



## NEWCOMER AND REFUGEE ARTS ENGAGEMENT

### 2026 PROGRAM GUIDELINES

***Application Deadlines: April 13, 2026***

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 Newcomer and Refugee Arts Engagement program provides targeted funding to Toronto non-profit organizations and artist collectives engaging newcomers and refugees through the arts, supporting the integration and inclusion of newcomer communities to Toronto. We define a newcomer as: an immigrant or refugee who has lived in Canada for less than 7 years; a refugee is a person who was forced to leave their home country and is now located in Canada.

**The set grant amount is \$20,000. This grant may cover up to 100% of project costs.**

#### **TAC Accessibility grant**

**Projects involving Deaf artists and artists with disabilities** may apply for an additional TAC Accessibility grant that 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.

Starting in 2026, the TAC Accessibility Grant will allow grant recipients to apply for an Accessibility Grant at any time during their project. The Accessibility Grant will be available to grant recipients as a separate application in 2026.

#### **When can the project happen?**

Project activities may not start before July 1. **Projects must be a minimum of 3 months in duration.** Projects must be completed within two years of the date of your Notification Letter.

#### **Who can apply?**

- If you are a first-time applicant to the Newcomer and Refugee Arts Engagement program or if you have any questions about your project's eligibility, please contact the Program Manager.
- To apply to this program, applicants must be either an incorporated non-profit organization or an unincorporated 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.
- The collective must have a bank account set up in the name of the collective.

- 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.
- 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 their art; seeks payment for their work; and has a history of public presentation.
- The activities for which the grant is requested must include the collaborative involvement of professional artists and newcomer and/or refugee community members.
- Applicants must have a strong track record of engagement with newcomer and/or refugee communities and demonstrate a viable administrative and financial plan for achieving the goals of the proposed activities.
- 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 Program Manager in advance of submitting an application.
- The project for which the funding is requested must take place in the City of Toronto.

TAC has two distinct funding envelopes:

- Arts Discipline funding (e.g. discipline-specific project grants and operating grants) and
- Strategic funding (e.g. Artists in the Library, Open Door, etc.)

**Applicants are eligible to receive only one grant from each funding envelope 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. Applications to the **Newcomer and Refugee Arts Engagement** program fall within the Strategic Funding envelope.

Applicants are not eligible if they have an outstanding final report in any other program within the Strategic funding envelope (e.g. Animating Historic Sites, Animating Toronto Parks, Artists in the Library, etc.).

**This Program does not fund:**

- 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.
- Applicants may not receive funds from both this program and any other Toronto Arts Council program for the same activities and timelines.
- Organizations receiving operating funding directly from the City of Toronto's Economic Development and Culture Division are not eligible to apply to this program.
- This program does not support schools or tuition-based training programs. Through this program TAC will fund art-based programs in public schools in Toronto so long as those activities are led by artists and are supplementary to basic instruction. Funding from these grants is intended for artists/project expenses not school staff or property.
- Religious institutions, unless there is a clear separation at both the program and budget level between their regular activities (i.e. religious/congregation activities) and their arts activities.

- Individual artists.
- Costs related to major equipment purchase, capital projects (e.g. building purchases, renovations, etc.), archiving, awards and award ceremonies, formal art therapy practice, fundraising events/projects and deficit reduction are not covered by these grants. Costs related to activities occurring outside of the City of Toronto are also not covered (e.g. touring, travel, etc.).

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

Applicants register and submit the application through TAC Grants Online (<https://tac.smartsimple.ca>).

**Applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 pm on the deadline dates.** 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 parts to the application are: Project Description, Budget Information, and Support Material:

- The Project Description asks applicants to summarize their project, describe an artistic vision, outline artistic and community objectives, provide a work plan, describe the community being engaged, and list key contributors.
- 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 with a breakdown of donated goods and services and projected Artistic Fees.
- Support Material is a critical component of the application. All applicants are required to submit examples of the artist's recent work that are relevant to the project. At least one example must be from the past two years. Previously-funded applicants should submit new support material. The support material should illustrate both the quality and nature of the artist's practice, and the artist's capacity to work in a community context relevant to the proposed project.
- Due to the number of applications submitted to this program, peer assessors will normally spend 3 minutes or less per application viewing support material. Works, therefore, may not be seen in their entirety.
- You can upload your media files to TAC or you can 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:
- Video - QuickTime (MOV), AVI, JPEG, JPG, MPEG, WMV.
- Audio – AAC, MP3, WAV, WMA.
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### **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: (\$22.08 per hour in 2022 or \$43,000 per year) [Ontario Living Wage by Region](#)

### **How is my application assessed?**

This is a competitive program. Applicants should be aware that meeting the general eligibility requirements does not guarantee that a grant will be recommended.

Funds are awarded on a competitive basis by an independent review panel of peers. Peer assessors are practicing professional artists and arts workers with experience working in newcomer community settings and neighborhoods across the city. Peer assessors are selected on the basis of their familiarity with and specialized expertise in a broad spectrum of artistic practices and to reflect the range of applicants and represent diverse mediums, genders, and cultural communities. 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:

- the demonstrated involvement of newcomer community members and professional artists in the design and implementation of the project;
- the artistic merit of the proposed project and its innovation in form, interpretation and/or content;
- the quality of experience the project will provide and its capacity to support the integration and inclusion of newcomer and/or refugee individuals to Toronto
- the applicant's strong, demonstrated experience engaging with newcomer and/or refugee communities and the quality of their outreach strategy for this project;
- the financial viability of the proposed project and the ability of the applicant to carry it out.

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.

As the peer assessors and the applications change with each year, 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 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 will be received within four months of the deadline date.

### **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 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.
- 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 the reference documents section of 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**

Contact Programs Manager Liza Mattimore

416-392-6802 extension 231

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