

# TORONTO ARTS \_ COUNCIL

## 2026 WRITERS PROGRAM

## PROGRAM GUIDELINES

*Application Deadline: June 15, 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 (TAC) Writers Program supports the creation of new literary works or works-in-progress in the genres of fiction (including novels, short stories, children's literature, graphic novels, etc.), literary non-fiction, poetry and oral traditions such as storytelling, dub, rap and spoken-word.

The program provides two levels of support for writers. The following fixed amounts are available:

**LEVEL ONE: \$5,000** – for writers in the early stages of their career.

**LEVEL TWO: \$10,000** – for writers with an established writing career.

### **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 (September 30). While it is understood that works in progress will have begun before the submission deadline, the period of time covered by this grant must commence after September 30.
- All projects must be completed within two years of the date that the Notification Letter was issued.

### **Who can apply?**

**All applicants to this program must be published by a professional publisher.** Only publishers that have an independent editorial selection process are considered professional. Self-publishing and writing in newsletters or non-literary student magazines do not qualify as professional publishing. Books released by hybrid presses that offer paid self-publishing services do not qualify as professional publishing.

- **Level One** – Applicants must have a minimum of one (1) professionally published work in any literary genre to their credit (i.e. an article, poem or short story). Those with one or more professionally published books in the genre of their proposed project must apply in the Level Two category. Artists applying in oral traditions must have a history of public performance.
- **Level Two** – Applicants must have a minimum of one of the following in the genre of their proposed project:
  - 1 professionally published book, or a signed book contract with a professional publisher;
  - 20 pages of published poems;
  - 60 pages (15,000 words) of short stories, articles or non-fiction published in literary magazines, periodicals or anthologies;
  - Artists applying in oral traditions must have a substantial history of public performance and be recognized as established artists by their peers.
- TAC recognizes that due to systemic barriers within the broader arts community (e.g. limited mainstream presentation opportunities for artists from equity-seeking communities) 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.
- Applicants 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.
- Applicants must be residents of the City of Toronto for at least one year prior to the application deadline. Temporary absences of up to 12 months may be considered, subject to written explanation and special permission; please contact the Program Manager. **Neither a Post Office Box address nor a studio address can be used to meet the residency requirement.**
- Applicants must be 18 years of age or older.
- Professional artists pursuing undergraduate or graduate studies may not apply for work related to their academic program of study
- Writing projects in languages other than English or French are accepted if the writing sample is accompanied by an accurate English translation.
- Applicants may submit an application to either the Playwrights or the Writers Program, but not to both.
- **Applicants may receive a grant through TAC's Playwrights or Writers Program only once every two years.** Those who received a grant in 2025 are not eligible in 2026 but may reapply in 2027.
- Individual artists may only receive one discipline-stream project grant and one strategic initiative grant per calendar year, and can only have one open application in each stream at a time. Please note: if you apply for a Writers grant you cannot also apply to another TAC program for the same project.
- Applicants may apply for funding for only one project per deadline.
- Reports on previous projects in the Writers or Playwrights programs must be submitted to TAC before you are eligible to apply for another grant in these programs.

- Projects cannot be funded more than once in this program. Writers who receive a grant may not reapply to continue or finish the same project.
- 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.

**This Program does not fund:**

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

Project funding solely for the purpose of publishing, including the cost of printing.

**Ineligible projects include, but are not limited to:**

- film, video or television scripts;
- anthologies or collections that include a number of writers' works;
- children's activity books;
- directories;
- index compilations or bibliographies of minimal critical content;
- travel or food guides;
- instruction or self-help books or manuals;
- cookbooks;
- catalogues of exhibitions;
- commissioned works, including industrial or business histories or biographies;
- academic textbooks or books designed primarily for an educational/scholarly market;
- professional reference books aimed at a specialized audience;
- calendars, daybooks, agendas or almanacs;
- promotion or book launches;
- translation;
- tuition fees.

**How do I apply?**

Applicants are encouraged to thoroughly read and understand the eligibility criteria before submitting the application. If you are not sure your project is eligible after reading these guidelines, you can contact the Literary Program Manager before submitting the application.

Applicants are required to register and submit the Writers application, including support material, on Toronto Arts Council Grants Online at <https://tac.smartsimple.ca>.

**Applications must be submitted on Toronto Arts Council 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.

The Writers Program assessment process is blind, meaning peer assessors are not given access to applicant names and resumes. Peer assessors access the other application sections directly through the online system; therefore, applicants must not identify themselves within the project description or support materials. Failure to comply may result in disqualification.

### **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.

### **What do I need to prepare?**

The online Writers application consists of three sections:

- The applicant's literary CV uploaded in PDF format – maximum three pages. Please differentiate between items published via print or web. This section of the application will not be reviewed by the grant review panel, but serves as your record of eligibility for TAC staff.
- The project description – maximum 500 words, entered into a text box in the online application. This section outlines the format, stage and scope of the project. Anonymity is required in this section.
- The writing sample support material - format details below. Anonymity is required in this section. Your uploaded writing sample must be **anonymous**, because it will be accessed by the peer assessors through the online system, and it must meet the following specifications:
  - File format – PDF only.
  - The title of the project and the page number must appear in the upper right corner of each page.
  - Minimum font size of 11 point.
  - PROSE (fiction and literary non-fiction): maximum 15 pages, double spaced.
  - POETRY: maximum 10 pages.
  - ORAL TRADITIONS: maximum of three audio pieces or 15 minutes of material. Accepted file formats - MP3, WAV, WMA, AAC. Provide the written text of the pieces uploaded as audio material.
  - Writing samples must be unpublished works, and be from the proposed project.
  - Writers applying to create works in languages other than English or French must complete the application form in English and accompany their writing sample with an accurate English translation. This requirement does not apply to writing intended to be comprehensible to an English-speaking audience.
  - For all support material types: do not identify yourself within the project description, writing or a/v sample, or within the names of the files you are uploading.
  - For adaptation projects, you will be required to upload a PDF copy of a letter indicating copyright permission with your application. *(The grant review panel does not see this letter, so it can include your name.)*

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

- An independent review panel of professional writers and editors assess applications on the literary or artistic merit of the writing. Grants are awarded based on the recommendations of the grant review panel.
- Assessment is done by a **blind** adjudication process, where peer assessors are not given the names or resumes of applicants.
- Peer assessors are selected to reflect diverse literary genres (fiction, poetry, non-fiction, performative practices) and to ensure balanced and equitable representation of genders, generations, persons of colour, Indigenous people, persons who are Deaf or have disabilities and individuals who identify as 2SLGBTQIAP. The goal is to engage highly qualified assessors who collectively reflect the multiplicity of experiences, perspectives and communities that make up Toronto's diverse arts sector and population.
- To ensure the assessment is as fair as possible for writers at all levels of career development, applications to **Level One** and **Level Two** are assessed separately.
- Decisions of the grant review panel are final. There is no procedure for appealing the decision; however, TAC welcomes comments or suggestions about any of its programs.
- Grant review panel deliberations are confidential and there will be no disclosure of the grant review panel proceedings or comments made during the adjudication.
- 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 3-4 months of the deadline date.

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

Funds shall 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.

### **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.

### **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**

Contact Literary Arts Program Manager

Rudrapriya Rathore

416-392-6802 extension 236