

ARTWORKSTO

NEWCOMER PROGRAM



FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

ArtWorksTO: Newcomer Program

Main Questions

1. What is the Application Deadline?

Application opens on June 23 and closes on July 24, 2025 at 11:59PM.

2. When will I be notified?

Applicants will be notified about the status of their application between **August 7 and August 14, 2025**.

3. What is the program's duration?

This program runs from August 2025 to August 2026.

Application Process

4. How do I apply?

To apply for the Newcomer Artist Program, please complete the application form [Stream 1](#), [Stream 2](#), no later than July 24th, 2025. Be sure to attach both your portfolio and resume prior to submission.

Please note: Applications submitted without a portfolio will not be considered.

5. Is ArtworksTO Newcomer Program the right program for me?

This workforce development program is designed to provide sustainable career pathways for 25 new Canadians in the media arts and arts education. Recognizing the challenges newcomers face in accessing meaningful employment, this initiative offers training, mentorship, and industry connections to bridge the gap between artistic talent and professional opportunities. Through strategic partnerships, this project will equip participants with the necessary skills, credentials, and work experience to establish lasting careers in the creative industry.

If this sounds like a good fit, please review the rest of this FAQ and apply online.

6. Who is considered to be a Newcomer?

A newcomer is defined as someone who has recently arrived in Canada or has been living in the country for no more than 7 years. To be eligible in 2025, applicants must have arrived in Canada after January 1, 2018.

7. What are the program requirements?

Requirements for the Newcomer Program are as follows:

- Applicants must be newcomers to Canada with a background in media arts (e.g. graphic design, photography, UX/UI design, digital illustration, animation, film, sound art, and interactive or web-based media) or arts education, seeking professional integration and career development opportunities.
- Must be a Canadian Citizen, Permanent Resident, or have an application pending for Permanent Resident status, or be a Protected Person (approved refugee claimant).
- Must possess a valid Social Insurance Number (SIN), which is required to legally work in Canada.
- Must currently reside in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), including the City of Toronto and the regional municipalities of Durham, Halton, Peel, and York.
- Must be 18 years of age or older to join the program.
- Must be available and committed to fully participate in the program, which runs from August 2025 to August 2026.
- Must demonstrate a genuine interest in developing new skills through short courses that are micro-credentials in Canada, as well as acquiring Canadian work experience in their field and using the program to advance their long-term career plans.
- Must demonstrate clarity of professional goals and explain how this program aligns with their career development and integration objectives in Canada.
- Must have intermediate English skills (CLB 6 or above) to participate effectively in all aspects of the program.

(Note: Fluency is not required, but applicants should be able to communicate effectively in both verbal and written form in professional settings. As a reference, this would be equivalent to CLB level 6 or higher, which is an intermediate level suitable for basic workplace and social communication.)

8. How many streams are there?

The Newcomer Program offers two different streaming options:

Stream 1 – Media Artists

Stream 2 – Arts Educators

9. Can I apply to both streams?

You can only apply to one stream. If you have relevant experience in both, please choose the one that aligns with your interests and where you'd like to focus your professional development in Canada.

10. How do I put together a portfolio for my application?

If you are uncertain on how to build your portfolio, a **1-hour online portfolio workshop** will be provided by OCAD U on **July 3rd from 6pm to 7:30pm**. Register to attend [here](#). The workshop will be recorded for those who are unable to attend live and will be available prior to the application deadline. We encourage all participants to view the workshop before sending in their application.

Portfolio Guidelines

11. What should I include in my portfolio for the Media Artist Stream?

Your portfolio is a collection of work that represents your creative and technical experiences and accomplishments and is a visual representation of who you are. You need to demonstrate that you are a visual communicator and that you are well-equipped to succeed in the ArtworksTO program. This can include experimentation in both traditional and digital media or any combination. Your portfolio should include:

Short bio: (300 words maximum)

What's your story?

Artist statement: (300 words maximum)

Your artist statement should explain your specific interests and passions as well as who or what inspires and influences the work you do. This is your opportunity to introduce yourself as an artist and provide context so we can better understand your work.

Examples of your creative process: Include examples/pdf/images/ drafts of your sketchbook, process and concept development skills as part of your portfolio submission. You can document your creative process as:

- a storyboard
- creative journal
- concept/idea book
- digital document.

The process work you provide, should link to several of the finished pieces included in your portfolio.

These can range from:

- Experimentation
- photos of development
- Drawings
- Mark-making
- Writing
- research and inspirations

Finished Work:

Include up to 5 examples of your original finalized work that demonstrates creativity, technical skills, range and expression of ideas.

Descriptions:

For each finished piece, include in 50 words or less, the process/making method/media concept and purpose of each submission. Please include the details of the collaborators and clients you worked with if applicable.

Tips:

- Works can be presented in a series: we recommend limiting 3-5 works or a series.
- Works can be video: we recommend a highlight reel (1-2 mins), understanding that reviewers may skim through longer videos.
- Include links to your professional website and/or social media pages.

12. What should I include in my portfolio for the Arts Educator Stream?

Your portfolio is a collection of work that represents your creative and technical experiences and accomplishments and is a visual representation of who you are. You need to demonstrate that you are a visual communicator and that you are well-equipped to succeed in the ArtworksTO program. This can include experimentation in both traditional and digital media or any combination. Your portfolio should include:

Short bio: (300 words maximum)

What's your story?

Artist statement: (300 words maximum) Your artist statement should explain your specific interests and passions as well as who or what inspires and influences the work you make. This is your opportunity to introduce yourself as an artist and provide context so we can better understand your work.

Examples of your creative process: Include documentation of your creative process as part of your portfolio submission. This can reflect your process as an artist and/or as an arts educator.

You may include examples such as:

- a storyboard
- a creative journal
- a concept or idea book
- a digital document

The process work should connect to the examples you provide in your portfolio — whether your own creative work or educational materials. These might include:

- lesson planning drafts
- reflections or notes on workshop design
- teaching materials in development
- photos or documentation of classroom activities or facilitation
- research, inspirations, and experimentation related to your teaching practice

The process work you provide, should link to several of the finished pieces included in your portfolio.

These can range from:

- Experimentation
- photos of development
- Drawings
- Mark-making
- Writing
- research and inspirations

Finished Work:

Include up to 2 examples of your original finalized work that demonstrate creativity, technical skills, and range of expression of ideas, and up to 3 examples that demonstrate your work as an arts educator (e.g. lesson plans, a video of you leading a workshop, a syllabus, or sample activities).

Descriptions:

For each finished piece, include in 50 words or less, the process/making method/media concept and purpose of each submission. Please include the details of the collaborators and clients you worked with if applicable.

Tips:

- Works can be presented in a series: we recommend limiting 3-5 works or a series.
- Works can be video: we recommend a highlight reel (1-2 mins), understanding that reviewers may skim through longer videos.

Request for Proposal (RFP)

13. What is a Request for Proposals (RFP) and why is it being used in ArtWorksTO to match participants to paid contracts?

A Request for Proposal, or RFP, is a document that a client (i.e. business, non-profit, or government agency) creates to outline the requirements for a specific project to seek proposals from qualified applicants. Proposals are reviewed to select an applicant to complete the project. Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are widely used in the media arts industry. ArtWorksTO offers training to program participants on the RFP process and how to write successful proposals. This training is designed to support participation in the ArtWorksTO RFP process, but also to develop skills that could be applied when seeking other paid contracts. Each participant will apply to three projects but will be assigned to only one of the three.

General Information

1. What is offered in the program?

Our program offers the following to the participants:

- Each participant will complete approximately 5 hours of mentorship
- Participants will undertake two OCAD U micro-credential courses specific to their stream
- Participants in both streams will choose one elective course at OCAD U
- Each participant will receive a \$150.00 stipend for each of the three OCAD U courses they complete
- Participants will work on a solo project and will receive \$5000.00 to cover direct costs related to their involvement in the project
- Once the program is completed, participants will have access to additional professional development, networking and mentorship through the ArtworksTO alumni program

2. Am I eligible to participate in the Media Artists Stream?

The Criteria for the Media Artists Stream are as followed:

- Must be practicing media artists whose careers have progressed beyond the early stages, either in their countries of origin or in their first years in Canada, but who may still face challenges in establishing themselves professionally in Canada. Media arts may include disciplines such as graphic design, photography, UX/UI design, digital illustration, animation, film, sound art, and interactive or web-based media.
- Must present a portfolio that showcases a consistent personal artistic voice or statement, professionalism, quality of execution, as well as demonstrated technical skills and artistic control in one or more media (e.g., video, film, digital arts, installation, sound art, etc.).
- Must have participated in a minimum of 3 group exhibitions or public showcases, either in their country of origin or internationally. This can include exhibitions, screenings, festivals, digital showcases, collaborations, finished pieces, or other forms of public presentation relevant to their discipline.

3. Am I eligible to participate in the Arts Educators Stream?

The Criteria for the Arts Educators Stream are as followed:

- Must have a background in arts education, including experience in teaching or leading community-based arts programs, and/or working in educational or cultural institutions (e.g., universities, colleges, schools, libraries, museums, community centers), whether in their countries of origin or, for those who may have started in Canada, still facing challenges in establishing themselves professionally in this country.
- Must have experience in developing or delivering arts education content appropriate to the context in which they work.
Applicants should have a personal artistic practice, a portfolio, and a history of exhibitions or public showcases, as this stream is intended for practicing artist educators. Evidence of an active practice will be required

4. Do I need teaching credentials for the Arts Educator Stream?

Although professional teaching credentials are not required for the Arts Educator stream, experience in teaching or leading community-based arts programs and workshops, and/or working in educational or cultural institutions are essential for program acceptance.

5. Is this a paid opportunity?

Participants will receive a total of \$5000.00 to cover any direct costs related to the project, including the time and materials used for the project.

6. What is a Media Artist?

A media artist is a creative professional who uses digital, electronic, or technological media as an essential part of their artistic practice. Media artists include artists working as videographers, filmmakers, graphic designers, illustrators, photographers, social media communications consultants, animators, digital artists, sound artists, game designers, User Experience (UX) designers, installation artists working with digital media, etc.

7. What are the courses included in the program and how long is each course?

A two-to-three-hour RFP workshop is scheduled for August 27, 2025, followed by the proposal development phase:

- o Stream 1: approximately September 2025 to mid-October 2025
- o Stream 2: approximately late November 2025 to mid-January 2026

A 1.5-hour session Indigenous Protocols Workshop led by Kennedy Salloum, lead of the ArWorksTO Indigenous Cohort:

- o Stream 1 & 2: this workshop will take place sometime between late August and mid-September 2025

Participants will undertake OCAD U micro-credential courses as follows:

Stream 1:

- o “[Introduction to Project Management](#)”: asynchronous 8-week course with 1–2 synchronous sessions Mon, Sept 15–Sun, Nov 9, 2025
- o “[Social Enterprise](#)”: asynchronous 6-week course with 1–2 in-person sessions (Mon, Feb 2–Sun, Mar 15, 2026)

Stream 2:

- o “[Teaching Art](#)”: in-person 6-week course (Thurs, Jan 15–Feb 19, 2026, 6:30–9:30PM)
- o “[Introduction to Project Management](#)”: asynchronous 8-week course with 1–2 synchronous sessions (Mon, Mar 30–Sun, May 24, 2026)

Participants in both streams will choose one elective course at OCAD U, which may be online (synchronous/asynchronous) or in-person if selecting a studio-based course. These elective courses typically run for six weeks, expected approximately:

- ♣ Stream 1: April to Dec 2026
- ♣ Stream 2: April to Dec 2026

Options for these courses are as follows:

1. Studio Art
2. Media Production
3. Applied Design
4. Creative Business Skills

The list of elective courses can be found at the following link:

<https://tinyurl.com/m2p2ywru>

Project realization periods (approximate):

- o Stream 1: November 10, 2025 – Week of February 16, 2026
- o Stream 2: March 2, 2026 – Week of June 1, 2026