

ARTISTS IN THE LIBRARY

2026 PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Application Deadline: October 6, 2026, for projects taking place in 2027

TAC is committed to equity and inclusion and welcomes applications from diverse cultural and geographic communities within the City of Toronto. Specific equity measures and 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?

Created in 2014 as a partnership between Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Public Library, *Artists in the Library* provides paid opportunities and space for Toronto artists while increasing access to the arts in Etobicoke, York, North York, East York and Scarborough through programming in the local library branches. Funding for this program is provided by the City of Toronto.

Artists in the Library program provides funding to professional artists, arts organizations and collectives working in any artistic discipline to create and deliver free **community-engaged arts programming** at one of the branches of the Toronto Public Library (excluding Bookmobile). This program encourages applications from TAC's equity priority groups and artists working in their local communities.

Grant recipients will have an opportunity to explore their art practice in a community setting; access space and facilities for arts programming and presentation; engage with the branch and its community in a meaningful way; work closely with and be supported by the branch team; navigate a multi-stakeholder environment and create and deliver community-engaged arts programming from start to finish.

Community engagement is a requirement in this program, but its format may vary. Activities may include performances, concerts, screenings, readings, filmmaking, storytelling, workshops, artist talks, participatory programs, arts education programs, and other arts programming. Permanent exhibitions and installations are not eligible. All funded projects will be produced by the grant recipient and hosted and supported by the assigned library branch. All projects must be delivered on site at the branch and within branch operating hours.

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

Budget: Your budget should include all artist fees, materials, equipment rental, and any other project expenses. Payment of professional artist fees is a requirement of this program. *Due to limited spots at TPL branches available to host the grant recipients, this program is not meant for one-off workshops or small-scale events; the offering must be substantial with appropriate budget.*

Timing: Programming in the branches must take place between September and December 2027.

Insurance: All grant recipients will be covered under TAC's liability insurance.

VSC: Grant recipients and all collaborators are required to complete a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) for projects whose intended audience are children or teens (anyone under the age of 18 years). TPL will facilitate the process and will reimburse the cost of VSC for up to three (3) individuals per project.

Registration/ticketing: Activities can include drop-in and/or pre-registration. All tickets must be free of charge.

Project fit: The projects supported by this grant cannot duplicate programming offered by TPL staff, such

as Children's Storytime, After School Clubs, Book Clubs, Arts & Crafts Circles (see the list of TPL core programs [here](#)); or art programs that are run by TPL directly, such as [Writer in Residence](#), [Arts Mentor in Residence](#) and [Art Exhibit Space](#).

The Artists in the Library program encourages proposals for projects that are substantial in scope and engage the community in a creative and meaningful way.

For age-specific projects, please follow TPL age groups:

- Birth–5
- Middle Years: 6–12
- Teens: 13–17
- Younger Adults: 18–24
- Adults: 24+
- All Ages

Program structure: Artists in the Library is a granting program run by Toronto Arts Council; the grant recipients in this program are included in the TPL's [programming series of the same name](#). The grant application is for the purpose of assessing the proposal and making funding recommendations; the grant recipients will be responsible for communicating all the details of their proposal to the hosting branch and managerial staff at TPL via forms, agreements, email, meetings, and calls.

NOTE: To be supported by TPL, **the proposal must be aligned with the TPL programming policy** summarized and linked at the end of this document. The applications must demonstrate familiarity with the TPL programming policy and understanding of the library environment. Proposals that are not suitable for a library branch or are not possible within its context, as assessed by TPL staff, will not be considered for funding. For specific questions about the suitability of the proposal for a library branch, please see TPL contact at the end of this document.

Participating Branches

Applicants are invited to indicate any branch they would like to work in, **outside the downtown core**. Applicants may also simply select a geographic area or neighborhood where you prefer to work, and the branch will be assigned to the funded projects by TPL staff, based on suitability and availability. [Areas](#) include: Etobicoke York, North York, Toronto & East York, Scarborough. For Toronto & East York, the downtown locations are not eligible: for the purpose of this grant program 'downtown' refers to the area south of St. Clair, east of Jane and west of Don Valley; if you have a question about eligibility of a specific location, please contact TAC program manager.

You can only propose programming for one branch or geographic area. Bookmobiles are not eligible for this grant.

Note: if you included a specific preferred branch, a different branch might be assigned.

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](#) is available to grant recipients as a separate application.

When can the project happen?

All projects must be completed in the 2027 calendar year and, in exceptional circumstances, no later than within two years of the date on the Notification Letter. The project cannot begin before the results are announced. Programming in the branches will take place between September and December 2027

The duration and the structure of the project will depend on the proposal and can vary from regular workshops throughout four months to a few larger-scale engagements and presentations to anything in between. The programming schedule will be developed in consultation with the branch staff. Scheduling options will vary depending on the branch and its capacity to support programming activities.

Who can apply?

If you are a first-time applicant or have questions about your eligibility or application, please contact the Program Manager, Strategic Initiatives, Lena Golubtsova at lena@torontoartscouncil.org.

- This grant program is open to professional artists, not-for-profit arts organizations or collectives. Experience working with communities or children and youth is an asset.
- 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 field; actively practices their art; seeks payment for their work; and has a history of public presentation.
- 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.
- You may not apply as an individual and be part of an organization or collective applying in the same competition.
- You may not apply for the same project in different grants programs.

TAC has two distinct funding envelopes. Applicants may be eligible to apply for one grant in each category per year, so long as they have no incomplete projects or outstanding final reports. The two funding envelopes include:

- **Arts Discipline:** project and operating grants in dance, visual arts, theatre, etc.
- **Strategic Programs:** Animating Historic Sites, Open Door, etc.

With a few exceptions (Newcomer & Refugee Artist Mentorship, Creative Enquiry Lab, Black Arts, Indigenous Arts), applicants can receive only one grant from each funding envelope per year. The Artists in the Library program falls within the Strategic Funding envelope. Any other Strategic Program grants must be completed with a final report filed and approved to meet eligibility criteria.

For individual applicants:

- Individuals 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. Grant recipients must have a Social Insurance Number.
- Individuals must have been a resident of the City of Toronto for at least one year prior to the deadline, and live and work in Toronto for at least 8 months a year. A Post Office Box address cannot be used to meet the residency requirement.
- Professional artists pursuing undergraduate or graduate studies may not apply for work related to their academic program of study.

For organizations and collectives:

- Organizations and collectives must be incorporated non-profit arts organizations or unincorporated arts collectives operating on a non-profit basis. A collective is defined as two or more artists working together under a group name, either on a single project (ad hoc) 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.
- For collectives of two artists, both must be City of Toronto residents. For collectives of more than two artists, most members must be City of Toronto residents.
- Collectives must be prepared to submit bank account information (in the name of the collective as listed in the application) if the application is successful.

This program does not fund:

- Commercial businesses or for-profit organizations;
- 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.
- Activities taking place outside of the City of Toronto (research, touring, travel, accommodations);
- Ongoing operating costs, such as permanent staff salaries and general administration of an organization. This program is not intended to support an organization or collective's ongoing activities. 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;
- Schools that are part of Ontario's public or private education system;
- Educational and religious institutions unless there is a clear separation in both programming and budget between their regular activities and their arts activities.

How do I apply?

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.

New applicants to the program are encouraged to speak with the Program Manager prior to applying.

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. Additional information [here](#).

What do I need to prepare?

The four main sections of this grant application are: Project Details, Project Description, Support Material,

Budget Information.

- **Project Details:** project location, project dates, project summary, project contributors form with brief bios for all contributors;
- **Project Description:** project overview (what do you want to do), artistic goals and objectives (why do you want to do it), how will you do it: outreach and audience development plan, workplan, access plan. Access planning relates to measures taken to make the event accessible to audiences. For more information on how to create an access plan, please refer to our external resource list on [accessibility in the arts](#);
- **Support Material:** audio/visual/printed examples of your work. Support Material is a critical component of the application. All applicants are required to submit examples of recent work that are relevant to the project. The support material should illustrate both the quality and nature of the artist's practice, and the artist's capacity to work in the context relevant to the proposed project.
 - Due to the number of applications submitted to this program, peer assessors will normally spend 5 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 provide links to an external website where your work has already been uploaded, such as Vimeo, YouTube, your personal website, etc. (recommended). If it's password protected, please also provide the password or any other instructions required to access the file. Do not submit materials through Google Drive.
 - Written support material, including press clippings, writing samples, letters of recommendations, must be uploaded in PDF format. Six pages maximum.
- **Budget Information:** budget table, supplementary budget PDF with detailed breakdown of artist fees and other expenses.

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](#)

How is my application assessed?

Grants are awarded on a competitive basis by an independent grant review panel of practicing artists with input from the program partner (TPL). Peer assessors are selected on the basis of their familiarity with and specialized expertise in a broad spectrum of artistic practices and their direct experience in the Toronto arts community. Grant review panels are composed to ensure equitable representation from TAC's Equity Priority Groups as well as geographical communities and artistic disciplines. 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:

- Artistic merit of the proposed project;
- Suitability of the proposed project for the setting of a public library. Implementation of the approved project would need to be in alignment with the TPL Programming Policy (and other relevant TPL policies);
- Quality of experience the proposed project will provide to the participants / branch customers, and

the benefits it will provide to the local community;

- Ability of the applicant to carry out the proposed project;
- Financial viability of the 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 or more of Toronto Arts Council's equity priority groups or that primarily involve or serve artists from these groups will be prioritized. Projects that involve local artists (or are proposed by artists with strong existing ties and partnerships with the local community) are prioritized in TAC's geographically specific Strategic Programs.

Project 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. Decisions of the grant review panel are final.

As the peer assessors and the applications change with each deadline, 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 and when 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. Results are not released over the telephone. Notification will be issued within three 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 the Grant Program Manager.

What do I do when I have completed my 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 Newcomer & Refugee Artist Mentorship and Creative Enquiry Lab 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.
- Successful applicants will sign an artist agreement with Toronto Public Library and will work collaboratively with the assigned branch to finalize and deliver their projects, in alignment with TPL Programming Policy and criteria outlined on pages 8–10 of this document.
- Grant recipients will be required to attend an Artists in the Library Program Orientation Session in early 2027 (date TBA).
- Grants may only be used for the purposes outlined in the application. All projects must be completed within dates specified in your grant notification letter.

- Successful applicants will be required to undergo Vulnerable Sector Check for any programs directly engaging participants from vulnerable sector and, in some cases, for other programming.
- Submission of a Social Insurance Number will be required for Individual grant recipients only. Individual grant recipients will receive a T4A for the grant amount.
- Grant recipients are required to acknowledge the support of Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Public Library in all written materials related 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 makes 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.
- 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 Program Manager, Strategic Initiatives, Lena Golubtsova. Recipients may also be asked to provide information to the TAC Communications 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 Program Manager, Strategic Initiatives,
Lena Golubtsova (she/her)

lana@torontoartscouncil.org 416-392-6802 ext. 219

WORKING WITH TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Toronto Public Library (TPL) provides public programming to fulfill its mission to provide equitable access to services, which meet the changing needs of Torontonians and to preserve and promote universal access to a broad range of knowledge, experience, information and ideas in a welcoming and supportive environment.

TPL programs respond to community needs and interests and support the priorities in TPL's Strategic Plan, as well as its Service Delivery Model, and reflect the TPL's vision, mission and values. Programs promote TPL collections and resources, offer access to professional or subject matter expertise, and build connections between residents and communities.

Grant recipients will enter an agreement with Toronto Public Library and will develop working relationships with the branch and the program management team at TPL. Toronto Arts Council will make the introductions and will not facilitate or take active part in this relationship and project delivery beyond the program orientation.

All projects delivered as part of Artists in the Library program will be in compliance with [TPL Programming Policy](#). Artists are encouraged to review the policy prior to applying. Some considerations resulting from the Programming Policy include, but are not limited to, the below.

Participants/audience

- Programs that are offered in library spaces need to be open to all members of the public (except for programming that is intended for a specific age group);
- If there is an intended audience other than age-based, program descriptions can include information about the intended audience; outreach and marketing of the program can be geared towards the communities intended; however, attendance cannot be restricted to any specific demographic or community.
- Generally, projects that are developed with specific or restricted audiences in mind may not be the best fit for this program. Open, community-based programs would fit best within the program and space.

Logistics/planning

- Following the award of the grant and agreements with TAC and TPL, the recipients will be asked to identify and determine specific needs with as much advance notice as possible:
 - Room/space requirements to run the program;
 - Technical requirements (use of computers, recording devices, internet requirements, etc). Please note that TPL is not able to provide computers to artists and participants. Software cannot be downloaded onto any existing TPL computers;
- Not all project needs can be always met by a branch, and the artists are invited to stay flexible and responsive to the site;
- Limitations and restrictions exist around using space outside a TPL building or taking participants offsite. Any preparation for the delivery of the program can take place offsite however, all programming must take place inside the library space.

Registration

- Programs can include pre-registration or drop-in; open, drop-in programs are strongly recommended. Where registration is required, it will be done by TPL staff;
- If artists wish to collect information from the members of public (for example, contact information to provide program updates), it must be coordinated with TPL staff and collected in a coordinated and intentional way, with an understanding that public library boards are institutions governed by the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). This Act specifies how

organizations such as libraries may collect, use, retain, disclose and dispose of personal information.

Considerations for specific activities

General

- Space restrictions: how much space is needed, what type of space is needed, does the project (deliverables or vision) work within the space? Projects cannot take up the whole branch; designated space may need to be assigned based on availability;
- Construction of projects: limitations on constructing something within a space, safety considerations, etc.;
- Affixing/hanging/installing items within the space would need to be reviewed/approved by TPL staff;
- Content that is appropriate for the space and intended audience (i.e. age limitations, mature content, etc.).

Exhibitions & Installations resulting from a program:

- Content of exhibitions and installations must be appropriate for the space and general audience; content will be reviewed in advance;
- Amount of space available in the branch, how the installation is affixed would need to be considered;
- Artist to provide details about the project including but not limited to space and location proposed, dimensions of work, materials used, set up and take down;
- Exhibits that include identifiable images of people must have distributed a notice of collections to the individuals who are aware their image will be on display at the library. The artist is required to provide proof if required (MFIPPA guidelines).

Performances

- Performance must be appropriate for the space and general audience; content will be reviewed in advance. Theatres at TPL are not guaranteed. When applying, you can select a branch with a theatre however, theatres belong to corporate venue rentals and may not be available for use.
- Artist must obtain appropriate public performance rights to the material that is being performed and be able to show proof to TPL staff;

Screenings

- Artist must obtain appropriate public performance rights to the material that is being screened and be able to show proof to TPL staff;
- Need to review in advance; ensure that the content is appropriate for the space and a general audience.

Co-created content

- Information must be shared in advance with participants (and TPL); need to ensure that consents are collected in advance;
- Participants (and TPL) need to understand how information will be collected, how it will be used and any rights that the artist has to use the content.

Movement-based programs

- Movement-based programs are permitted within TPL movement guidelines:
 - To include creative, cultural forms of expression;
 - TPL staff to review the proposal to properly assess the risk of the movement-based program, advise where it should take place, equipment required, etc.

- Access to space: not all branches have the appropriate space. Movement programs would be restricted to specific branches that have the appropriate space/availability based on the project presented;
- Participants have the right to participate or not participate if they wish;
- Artists must have the experience/training (as required) to deliver a movement program and First Aid training;
- Accessibility requests: projects need to be able to accommodate anyone who wishes to participate – ensure that people of all abilities can participate in the movement-based activity.

Honoraria for participants

- TPL does not offer honoraria to participants who attend programs.
- If artists are offering honoraria to participants, artists must review and share with TPL in advance, including:
 - What is being offered (how much)
 - How is it being distributed (cash, gift card, e-transfer)
 - How are participants made aware of the honoraria
 - Requirements to receiving it
 - Are all participants receiving the honorarium? Is there equal distribution?
 - Rationale for wanting to distribute it, what are the objectives they are hoping to meet
- Any honoraria provided to artists and participant needs to be provided outside of TPL
- Generally, most projects in this program will not include honoraria for participants; artists may wish to consider other ways to improve access to programming such as TTC fares or refreshments.

Food

To create a safe environment for all, food in programs is limited. However, artists may wish to provide food or refreshments as part of their program. Discussions for any food to be served at a program should take place in advance with TPL staff, with the following considerations:

- Artists (or those providing the food) should have the necessary food safety training and knowledge;
- All food provided must be sourced externally; TPL does not have the appropriate facilities for food preparation;
- Information about food being provided should be included in promotional materials to allow people with allergies to plan accordingly;
- Food should not be given out as prizes or used in craft programs;
- Program spaces should be cleaned at the end of the program, and all surfaces wiped down.

Media

TPL needs to be made aware of/approve any media requests related to the project.

Further questions

For questions about TPL branches and project fit, please contact:

Naomi Fisher (she/her)

nfisher@tpl.ca 416-394-1022