

# TORONTO ARTS \_ COUNCIL

## 2026 MUSIC CREATION & AUDIO RECORDING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Application deadline: September 3, 2026

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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

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

Toronto Arts Council's Music Creation & Audio Recording program offers grants to practicing professional artists to assist them in the writing **and** production of their original music. This program will support new work in **any/all** genres of music. **Music Videos, Professional Development and Touring/Travel expenses, and expenses incurred outside the City of Toronto are not eligible for funding.**

You may apply in **one** of the three following categories. Artists may only apply to one category per year. Categories may not be combined.

#### **Creation (maximum grant \$10,000)**

For artists looking for funding to support the writing/composition phase of new work. Grants awarded in this category can assist with creating and composing original music, and other project costs (e.g., the cost of copying and preparing performing parts, etc.). Recording costs are eligible **only** if they are directly related to the writing process.

#### **Recording - Demo/EP (maximum grant \$8,000) paying yourself (and additional contributors, as applicable) artist fees**

For artists looking for support to create a short-form recording in a home-based or professional facility, provided that it is not your own. A short-form recording is any recording that is considered substantially shorter in length compared to the standard in your artistic community, and is often for the purpose of demonstrating newly developed work for others in the music community (labels, funders, presenters, promoters and/or festivals) or for limited/online release direct to your audience. Grants for Demo/EP recordings can assist with artistic costs, production costs, mixing, editing, and mastering by professionals. You may pay yourself (and additional contributors, as applicable) artist fees to complete the project. *You cannot expense studio fees if you are using your own studio.* Packaging, design, and manufacturing costs (maximum 500 units) are eligible, only if the work is completed in professional facilities. You may also include web design and online media management costs to a maximum \$500 if they are associated with the proposed recording project. *Projects seeking funding solely for manufacturing, online media management, and web design costs are not eligible for funding. Grants awarded in this category do not fund costs associated with the writing/composition of new work.*

## **Recording - Full-Length (maximum grant \$15,000)**

For artists looking to undertake the production of a full-length audio recording in one or more professional facilities that regularly charge a fee to a variety of artists to record and produce work. The applicant must be the originator/composer of the majority of the material for the recording. Grants for full-length audio recording can assist with producer costs and artist costs (yourself and additional contributors). This category also supports costs associated with recording, mixing, editing, mastering, packaging, design, and manufacturing costs (maximum 1,000 units), provided the work is completed in professional facilities. You may also include web design and online media management costs to a maximum \$1000 if they are associated with the proposed recording project. *Projects seeking funding solely for manufacturing, online media management, and web design costs are not eligible for funding.* A small portion of the work may be completed in home-based facilities, but these costs are not eligible for support in this category. *Grants awarded in this category do not fund costs associated with the writing/composition of new work.*

## **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?**

- The Project Start Date must be after you receive the notification of results (November 30).
- TAC does not fund retroactively. Projects that are completed before results are announced are not eligible for funding.
- All projects must be completed within two years of the date that the Notification Letter was issued.

## **Who can apply?**

- You must be a Canadian Citizen **or** Permanent Resident (Landed Immigrant) **or** have an application pending for Permanent Resident status and, if requested, be able to provide verification documentation. (Grant recipients must have a Social Insurance Number.)
- You must be a current resident of the City of Toronto who has lived in the City for at least one year prior to making this application **Note: A Post Office Box address cannot be used to meet the residency requirement.**
- You must be a professional artist who has maintained an independent practice for at least one year. TAC defines a professional artist as 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.
- Undergraduate students are not eligible to apply. Professional artists who are pursuing graduate studies may not apply for work related to their degree.

- Applicants must be 18 years of age or older.
- 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 officer in advance of submitting an application.
- Collaborative proposals (involving a co-applicant) are eligible. For these proposals, one of the applicants must identify a principal applicant. Co-applicants are subject to the same eligibility criteria as single, individual applicant. If the application is successful, the grant payment will be payable to the principal applicant, as listed in the application. Similarly, a T4A slip will be issued to the principal applicant.

### **Can my band/ensemble apply?**

- Currently, this program accepts applications only from individual artists. If you are interested in applying as a band/ensemble, it is suggested that one member (preferably lead) submit an application on behalf of the group. Please note, if a grant is awarded, a direct deposit and T4A slip will be issued to the primary applicant.

### **This Program does not fund:**

- **Projects where the applicant is not the originator of the music**
- Expenses Incurred outside the City of Toronto are not Eligible for funding.
- Compilations
- Projects where the artist or group of artists is not in a decision-making position regarding all phases of the project
- Spoken word, narration, poetry or libretto projects
- Activities that are completed before the results of this competition are announced
- Artist/production fees claimed by applicants
- Expenses beyond the manufacturing costs of the first 500 units (demo/EP recording) / 1000 units (full-length recording), such as rehearsal, second print-runs, promotion or marketing expenses
- Expenses related to web design and online media management beyond \$500 (demo/EP recording) / \$1000 (full-length recording)
- Projects seeking funding solely for manufacturing, online media management, and web design costs
- Projects in the name of record companies/labels, managers, agents, lawyers
- Activities that take place outside the City of Toronto
- Purchase of equipment, computer software instruments, etc.
- Travel and touring
- Professional development, training or study
- Fundraising or benefit activities

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

Applicants are required to register and submit the Music Creation & Audio Recording application, including support material, on TAC Grants Online at <https://tac.smartsimple.ca>.

**Applications must be submitted on TAC Grants Online 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, 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.

## **Why do I have to submit support material?**

For the grant review panel processes, support material is the most important part of the application. The grant review panel process is largely based on the review of examples of your previous work and/or current works in progress.

Your application must include two examples of your work. You may upload your support material to your application or provide a link to your files. If you provide a link, please ensure that it will work up to 4 months after the submission date. Please also provide the password or any other instructions required to access the file.

For uploading, the **maximum file size is 50 MB** and files are accepted in the following formats:

- Audio –MP3, WMA, WAV

**\*DO NOT** submit music videos as support material. Videos should **ONLY** be included as links if they are integral to providing context for your work (i.e., music for dance or sound installation).

If submitting music with lyrics or spoken word, you must upload a copy of the text. For text in languages other than English or French, you must also upload an accurate English translation. In addition, you may also upload scores. **Accepted file format for text and scores is PDF.**

Due to the number of applications submitted to this program, the grant review panel will listen to a maximum 10 minutes of support material per applicant. Therefore, works may not be heard in their entirety.

Although you may choose to include a selection of work based on your complete body of work, emphasis on recent work is usually best. Also, when selecting support material, it is recommended that you choose work most closely related to your proposed project.

It is recommended that you approach selecting support material as follows:

### **Creation**

Choose two examples of your best work.

- The first track should illustrate the direction in which you are going to be working.
- The second track can be any other example of your strongest work, best supporting your application.

### **Recording - Demo/EP & Full-Length**

Choose two examples of your best work.

- The first track must be a performance of a work to be released on your proposed recording.
- The second track should illustrate your best recording to date.

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

- Funding is awarded on a competitive basis by an independent review panel of

peers. Peer assessors are practicing music artists and arts professionals selected on the basis of their familiarity with, and specialized expertise in, a broad spectrum of artistic practices.

- Peer assessors are also selected to reflect diversity of gender and cultural communities.
- The grant review panel makes artistic assessments based on applicants' past and proposed work within the context of each competition. As the peer assessors and the applications change with each competition, a review panel's assessment of relative artistic merit will also vary. Unsuccessful applicants may succeed with another grant review panel.
- Grant review panel deliberations are confidential, *therefore no feedback about your application will be given*. Peer assessors are required to keep the contents of all applications and discussions during the assessment meeting confidential. Peer assessors must not disclose that they have been selected as assessors. The names of the peer assessors are released with grant results following each program competition.
- **Decisions of the grant review panel are final.** There is no procedure for appealing the review panel's decision; however, Toronto Arts Council welcomes comments or suggestions about any of its programs.
- 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 will be prioritized.

### **How do 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 the TAC grants management system to receive their results. Notification will be received within three months of the deadline date.

### **What if my project changes?**

You may only use funds for purposes outlined in the application. Changes to the scale, activities and timeframe of the project must be reported promptly to TAC.

### **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 the Creative Communities, Dance, Literary Arts, Music, Theatre, and Visual/Media Arts programs will not be accepted unless reports on previous funding have been received and approved by TAC.

### **Are grants taxable income?**

Yes. Grant recipients are required to maintain adequate accounting records as to the receipt of funds from TAC. A T4A form will be issued by TAC to Individual Applicants and should be retained for income tax purposes.

## **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](#)

## **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.

## **Further questions**

For further information on the Music Creation & Audio Recording Program, contact Music Program Manager

Christy DiFelice

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