, applicants are asked to describe their relationship to their community and culture, if known.

- Artists must be professional. 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 tradition; actively practices her/his/their art; seeks payment for her/his/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) 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 Program Manager in advance of applying.

- You may not apply as an individual and an organization or collective for the same project at the same time. If you are one of the members of an applicant collective, you may also apply as an individual for an unrelated project in the same competition year.

- The project for which the funding is requested must take place in the City of Toronto. Exception: Indigenous led projects based in Toronto may provide programming outside the boundaries of Toronto that yields direct benefit for Indigenous artists and Indigenous communities in Toronto.

Applicants may receive only one grant per calendar year through the Indigenous Arts program. However, applicants may still apply for different projects to arts discipline programs as well as other strategic initiatives programs that TAC offers. In this case, the applicant may receive up to one project grant in each funding stream and three project grants [3] total per calendar year. Please note: if you apply for an Indigenous Arts project grant you cannot also apply to another TAC program for the same project. Please visit TAC's website for other granting opportunities.

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.

- 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. Note: Temporary absences of up to one year may be considered, subject to written explanation and special permission. Please contact TAC's Indigenous Arts Program Manager.

- Professional artists who are pursuing a graduate degree may not apply for work related to their thesis. Note: A letter from the graduate program director confirming that the project is not related to the graduate student's thesis may be required. Please contact TAC's Indigenous Arts Program Manager.

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, most members must be City of Toronto residents and Indigenous.

- Organizations must be artistically and financially led by an Indigenous person, as defined above or provide proof via letter from a board that is primarily Indigenous that the Organization is artistically and financially governed by the board and guided by membership; must have 51% majority of Indigenous members on its Board of Directors; and 51% majority of Indigenous members on the Board Executive.

- Organizations and collectives must be located in the City of Toronto. A Post Office Box address cannot be used to meet this requirement.

This Program does not fund:

- Projects that have been completed prior to the announcement of results. Toronto Arts Council does not fund retroactively.

- Non-Indigenous artists, organizations, and collectives

- Organizations and collectives that receive Operating funding from TAC

- Undergraduate students

- 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

- This program is not intended to support ongoing operating costs, such as permanent staff salaries, general administration, and ongoing activities of an organization or collective.

- Costs related to equipment purchase, capital projects (such as building purchase or renovation), fundraising activities, deficit reduction, publishing and archiving projects, awards and award ceremonies, projects conceived for competitive purposes.

- Activities taking place outside of the City of Toronto (such as touring, travel, accommodations). Exception: Indigenous led projects based in Toronto may provide programming outside the boundaries of Toronto that yields direct benefit for Indigenous artists and Indigenous communities in Toronto.

How do I apply?

Applicants register and submit the application on TAC Grants Online - https://tac.smartsimple.ca. Applications can be submitted on an ongoing basis, any time before 11:59 pm October 15, 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 in-box.

Application Accessibility Support

Applicants who are Deaf, have a disability, or 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 four main parts to the application are: Artistic Statement, Project Description, Budget Information, and Support Material:

The Artistic Statement is a two-part statement from the lead artist(s) of the project.

- Tell us about your Inspiration for creating; creative influences and process; achievements and career goals; collective vision or mission/values statement. (up to 500 words)
- Describe your relation to your Indigenous community and culture, whether from a physical place (urban, a First Nation, Inuit homeland or Métis settlement), ancestral territory, or affected by displacement (up to 250 words)

The *Project Description* covers: Project Goal, Work Plan, Public Impact, Outcome and Project Contributors.

- The Project Goal describes what you want to do and why. (Up to 1000 words)

- The Work Plan describes how you will accomplish the project. (Up to 500 words)

- The Public Impact section gives details about the intended audience/participants and how you plan to reach them. This section is for projects that include public presentation or community participation (an answer is not required for Development or Creation projects). (up to 400 words)

- The Outcome describes the expected impact of your project on the artist(s) involved.

  - The Project Contributors is a list of the artists and key community contributors involved in your project. Bios are required for all project contributors. Accepted file format – PDF.

In Budget Information you will fill out a table that shows the proposed Revenues (Earned Revenue, Private Sector Revenue, Government Revenue) and Expenses (Artistic/Production Expenses, Administration/Marketing Expenses) for your project. You will also need to upload a PDF file with supplementary budget information, breaking down how expenses, such as artist fees, will be spent.

The *Support Material* is an important section where you will upload Audio-visual files/links to support the assessment of your application. Applicants in all categories are encouraged to contact the Indigenous Arts Program Manager by email to determine what, if any support material is necessary. Audio-visual support material must be accessible through an external website where your work has already been uploaded, such as Vimeo, YouTube, personal website, etc. Do not submit material through Google drive. If it is password protected, please include the password. Keep in mind that the Peer Assessors will have a maximum of 5 minutes to watch all your support material. Written support material, like letters of support or press clippings must be uploaded in PDF format.

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 a panel of peers from the Indigenous arts community. Peer assessors are selected based on their familiarity with a broad spectrum of Indigenous arts practices, specialized expertise, fair-mindedness, gender diversity, as well as emerging, mid-career and established artists.

- The grant review panel assesses projects in each category according to the following criteria:

All categories:

- Artistic merit

- Contribution of the project to the development of the applicant

- Financial viability of the project and the ability of the applicant and participants to carry out the project

Exhibition, Presentation, Dissemination and Indigenous Arts Sector Development categories only:

- Artistic merit

- Contribution of the project to the development of Indigenous arts in Toronto

- Public impact, including the quality and effectiveness of the publicity, marketing, outreach and/or audience development strategies

- Financial viability

- 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.

- Included in TAC's 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 will be prioritized.

- Decisions of the grant review panel are final.

- Peer assessor evaluation of relative artistic merit will 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.

Notification of results with the rolling deadline are issued within three to four months of your submission.

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 of project dates, contributors or partners must be communicated 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 any TAC Arts Discipline Projects Program (Black Arts, Creative Communities, Dance, Indigenous Arts, Literary Arts, Music, Theatre, Visual/Media Arts) 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.

- Grant recipients are required to acknowledge the support of Toronto Arts Council in all written materials relating to the activities for which funds are granted. 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. In lieu of the logo, the

recipient may use the phrase "produced with the support of the City of Toronto through Toronto Arts Council."

- 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 maintain adequate accounting records as to the receipt of funds from Toronto Arts Council. A T4A form will be issued by TAC to Individual Applicants and should be retained for income tax purposes.

- TAC staff attend 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 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

Contact Rupal Shah, Director, Policy & Programs

416-392-6802 x211

rupal@torontoarts.org