**TORONTO ARTS COUNCIL**

# OPEN DOOR
# 2025 PROGRAM GUIDELINES
*Application Deadlines: November 12, 2025*

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, the sharing of knowledge and leadership. Open Door provides funding for ideas with the potential to create transformative change in the arts sector.

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. Requests under $30,000 do not require audited financial statements. Mid-range requests of $30,000 to $75,000 from new organizations/collectives with a limited funding record, and/or no audited statements should consult with the Program Manager about exemptions or alternative documentation that may be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Applicants with funding requests over $75,000 are also urged to speak with the Program Manager. Funding requests above $75,000 are generally from established arts organizations/collectives with a longstanding funding record and or recognized leadership and experience.

This program also asks applicants about their access plans. Applicants should consider who is accommodated in their programming, and who cannot participate due to lack of accommodations. How can access to your intended activities be expanded to ensure that all contributors, artists, and audiences are supported? Access needs can and should be considered in outreach, planning, programming, and dissemination. Please speak to the Program Manager if you have questions about access planning.[Link to Access resources](#)

## 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 required information in their budget. A TAC Accessibility grant will provide 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 2 years of the date on the notification letter. Project activities may not start until 3 months after the application deadline.

## Who can apply?

**All Applicants are encouraged to speak to the Programs Manager, before applying**:

- To apply to Open Door applicants must be either an incorporated non-profit arts organization or an unincorporated arts collective operating on a not-for-profit basis.

- A collective is defined as two or more artists working together under a group name, either on a single project or on an ongoing basis.

- Organizations and collectives must be located in the City of Toronto. A Post Office Box address cannot be used to meet this requirement. Organizations with a regional Toronto office must have operated in the City of Toronto for at least one year prior to the deadline.

- 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.

- 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 take into account 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. You may be eligible for other project grants from the Discipline stream or that have limit exemptions, please speak to the Program Manager if you have questions about eligibility.

## This program does not fund:

- Individuals

- activities included in TAC operating grants

- activities included in other TAC project grants

- capital projects or expenses, renovations, or repairs**. Small equipment purchases are eligible, but their purchase must be essential to the project and must be included in the budget on a single line with a detailed supplementary budget including itemization and a description of their essential need. Please speak to the Program Manager if you have equipment expenses and you want to confirm eligibility.**

- 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: What circumstances and/or inspirations led your organization to design the proposed project? Describe the project details, including relevant timeline, dates, and project activities. How will the project create transformative change for arts organizations and collectives and/or the arts sector? Describe how the project demonstrates one or more of the following: innovation, experimentation and risk-taking; collaborative leadership; community partnership; sharing of knowledge. Access Plan: Tell us about your plans to make the project accessible and to accommodate audience and participant access and safety.

- 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). As outlined in *What does this program support?* section you may speak with the Program Manager for questions about financial statements or alternative proof of fiscal responsibility.

- 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 – Canadian 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 project invests in collaboration, community, experimentation and innovation, 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 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.

- 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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