



**PROJECT HOST
SUBMISSION GUIDE
NEWCOMER COHORT**

BE A HOST

**BRING YOUR
CREATIVE VISION
TO LIFE. NO COST,
FULL IMPACT.**

Collaborate with
NEWCOMER ARTISTS
on meaningful,
fully funded projects

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Photo by Hong Yu Casey Chan
for Method Collective as part of
ArtWorksTO Newcomer Program,
Media Arts Stream, 2025-2026.



A PLACE TO CREATE AND BELONG

PROGRAM'S LEAD LETTER



Newcomer artists arrive in Canada at every stage of their careers; some with decades of professional experience, others with promising practices still finding their footing, all with perspectives and creative practices that this city genuinely needs. And yet, once here, many face the same walls: barriers to access, to networks, to visibility.

I know this firsthand. Building a creative practice in a new country is hard in ways that are difficult to explain to someone who hasn't lived it. That experience is what this program was built on.

“ Project Hosts are at the heart of what makes this work. When you open your doors to a newcomer artist, you’re not just offering a project opportunity; you’re helping build the kind of cultural sector that actually reflects the city we live in.”

Through mentorship, training, and paid creative work, the Newcomer Program creates meaningful pathways for artists who are ready to contribute. We're glad you're here, and we hope you'll be part of it.

**XIMENA
BERECOCHEA**

ArtWorksTO Newcomer Program Lead

ABOUT THE PROGRAM



Behind the scenes; Armyr Naderi, selected participant of the ArtWorksTO Newcomer Program, Media Arts Stream, 2025-2026.

The ArtWorksTO Newcomer Program is a workforce development initiative of Toronto Arts Foundation that supports newcomer artists in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in building sustainable careers in media arts and arts education. The program is delivered in partnership with the City of Toronto, OCAD University (OCAD U) for credentialed education, and Work in Culture (WIC) for employer engagement.

Central to the Newcomer Program are Project Hosts, GTA-based organizations like yours that submit a project proposal. Once approved, program participants select which projects they'd like to work on through a bidding process. An assessment committee finalizes the match between the participant and the project that best fits their profile and goals. Up to \$5000 of the cost of the participant's involvement is covered by Toronto Arts Foundation, making it an accessible opportunity for organizations to collaborate with talented newcomer artists at no direct cost.

The Program
is structured
in two streams:

STREAM 1
MEDIA ARTS

STREAM 2
ARTS EDUCATION

Each participant receives:

- Credential education delivered by OCAD U, including a \$150 stipend per course
- A guaranteed, paid creative contract valued at \$5,000
- Group and one-on-one mentorship with industry professionals
- Networking through masterclasses, workshops and panels
- Wrap-around supports
- Upon completion of the program, access to the ArtWorksTO Alumni Pathways Program

SUPPORTING NEWCOMER ARTISTS

As a Project Host, you'll play a critical role in advancing equity by supporting the career development of talented newcomer artists who are building their futures in Canada. Your commitment creates real pathways into the cultural workforce for artists who face systemic barriers.

Project Hosts will propose a short-term project idea for either or both streams (as applicable) that can be developed in 3 months' time. These projects must align with program participants' desired skills and outcomes to be coconsidered - i.e. graphic design, digital illustration, etc for the media arts stream, or i.e. workshop hosting, creative facilitation support, etc for the arts education stream.

Selected organizations will be matched to a Media Artist or Arts Educator to complete the approved project idea. For details on compensation and cost coverage, please refer to the 'Direct Costs Covered' section below.



Still image is part of Jim Libiran's portfolio, selected participant of the ArtWorksTO Newcomer Program, Arts Education Stream, 2025-2026.

ELIGIBILITY & RESPONSIBILITIES

The ArtWorksTO Newcomer Program Stream is open to a range of Greater Toronto Area (GTA)-based Project Hosts that are interested in engaging a creative newcomer workforce and supporting their inclusion and career advancement, including:

- Arts organizations (all disciplines)
- Community organizations (excluding faith-based groups)
- Libraries
- Municipalities
- Nonprofit and for-profit organizations
- Small and large-scale businesses

ELIGIBILITY

To host a project with ArtWorksTO, organizations must meet all of the following requirements:

- Be based in the Greater Toronto Area (Toronto, Durham, Halton, Peel, or York Region).
- Demonstrate a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace and in the communities they serve.
- Have a minimum of two (2) years of stable operations in good standing with the CRA.
- Be able to demonstrate a commitment to inclusive workplace development and an interest in and/or commitment to advancing the arts ecosystem in the GTA and beyond.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure that each ArtWorksTO matched to a project is paired with a designated representative/project lead. This representative must meet the following requirements:
 - Be prepared to fulfill the responsibilities associated with supporting the participant.
 - Have the authority to make project-related decisions within the organization.
 - Have the required project knowledge to collaborate and provide effective guidance.
 - Be actively engaged and responsive, providing regular, timely, and clear feedback to the participant throughout the project to ensure its successful and timely completion.
- Participate in an initial online meeting with their matched participant and staff member.
- Provide access to additional tools, resources, and materials within their organization to complement the approved project and contribute to its successful completion, in alignment with the approved project budget.
- Notify Program Lead of changes on scope of work and/or timeline, and meet with them for periodic check-ins as needed.
- Engage in program evaluation activities on behalf of the organization they represent.
- Acknowledge the program publicly using recognition guidelines (e.g. graphics and text) provided during the contracting process.



Illustration by Maliha Ali, for OCAD U School of Continuing Studies as part of ArtWorksTO Newcomer Program, Media Arts Stream, 2025-2026.

ELIGIBILITY FOR RETURNING PROJECT HOSTS

Organizations that have been matched with three ArtWorksTO participants (consecutively or non-consecutively) cannot participate in another program cycle in any of the three ArtWorksTO programs until they have:

1. Observed a one-year wait period (mandatory), and
2. Completed one or more of the following optional actions:
 - Hired an ArtWorksTO alumni.
 - Offered a paid placement or internship position to an ArtWorksTO alumni.
 - Offered to set-up a partnership with ArtWorksTO that aligns with ArtWorksTO mission of advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion in the media and arts education industries. Partnership offering is subject to a mutual agreement between ArtWorksTO and organization.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- Projects must provide meaningful, creative hands-on experience that contributes to the participant's professional growth in Canada, and leverages their Media Arts or Arts Education skills.
- Projects must be achievable within three months' time and have clearly defined deliverables
- Projects should be scoped to fully use the \$5,000 budget allocated to the participant. This budget is intended to cover the participant's professional fees, as well as reasonable transportation and project-related tools and material costs.
- Participants must take creative lead in the development of their projects with the close guidance and final approval of their assigned Project Host.
- Some artists may come equipped with their own tools to complete the proposed project, while others may need materials and tools to be purchased or rented using the participant's budget and/or provided in-kind by the Project Host, depending on the needs of the project.
- If the proposed project requires resources beyond the \$5,000 budget (e.g., expanded scope, additional deliverables, or higher material costs), the Project Host is responsible for covering those additional expenses or adjusting the project scope accordingly.
- If you need support developing a realistic project scope and budget, please contact our Employer Engagement Partner: Stephanie Draker, Work in Culture (stephaniedraker@workinculture.ca).
- Additional examples of recently completed projects can be found on the WIC website for reference.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

STREAM 1 MEDIA ARTS

Media arts projects are creative works that use digital or electronic media as primary tools for artistic expression. These projects combine elements of technology, storytelling, design, and interactivity, and they're common in both educational and professional arts settings.

For example:

- Digital Illustration
- Graphic Design
- Photography
- Marketing/Social Media Campaign Development
- Videography
- Website & User Experience Design
- 3D Rendering

STREAM 2 ARTS EDUCATION

Arts education projects come in many forms, depending on the setting (school, community, museum, online), the goals (skill-building, social change, personal expression), and the audience (youth, adults, marginalized communities, etc.).

For example:

- Arts-based programming; skill-based or technique-focused (e.g. painting lessons, dance lessons, multidisciplinary crafting, etc.).
- Creative workshops (e.g., writing and storytelling, public speaking, using narrative tools for personal growth, innovation, and design principles).
- Co-designing curriculum through a creative lens (e.g. critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration and communication, movement and expression, etc.).
- Community outreach engagement opportunities through participatory or socially engaged arts (e.g. to address local history or community identity, arts for justice, healing/therapy).
- Exhibition/tour development (e.g. for public engagement and audience development).
- Programming for specific communities and/or all ages (e.g. art camps for youth, art clubs for seniors, etc.).

COSTS

DIRECT COSTS COVERED BY TORONTO ARTS FOUNDATION

The Media Artists or Arts Educators selected as participants in this program will receive \$5,000.00 CAD to compensate for their time, expertise and any materials directly related to their involvement in the program. This amount is covered entirely by ArtWorksTO and is paid directly to the participant.

INDIRECT COSTS COVERED BY THE PROJECT HOST

The Project Host will need to cover any indirect costs related to hosting the participant and administering their project. For example:

- Staff time, administrative, and equipment costs to support and monitor the participant.
- An appropriate workspace or venue space as required (e.g. a desk, company computer, workshop space).
- Overhead costs associated with project (e.g. utilities, rent for office/venue space, office supplies).
- Costs associated with hosting or communicating about the final outcomes of the project, etc.

Q&A WITH XIMENA BERECCOCHEA

As lead of the AWTO Newcomer Program, Ximena Berecochea brings together mentorship, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a deep commitment to supporting emerging artists and newcomers. A photo-based artist, scholar, and educator, her practice bridges visual art, literature, and multimedia. She holds a PhD from the University of Toronto, has taught at several universities across Toronto, and has exhibited internationally, with work included in global collections. Ximena is also a member of Mexico's National System of Art Creators and co-founder of the Institute for Creative Exchange, where she developed international collaborations connecting artists, writers, and cultural practitioners across disciplines.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I propose more than one project opportunity as part of my application?

Yes! If you have more than one project idea for either stream, you can submit multiple applications.

Do I need to submit separate applications for each Stream?

Yes, there are separate forms for Stream 1 – Media Artists, and Stream 2 – Arts Educators.

How do I apply?

Follow the links below to access and complete the application form(s).

Applications for Stream 1 – Media Artists, and Stream 2 – Arts Educators will be accepted from June 22, 2026 to September 8, 2026.

You can also download a copy of the application questions from our program page in order to prepare your answers in advance.

How will my application be assessed?

Project Host applications will be reviewed by program partners, who will assess the proposed projects for alignment with the learning goals of the existing roster of program participants. Project proposals will also be measured according to:

- **Organizational Goals:** The application explains how the proposed work will help the organization achieve a clear and impactful goal or learning objective and engage their intended audience.
- **Project Plan:** The Project Host has laid out a clear and reasonable plan for the project, including an appropriate timeline and project scope/scale to achieve the host organization's identified goals.
- **Project Deliverables/ Outcomes:** The number of anticipated project deliverables or outcomes are eligible, reasonable, and appropriate for what the project aims to achieve in the timeline

provided and against the ArtworksTO budget provided to the Media Artists or Arts Educator to complete the work. If, as part of the assessment, it is determined that the project value exceeds the \$5,000.00 amount provided by ArtworksTO, the Project Host can clarify if, and how, they would cover any additional costs to ensure the success of the project.

What happens if I decline the proposed match with a selected Media Artist or Arts Educator?

At times during the matching process, either the Project Host or participant may determine that the match is not a good fit.

If the Project Host declines the proposed participant match, they may not be rematched with another proposed participant and will need to resubmit for a future cohort.

How will my involvement in this program be evaluated?

The ArtWorksTO Newcomer Program Lead will work with a third-party evaluation

company to collect feedback from both newcomer participants and project host throughout the duration of the program. Project Hosts will be asked to complete surveys and in some cases, perform additional interviews conducted by third-party evaluator about their involvement in and/or experience with the program.

When can a project happen?

Stream 1 – Media Arts
Media Artists will have up to three (3) months to complete their projects. The project timeline can happen anytime between January 11, 2027 – April 12, 2027.

Stream 2 – Arts Educator
Arts Educators will have up to three (3) months to complete their projects. The project timeline can happen anytime between April 5, 2027 – July 5, 2027.

There is no minimum number of days required for a project. However, Project Hosts must ensure they are proposing a project with a manageable

timeline that can be completed within three (3) months. Project Hosts will also need to be mindful that the selected participants will be engaged in other mentorship and learning activities through OCADU and NAN; timelines and scheduling may need to be adjusted to allow for their participation in those sessions.

How do I apply?

Follow the links below to access and complete the application form(s). Applications for the Stream 1 – Media Artists, and Stream 2 – Arts Educators will be accepted from June 22, 2026 to September 8, 2026. You can also download a copy of the application questions from our program page in order to prepare your answers in advance.

When will I hear about the results?

Stream 1 – Media Arts
We anticipate that successful Project Hosts will be contacted during the week of November 30th, 2026 for Stream 1 to move

on to the matching process with their proposed newcomer Media Artist.

Following a successful match, the Project Host and Media Artist participate in an initial online meeting for introductions and will enter into a formal contract in early December 2026.

Stream 2 – Arts Education
We anticipate that successful Project Hosts will be contacted during the week of January 25, 2027, for Stream 2 to move on to the matching process with their proposed newcomer Arts Educator. Following a successful match, the Project Host and Arts Educator will participate in an initial online meeting for introductions and will enter into a formal contract by mid to late February 2027.

Note: as part of this matching process, your project activities and timeline may be reassessed and adjusted to align with the ArtWorksTO Newcomer Program objectives and compensation rate provided to the Media Artist or Arts Educator.

SUPPORT THE ARTS.

The arts are an essential service in Toronto. Art grows the economy, connects communities, and fills our lives with joy. When you give to Toronto Arts Foundation, you help artists thrive and keep Toronto vibrant, inclusive, and alive with culture.



TRANSFORM TORONTO.



THE ARTS MOVE
TORONTO FORWARD.
DONATE TODAY.

**WE MANAGE THE
PROCESS + MENTOR
THE ARTIST + FUND
YOUR PROJECT FROM
START TO FINISH.**

**WORK WITH A SKILLED MEDIA ARTIST OR ARTS EDUCATOR
THROUGH OUR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND
BRING YOUR CREATIVE IDEA TO LIFE.**



NEWCOMER PROGRAM





CHAMPION ARTISTS. DEVELOP TALENT. ENRICH YOUR ORGANIZATION.



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NEWCOMER PROGRAM

MENTORSHIP PROJECT