

Ontario Arts Council (OAC) - Music Creation Projects

Music Creation Projects

Until this program opens in [Nova](#), the Ontario Arts Council's online granting system, program information may change. This includes deadline dates and specific information on eligibility. Be sure to visit this page after the program opens in [Nova](#), but before starting your application.

Purpose

The program supports Ontario-based professional artists in creating original musical works. This program supports music creators at all career stages, working in all music genres/styles. The program has two categories:

- **Self-directed creation:** Projects where the applicant is an individual creator who is requesting support for composing/writing a new piece of music or body of work (for example, a song set). The applicant is taking their own initiative and making their own decisions about the music to be created.
- **Commissioning:** Projects where the applicant is an individual composer/songwriter working with a commissioner. The commissioner can be an individual artist, music group or non-profit arts organization, choreographer or dance company, who makes a commitment to give the proposed commissioned work a première.

Note: This program is not for recording activity. For recording projects, see the [Music Recording Projects](#) program.

Priorities

The program's priorities are to support:

- projects that display exceptional creativity in composition and song-writing
- projects that enhance the range of music available to performers and the public
- projects that, in addition to the above, may contribute to arts education, public participation and community involvement in the arts in Ontario (for example, composition for children's choir)

Deadline date(s)

April 3 and September 11, 2025, 1 p.m. EST

- The application form will be available in Nova about two months before the deadline.
- You will find out whether you got a grant about four and a half months after each deadline.

Grant amount(s)

- Self-directed creation: maximum \$4,000

- Commissioning: maximum \$20,000

Important: Due to the number of applications received and the limited funds available, grants awarded may be smaller than the amount requested. Grant request amounts should be in proportion to the proposed activity. Only large-scale projects (e.g. compositions for opera) are likely to be awarded grants close to the maximum amount in the Commissioning category.

Eligible applicants

- Individuals: professional composers, songwriters and music creators, who are Ontario residents

Note:

- Eligible songwriters must be creating music and words, or the music in partnership with a lyricist or poet. They cannot write only the song texts.
- Others may be involved in the creative process. This could include commissioners where applicable, musicians, band members, lyricists, etc.)

For applicants applying for music commissions only:

- Composers are the applicant and commissioners of the new music are required participants.
- Commissioners can be professional individual artists (music performers, choreographers) music groups, not-for-profit arts organization or dance company. Commissioners not entirely comprised of professional musicians, such as community orchestras or choirs, are also possible.
- Commissioners where music performance is not a primary activity, (e.g. an art gallery), are eligible. However, commissioners must describe their music programming curation and the context in which the new work will be presented to the public.
- Projects with commissioners located outside Ontario are eligible. The world première may occur elsewhere, but any plans for the first Ontario performance must be provided.
- Commissions suitable for young performers are eligible if the impact on learners or its potential for future use by the music education community can be demonstrated.

Read the [Guide to OAC Project Programs](#) for more eligibility information.

Ineligible applicants

- ad hoc groups, collectives and organizations. Note: an individual may apply to create with others
- professional composers or songwriters who are currently enrolled in composition or songwriting courses or a music composition degree program at a university, college or conservatory (composition/songwriting workshops are permitted), are not eligible to apply in the Self-directed creation category
 - However, they may apply in the Commissioning category, provided

they can demonstrate that the professional contract to create a new composition for the commissioner is independent of their studies.

What this program funds

- Composition/creation of new original work. This may also include:
 - creation of a companion piece or additional movements, intended to accompany an earlier composition
 - completion of a larger-scale work under development (for example, an opera)
 - music incorporating other media or art forms.

Eligible activities:

- **Self-directed creation:**
 - composition of original lyrics and/or music, including time to create a body of work
 - mentor consultation, collaborations with other artists and research
 - creation of electronic music, where the process involves sampling and manipulation of recorded materials
- **Commissioning:**
 - projects where a composer is contracted by an ensemble, arts organization, music education organization or an individual artist wishing to commission and première a new work.
- For commissioning projects, please note the following additional information:
 - in the case of opera, a commitment to production development or workshops must be specified, even if the exact plans for a world première production are not known
 - composer and librettists/lyricists fees may include activity that occurred before the deadline. For information on commissioning rates, please see Canadian League of Composers [official fee schedule](#)

Eligible expenses:

- artist fees (for example, composer/songwriter/creator, co-creator, librettist/lyricist, mentor)
- score/sheet music copy costs or the self-generation of parts (for example, individual parts for each instrument) for one master set (not reproductions for each player or publishing copies for resale/rental)
- space and equipment rental for the purpose of the creation process
- purchase of small-scale equipment, software, electronics and similar materials required to carry out the project (suggested maximum \$500)
- modest recording costs are only eligible when documenting new creation or process (i.e. archival recording)
- for electronic music (i.e. electro-acoustic, beat production, sound art), or where your project is exploratory in nature or you are creating beats/

soundscapes with the potential to be used for future works by other artists (i.e. not a finished work/recording), higher recording costs are eligible

- higher recording costs are also eligible for commissions for dance/new choreography where creation of an electronic soundtrack is necessary for use by the commissioner
- childcare and other dependant care fees enabling individuals to take part in the project (this does not include regular, ongoing expenses)
- expenses related to making the project accessible to audience members and project participants (other than the applicant) who are Deaf or have a disability
 - Note: Applicants to this program who identify as Deaf or as having a disability may apply for supplementary funds for their own accessibility expenses through [Accessibility Fund: Project Support](#).

What this program does not fund

Ineligible activity:

- projects that are a part of the applicant's course of study/academic work
- commission projects where the applicant is also the commissioner of the work
- commissions by musical performing organizations or dance companies with composers who are their own artistic directors/leader, administrative head or members of the board
- commissions by librettists/lyricists/writers for the musical setting of their own texts
- commissions by educational institutions for their own faculty
- commissions by record companies/labels, managers, agents and lawyers
- commissions by religious institutions
- film or television soundtracks
- video production, including of promotional and music videos
- incidental theatre music and arrangements
- revisions, rewrites or rearrangements of existing work

Ineligible expenses:

- major capital expenditures, including buying, leasing or renovating buildings and purchase of major equipment (for example, purchase of recording equipment, instruments, computers)

Activity timing

The activities for which you are requesting funding:

- cannot start before the deadline
- cannot finish before you receive your grant results
- must be completed no more than two years after you receive the grant results

Note: For self-directed creation, your project may have started before the program

deadline date. However, expenses incurred before the deadline date are ineligible and will not be covered by this grant. For commissioning, composer and librettists/ lyricists fees may include activity that occurred before the deadline. The world première/performance, public releases of recordings and/or publishing of new songs/compositions cannot be earlier than four and a half months after the deadline.

Final report requirements

If you receive a grant, you must complete the project and submit a final report in Nova. See [Terms and Conditions – receipt of OAC project grant funds](#) for more information on reporting obligations.

In your final report, you will need to provide:

- a description of the project undertaken and its outcomes, including details on any approved or minor changes to what had been outlined in the application
- a final budget
 - If the budget you submit shows a surplus of more than \$250 (revenues as compared to expenses), you may be required to repay the surplus amount to OAC.
- sample from printed lyrics/charts/scores and/or audio recording of the work(s) created
- documentation and/or an explanation of how you followed or will follow OAC's [Recognition Requirements for Project Grant Recipients](#)
 - This should include samples of any promotional or other materials produced for the project that show the OAC and Government of Ontario logos. [Read logo guidelines](#)
 - This could also include social media screenshots or a description of how you recognized OAC or plan to do so in future activities or materials tied to the project.
 - ◆ Note: If applicable, at a minimum, the first publication of a score/songs should include OAC recognition.

To apply

Complete and submit an application in [Nova](#), OAC's online grant application system. You will be able to do this approximately two months before the deadline.

Before applying, be sure to:

- read the [Guide to OAC Project Programs](#) for basic eligibility requirements and other restrictions
- create or update your profile in [Nova](#)

Your application will include:

- basic information about the project
- your answers to [application questions](#)

- a project budget
- artistic examples:
 - A minimum of two and a maximum of three audio or video examples
- support documents:
 - artists' résumés or bios (including a bio of the commissioner, for commissioning projects)
 - score excerpts or lyrics
 - a letter from the commissioner (for commissioning)

Complete instructions and requirements are in the application in [Nova](#).

For information on how assessors rate applications see the [Guide to OAC Assessment](#) and the [Evaluation Rubric – Activity Projects](#).

For details on creating a profile or submitting an application in [Nova](#), see the [Nova User Guide](#).

Program-specific definitions

See the [Music Definitions page](#).