

TORONTO ARTS _ FOUNDATION

2026 TORONTO ARTS FOUNDATION AWARDS NEWCOMER ARTIST AWARD DESCRIPTION & ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Nomination Deadline: November 26, 2025

The Toronto Arts Foundation Awards are designed to heighten public awareness of arts in Toronto by recognizing artistic excellence and achievement. The awards celebrate artists, cultural leaders, and organizations whose work contributes to the artistic and cultural life of Toronto.

The Toronto Arts Foundation Awards are presented in recognition of a body of creative accomplishment rather than for specific works or achievements. The awards are generously funded by individuals and sponsors. Toronto Arts Foundation presents these awards annually at a variety of events.

Award Description

The Toronto Arts Foundation **Newcomer Artist Award** provides micro-awards of \$2,500 to six newcomer (immigrant and refugee) artists. The award aids the integration of newcomer artists into Toronto and Canada by supporting their artistic careers. Newcomer artists living across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and working in a range of disciplines are eligible for the award. The Newcomer Artist Award is presented every year in spring. The 2025 Newcomer Spotlight Program is generously sponsored in part by Bell Canada.

Basic Eligibility Requirements

Individuals:

- must be an artist who has lived in Canada for 7 years or less
- must be over 18 years old
- must be a resident of the City of Toronto or Halton, Peel, York, or Durham municipalities
- must not have received this award in 2025
- may self-nominate
- are not eligible to nominate or receive Toronto Arts Foundation awards while serving as executive board member or staff of Toronto Arts Foundation or Toronto Arts Council
- Applicants must also meet one of the following criteria:
- Hold Canadian Citizenship, Permanent Resident status, or Approved Refugee Claimant (Protected Person) status;
- Have an application for Permanent Residency or Canadian Citizenship pending; or

- Hold a valid work permit authorizing legal employment in Canada.

With the exception of the Newcomer Artist Award, no person or organization may be selected for more than one Toronto Arts Foundation Award within any given year, and no person or organization may receive the same Toronto Arts Foundation Award twice. This does not preclude a recipient from being considered for a different Toronto Arts Foundation award in the future.

Nominations for Multiple Awards

Please note that nominees are not eligible to be nominated for more than one award in a given year. If the same individual or organization is nominated for multiple awards, the nomination that was submitted first chronologically will be the one considered. All other nominations will be considered ineligible and removed from the submissions.

Individuals or Organizations with Multiple Nominations for the Same Award

Due to the volume of nominations, Toronto Arts Foundation is no longer accepting multiple nominations of the same individual or organization for each award. We encourage you to reach out directly to the artist or organization you would like to nominate to ensure they are aware of your submission on their behalf. The nomination that was submitted first chronologically will be the one considered for the given award. All other nominations will be considered ineligible and removed from the submissions.

How to nominate

To nominate an individual or to self-nominate for the Newcomer Artist Award you must:

- Visit the [Toronto Arts Foundation Nomination Portal](#)
- Register an account on Toronto Arts Foundation's Nomination Portal or sign into your existing account
- Submit the nomination online, complete with supporting material.

Notes

Along with the name of the individual you are nominating, the Nomination Portal will ask for a biography, a nomination rationale, and accompanying support material in the form of visual, audio or text-based attachments.

Nominators can save their application at any time before submission by clicking 'Save Draft.' Nominators can log-in and out of Toronto Arts Foundation's Nomination Portal as many times as needed before clicking 'Submit.'

*Please ensure you are on/register through **Toronto Arts Foundation's** Nomination Portal and not Toronto Arts Council's Grants Online.

Award Selection Process: Policies and Procedures

Appointment of Awards Assessors

An Award Panel of up to five Assessors selected by the Award Manager will review nominations and recommend the selected recipients for final approval by Toronto Arts Foundation. Participants in each panel include practitioners of the arts, organizers, programmers, producers, curators, critics, commentators and lay specialists. Panelists must have recognized expertise, credibility, and experience along with a familiarity of the newcomer experience.

The final list of Assessors is made public in the form of an announcement distributed to media and Foundation stakeholders and posted on the Foundation's website.

Details of Nomination and Selection Process

Members of the arts community and general public are invited to nominate individuals, including themselves to be considered by the Assessors. Nominations must be submitted through Toronto Arts Foundation's Nomination Portal. Where appropriate, nominations may include accompanying support material in the form of visual, audio or text-based attachments. Awards Assessors are precluded from participating in the nominating process.

The Assessors will be informed of Toronto Arts Foundation's criteria, the unique aspect of the award and its relationship to the Foundation's mission and vision.

Deliberations will be guided by the following assessment criteria:

- meeting eligibility requirements as detailed above.
- artistic strength and/or future potential of the artist
- demonstration of the impact on the artist's current artistic practice
- contribution to the development of arts and culture in Toronto.

The Assessors endeavor to reach unanimous decisions in its selection process. In the event that unanimity is not achieved, a decision may be reached by majority vote. All deliberations are strictly confidential.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest refers to a situation in which private interests or personal considerations may affect an Award Assessor's judgment in the assessment process.

Specifically, a conflict of interest exists where an Assessor has a financial interest in the success or failure of a candidate; has a personal interest in a specific candidate or has any other reason which makes them unable to objectively evaluate the candidate. If in the course of the Award Assessors deliberations, any Assessor has a conflict of interest, that person is expected to declare such conflict and withdraw from the selection/voting process.

Toronto Arts Foundation reserves the right to amend these Policies and Procedures, without notice to any party.

For questions about the awards and eligibility please contact:

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