

CONVERSATION

**TORONTO
ARTS FOUNDATION**

**ART
BE PART
OF THE
CONVERSATION**

2026
MUNICIPAL
ELECTION
TOOLKIT

AND

UNDERSTAND WHY THE ARTS A MUNICIPAL ELECTION ISSUE
BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION
GET INFORMED BEFORE YOU VOTE
HELP SPREAD THE WORD

TOGETHER, WE CAN HELP ENSURE ARTS AND CULTURE REMAIN AT THE HEART OF TORONTO'S FUTURE.

IT'S ELECTION SEASON IN TORONTO!

FROM AFFORDABLE CREATIVE SPACES TO NEIGHBOURHOOD ARTS PROGRAMMING, DECISIONS MADE AT CITY HALL HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS WHO WORK HARD TO MAKE TORONTO A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE CAN BELONG AND WHERE THE WORLD WANTS TO VISIT.

THIS TOOLKIT WILL HELP YOU:

Understand why the arts are a municipal election issue
Be part of the conversation by speaking to your candidates
Learn when, where, and how to vote, and
Spread the word and mobilize your networks to get out and vote!

BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION

TOGETHER, WE CAN HELP ENSURE ARTS AND CULTURE REMAIN AT THE HEART OF TORONTO'S FUTURE.

UNDERSTAND WHY THE ARTS A MUNICIPAL ELECTION ISSUE

Creativity is not a luxury. It is one of the ways we express our identities, build a sense of belonging, and experience our city together. Arts participation can support newcomer integration, strengthen social connections, reduce loneliness and isolation, and create opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to participate in community life.

72% of Torontonians say that arts participation increases their awareness of different perspectives.

69% of Torontonians use music or dance to connect with their cultural heritage.

In one of the world’s most diverse cities, the arts help Torontonians see themselves and one another, share their stories, and feel at home.

WE ARE WHO WE ARE THE ARTS ARE WHO WE ARE
THE ARTS ARE WHAT WE DO THE ARTS ARE

Toronto is a city of creators, audiences, and participants. Artists and arts organizations animate neighbourhoods, attract visitors, and contribute to vibrant communities. And yet, many artists and organizations struggle to sustain their work in Toronto due to affordability pressures and lack of access to appropriate space.

1 in 5 Canadian artists lives in Toronto.
8% of Toronto’s workforce is made up of cultural workers.

67% of Torontonians attended an arts or cultural event in the past year.

At a time when global cities are competing to attract and retain creative talent for all that it brings to the life of a city, outpricing artists means losing a key source of Toronto’s competitive edge — innovation, identity, and community vitality.

THE ARTS ARE GREAT FOR THE ECONOMY THE ARTS ARE GREAT

Toronto's cultural economy supports jobs and businesses across the city, attracts 4.3 million visitors annually, and contributes to vibrant main streets and neighbourhoods.

\$11.4 billion
the approximate contribution of Toronto's arts and culture sector to the city's GDP.

\$65 billion
the direct GDP contribution of Canada's arts and culture sector in 2024, according to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

Canada's arts and culture sector is growing faster and supporting more jobs per dollar than other key sectors like oil and gas, manufacturing, or agriculture, according to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

A COMMITMENT TO ARTS AND CULTURE IS A COMMITMENT TO TORONTO.

Culture plays a critical role in community development, identity and belonging, economic vitality, and vibrant neighbourhoods. Recognizing this, the City of Toronto established an ambitious vision for Toronto's cultural future through Culture Connects: An Action Plan for Culture in Toronto 2025-2035. The next Mayor and City Council have an opportunity to turn that vision into reality by recognizing arts and culture as essential city-building infrastructure and investing accordingly for the benefit of all Torontonians.

ASK

What will you do to support the arts in Toronto and champion culture in every neighbourhood.

How will you ensure culture is part of Toronto's city-building agenda?

What municipal tools would you use to protect existing cultural spaces and create more affordable cultural space in Toronto?

How will you make arts and cultural opportunities more available across Toronto?

How will you support a thriving cultural workforce?

BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION

HEADING TO A CANDIDATE EVENT? SPEAKING TO A CANDIDATE WHO KNOCKED ON YOUR DOOR? MAKE THE ARTS PART OF THE CONVERSATION. YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A POLICY EXPERT TO TALK TO CANDIDATES ABOUT THE ARTS - START WITH A QUESTION.

THE ARTS MATTER TO YOU.

SHARE WHY THE ARTS MATTER TO YOU.

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“The arts connect communities, contribute to Toronto’s economy, and are a crucial part of who we are. I care about the arts, and I want to see them remain an important part of Toronto’s future.”

Make it personal. Talk about a local arts organization you value, a cultural space that matters to your neighbourhood, or an experience that has helped you connect with others.

SAY

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SHARE WHY

GET INFORMED BEFORE YOU VOTE

YOUR MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATIVES MAKE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT ARTS FUNDING, CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC SPACES, AND THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH TORONTO'S ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS WORK. TAKE TIME TO LEARN ABOUT THE CANDIDATES IN YOUR WARD AND UNDERSTAND THEIR PRIORITIES. YOU CAN USE THIS RESOURCE TO SEE WHERE EACH CANDIDATE STANDS ON ARTS AND CULTURE AND HOW THEY PLAN TO MAKE THEM PART OF THEIR PLATFORM.

WHERE TO FIND ELECTION INFORMATION FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION ABOUT CANDIDATES, VOTING DATES, POLLING LOCATIONS, AND HOW TO VOTE, VISIT THE CITY OF TORONTO'S OFFICIAL ELECTION WEBSITE. ELECTION INFORMATION CAN CHANGE, SO CHECK OFFICIAL SOURCES BEFORE MAKING YOUR VOTING PLAN.

Find your ward and candidates. Identify the candidates running for Mayor and City Council in your area.

Review their platforms. Look for commitments related to arts and culture, affordable spaces, neighbourhood investment, and support for cultural workers.

Ask questions. Contact candidates directly or attend a local candidate debate or community event.

Share what you learn. Encourage friends, neighbours, colleagues, and fellow arts supporters to make arts and culture part of their own election conversations.

Make a voting plan. Confirm your eligibility, voting dates, locations, and accepted identification requirements through official City of Toronto election resources.

YOU CAN HELP MAKE ARTS AND CULTURE A VISIBLE PART OF TORONTO'S MUNICIPAL ELECTION CONVERSATION.

HELP SPREAD THE WORD

SHARE Toronto Arts Foundation’s policy recommendations with candidates and community members. **TALK** about the value of the arts with friends, family, and colleagues. **SHARE** examples of the artists, cultural spaces, and arts organizations that make your neighbourhood special. **ENCOURAGE** candidates to explain their commitments to arts and culture. **SHARE THIS TOOLKIT WITH YOUR NETWORKS.** Use the following resources to share to your social media channels.



