

TORONTO ARTS _ COUNCIL

2026 COMMUNITY MUSIC MAKING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Application Deadline: April 7, 2026

TAC is committed to equity and inclusion. We welcome and encourage applications from all Toronto artists, including but not limited to: Indigenous artists, Black 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?

Toronto Arts Council's **Community Music Making** program recognizes the role that non-professional music organizations play in creating a dynamic and culturally engaged City. This program provides funding to support the Toronto-based annual programming of non-profit community choirs, opera, orchestras, and ensembles that are committed to building community through music making processes such as creation, workshops, concert production, and other related activities. The City of Toronto supports this program through a funding allocation approved annually by Toronto City Council.

The Music Program seeks to support a diverse range of musical forms with a high priority given to applicants that demonstrate a commitment to the performance of works by Canadian composers. **First time applicants must speak to the Program Manager prior to submitting an application: applications are accepted by invitation.**

Who can apply?

To be eligible to apply to the **Community Music Making** program, an organization must:

- be non-profit;
- be governed by a Board of Directors or other body responsible for the organization;
- be located in the City of Toronto and have a significant portion of its activities occurring within the City;
- have an annual operating budget of less than \$150,000;
- conduct music activities on an annual, ongoing basis either throughout the year or on a seasonal basis;
- have previously received a minimum two project grants through TAC's music program;
- produce a minimum of two self-presented concerts with different repertoire in each season (self-presented means that the organization takes responsibility for planning, production and ticket selling);
- pay artist fees to professional¹ artistic leadership.
- submit verification of financial results of the last completed fiscal year:

- for requests of \$30,000 or less, if annual operating revenues are \$100,000 or more, a **review engagement** is required, (or, if available, audited financial statements);
- for requests of \$30,000 or less, if annual operating revenues are under \$100,000, **unaudited financial statements** that include a balance sheet and a statement of income and expenses is required, (or, if available, audited financial statements or a review engagement);
- actively engage community members, and contribute to building community through music making processes beyond concert presentation (e.g., rehearsals, workshops, masterclasses, retreats, etc);

The following are not eligible to apply to this program:

- Professional Organizations that receive funding through any TAC discipline program;
- Community music organizations with budgets greater than \$150,000;
- Community music schools, presenters/producers and/or festivals.

Organizations may receive only one grant per calendar year through the Music program and may not apply to other TAC discipline programs. However, TAC offers other types of granting opportunities through its *Strategic Initiatives* envelope, and organizations receiving funding through the **Community Music Making** program may be eligible to apply to one of these programs. Please consult TAC's website for other granting opportunities. Applicants to the **Community Music Making** program may receive a maximum of one additional grant per calendar year and must submit a final report on that project before applying to another program in the *Strategic Initiatives* envelope.

Value of Grant

Maximum request: TAC will fund up to 35% of an organization's annual programming expenses, to a maximum of \$25,000 per year. Applicants may receive less than the full amount requested. The applicant must have a range of revenue sources, which may include donated goods and services.

Funding awarded through the **Community Music Making** program contributes to the costs associated with an organization's ongoing music activities. Eligible costs include artistic, programming and production expenses costs, administration, marketing and communications expenses, venue costs, etc.

TAC does not provide funding for capital projects (e.g. equipment, renovations, purchase of buildings), fundraising events/projects or deficit reduction.

How do I apply?

First time applicants must speak to the Program Manager prior to submitting an application: applications are accepted by invitation.

Applicants are required to register at TAC Grants Online (<https://tac.smartsimple.ca>) and submit the Community Music Making application and all required support material using this online grants management system.

Applications must be submitted on TAC Grants Online no later than 11:59 pm on the deadline day.

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

Do I need to submit a budget?

Applicants are required to submit a budget in a format that includes your Last Completed Year (*actual*), Current Year (*projected*), and Request Year (*estimated*). The budget must include: all revenues and expenses; a breakdown of government grants by funder; your accumulated surplus or deficit.

Do I need to submit support material?

Applicants are required to submit audio or video recordings (maximum two) featuring recent work in their application. Only recordings made within the past three years are accepted. It is recommended that at least one example be from the past year. Support Material is not required to submit and Interim Report.

Support material is an essential part of your application and should be of the highest technical quality, because the committee makes its assessment of artistic quality by listening to the recordings. Audio recordings are recommended over video recordings unless the visual element is an integral part of the work being performed.

Do not submit promotional audio/visual material, such as compilation videos used for publicity purposes or to sell programming. The committee will review a maximum of 10 minutes of support material per applicant. Works may not be heard in their entirety.

You can upload your media files to TAC or provide a link to your files. 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:

- Audio – AAC, MP3, WMA
- Video – QuickTime (MOV), AVI, MPEG, WMV

Be sure to allow sufficient time to upload support material to your application – do not wait to the last minute/hour of the submission deadline date.

Applicants may also upload a maximum 6 pages of printed support material, including press clippings. Accepted file format - PDF.

How is my application assessed?

Grants are awarded on a competitive basis by a panel of peers from the community music-making sector in Toronto selected for their familiarity with a broad spectrum of music practices, specialized expertise, and fair mindedness. Grant review panels are composed to ensure fair representation of gender and cultural diversity, as well as emerging, mid-career and established artists. The grant review panel's recommendations are approved by TAC Directors.

The Grant Review Panel evaluates applications to the Community Music Making program 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, using the criteria below. TAC's equity focused criteria represent 20% of an applicant's overall assessment in the evaluation process for this grant program.

1. Community Impact

- The organization's ability to describe its current membership and audience and its level of commitment to develop both so that it reflects the community it serves.
- The ways in which the organization builds community by supporting the artistic growth of its members through development opportunities led by professional artistic personnel.

- The ways in which the organization engages its audience through outreach and audience development activities such as artists' talks, Q&As, pre- and post-performance talks, lecture-demonstrations, etc.
- The organization's ability to gain support from the wider community in the form of sponsorships, partnerships, volunteers, etc.

2. Organizational Stability

- The organization's annual budget 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.
- A demonstration, through past performance, that the organization can respond to changes in its financial circumstances; 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.
- How the artistic and (if applicable) administrative staff, alongside the governing body of the organization, reflect the community served by the organization. The commitment of the staff and the governing body to the well-being of the organization.

3. Artistic Quality

- 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, programming, etc.

Priority is given to applicants that demonstrate a commitment to the performance of works by Canadian composers.

4. Equity Implementation

- 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 its operations, particularly with regards to the inclusion and engagement of Indigenous people, Black people, persons of colour, persons who are Deaf, have disabilities or are living with mental illness, and persons who self-identify as 2SLGBTQIAP.

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.

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.

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.

How and when do I find out the application results?

Applicants will be notified by email when the results are available (within four months of the submission deadline) and will be able to log in to TAC Grants Online to receive their results.

What are the rules or requirements for this funding?

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 include visual acknowledgement of TAC support in all promotional materials, advertising and programs related to the project being funded. The TAC logo for grant recipients is available on our website; specifications for the size and placement of the logo should be commensurate with that of other donors or sponsors who have provided similar financial support. In lieu of the logo, the recipient may use the phrase "produced with the support of Toronto Arts Council with funds provided by the City of Toronto."

TAC funding may only be used for the purposes outlined in the application, and significant changes to the nature or scope of activities or season must be reported promptly to TAC – this includes significant changes to project dates and repertoire. In such cases, TAC may require full or partial repayment of the 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;
- breaches any of the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code in its operations;
- ceases operating prior to completion of the project;
- ceases to operate as a non-profit organization or collective prior to completion of the project;
- winds up or dissolves prior to completion of the project;
- commences or has commenced against it any proceedings in bankruptcy, or is adjudged a bankrupt, prior to completion of the project.

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.

The City of Toronto requires that all organizations and individuals 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 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 documents can be downloaded from TAC's website, www.torontoartscouncil.org: *Anti-Racism, Access and Equity Policy Guidelines, Hate Activity Policy and Procedures* and *Human Rights and Harassment Policy and Procedures*.

Further questions

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