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# BLACK ARTS FUNDING FOR A BLACK ARTS FUTURE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TORONTO ARTS COUNCIL

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‘We Have Done Enough’ an art installation designed by artist Anique Jordan and presented by NIA Centre for the Arts, challenges viewers to consider the significant work that Black people have put into explaining and fighting against racism. Photo: Nabil Shash

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# WE HAVE DONE ENOUGH

WRITTEN BY ANIQUE JORDAN

We have protested, we have rallied,  
we have cried, we have grieved, we  
have made art and offered you  
models of difference, we have  
begged and held arms, we have  
shown love and kindness, we have  
been angry, we have taught our  
children they are beautiful, to try  
and offer themselves to the world in  
spite of it.

You have taken our tools, our music,  
our rituals, our labour, yet we have  
written and taught and organized  
and prayed, we have offered  
evidence, facts and history and still  
are denied. We have given hope  
when we shouldn't have any left.  
We have done it all and right now,  
for many of us, there are no words  
left for the exhaustion, the fear, the  
grief, the hurt. Our mothers have  
told you they are scared. We are  
scared. We are tired, so tired.

**We have done enough.**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the newest wave of protests by Black bodies sets the world ablaze in 2020 once again, loudly demanding the right to live, work, play and in the case of this report, make art, organizations both public and private seem to be taking yet another step towards equity for Black bodies. Toronto Arts Council (TAC) is no exception and is showing leadership as it steps up to acknowledge its own shortcomings in support of Black Artists by designing a new grant program stream specifically for Black artists/arts organizations, which according to 90% of participants in the consultations that inform this report, is very much needed.

Current granting statistics within TAC show that 10% of individual artist grant applicants identified as Black in 2019 vs 8.9% in the 2016 census; 16% of organization/collective project grants and 3% of operating grant applicants identifying as Black. The success rates for individual and organization/collective grants is reported as the same overall success rate for other applicants, and Black individual artist grants represented 9% of grant dollars awarded to individuals, Black organization/collective project grants represented 14% of granting dollars and Black organizations/collective operating grants represented only 2% of granting dollars.

Of the 162 respondents who participated in this consultation, 60.49% of respondents have never received funding from TAC. The community consultations that informed this report provided a valuable opportunity to reveal the specific barriers and unexplored issues that contribute to these lower numbers of support, as well as the possibilities for change.

While the overwhelming consensus by participants that the \$300,000 represented a token gesture, it sparked the exploration of potential new ideas and revealing deeper insight into current obstructions. Great skepticism was balanced by a cautious optimism that perhaps this initiative could be an important first step by TAC to address long standing systemic issues that have shackled the artistic potential of the Black arts community. The following themes represent key points and thought provoking questions which were repeatedly brought forward by participants:

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A genuine, acknowledgement of how TAC has not been serving the Black community and the history of barriers that have been created and/or maintained
- \$300,000 is too small and considered tokenistic, performative or that TAC was offering a band aid solution to a deeper issue. TAC should continue to look at redistribution efforts to allocate more funds towards this fund in the future.
- The continued perception of under-representation of Black artists receiving funding at TAC due to the intimidation of a daunting, granting structure.
- The need for a more welcoming and intuitive website that should not be a barrier to accessing funds - how are we cutting ourselves off from our artists who aren't able to access TAC as is (dyslexic, mental health issues, Francophone).
- A movement towards simplicity - simple language, customer service, videos, apps
- Increased outreach in communities and the creation of tutorials/trainings via videos on how to apply to grants - huge piece
- The assumption that funding can't be for orgs and individuals from the same stream - if this granting stream is for individuals, how is the TAC addressing the increased funding need for Black organizations and collectives and vice versa?
- The need for rolling deadlines
- The need for a true jury of peers for Black artists, including additional training for jury members to ensure equity and inclusivity across intersecting Black identities.

This report provides recommendations for the design of a new grant funding program for Black Artists, with additional recommendations for TAC to continue to review and adjust its internal infrastructure in order to provide support that will truly impact the Black arts community far into the future. Although the increase in funding allocated to Black Arts community is critical, the work to ensure that the beginning of a systems change within TAC to better support the most racialized and marginalized artists within Toronto is the key to providing funding that is equitable, impactful and shifts TAC from simply being an unapproachable, institutional funder to a leader in arts engagement.



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# PROJECT OVERVIEW

## Project Background and Scope

The TAC Board of Directors approved a recommendation to develop a TAC response in support of the Black arts community. The recommendation includes the main points:

- Toronto Arts Council partnered with Toronto Arts Foundation on a new arts grants program designed to contribute to systemic change for the Black arts community;
- That the combined contribution towards the program be a minimum of \$300,000 with Toronto Arts Council's financial commitment to be taken from the 2020 granting budget;
- That the program be approved in principle, with the understanding that once the program is developed in detail it will come back to the board for approval.

TAC acknowledged that the resources allocated to this initial effort cannot in and of themselves bring about systemic change for the Black Arts community. However, dedicating funds through this initial response can contribute to change if it leads to solutions to the issues faced by Black arts community as articulated by members of the community. To this end, TAC committed to designing consultations with the Black arts community, guided by the TAC Equity Steering Committee.

To ensure a range of perspectives and voices are heard to broaden their reach, consultations were co facilitated by Paulina O’Kieffe-Anthony and Kai ner Maa Pitanta, and include TAC Board and Committee members and external leadership, and who will develop the program in accordance with advice received. At this time, there are no restrictions on potential grant recipients which could include individual artists, collectives or organizations. Equally, there are no pre-set restrictions on the kind of support to be offered which could include creation, programming, administration, professional development, mentorship, residencies, etc. The granting model to be employed for this initiative is also open, and may depart from traditional processes.

Paulina and Kai designed and implemented consultations using various methods to gather insights from members of the Black arts community (individuals, groups and organizations) as a means of supporting TAC to design a new grant funding stream for the Black arts community that would be accessible and have significant impact for Black artists in Toronto. Both consultants gathered data to develop this recommendation report to help guide TAC in this endeavour.

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# PROJECT OVERVIEW

## Consultation Demographics

This consultation reached as many Black artists and individuals connected to the arts community and will include the following:

- Black artists (emerging, mid career and established)
- Black arts organizations
- Toronto Arts council staff members

The goal is to reach between 100-150 individuals through in person consultations and up to 500 individuals via electronic survey. A total of 162 individuals were reached and of those:

- 3.7% were New Creatives (less than 2 yrs of arts experience)
- 22.22% Emerging Artists (2-5 yrs)
- 26.54% Mid Career Artists (5-10yrs)
- 47.53% Established Artists (10+ yrs)

- 75.31% were Independent Artists
- 12.96% were Arts Workers (not representing an arts org)
- 11.73% were Arts Workers (representing an arts organization)

## Methodology

Data was gathered in the following manner:

### ***One on One sessions***

3 one on one interview sessions will be conducted with individuals in the Black arts community who could not attend the group consultation sessions. Additionally 1 session was developed for Black Staff at TAC and 1 session was conducted for the entire staff team at both Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Foundation.

### ***10 Group Consultation sessions***

10 Group sessions were conducted online with an average of 6 people per session. A total of 48 people from the Black Arts Community participated in consultations.

### ***Survey***

The consultants developed a survey to gather as much data from the Black Arts community, particularly those who are not as connected to TAC. This survey ensured a larger and diverse pool of voices are captured in the final report. 162 people participated in the survey, with 90% of survey respondents identifying as Black.

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## THE BLACK ARTS COMMUNITY & THE TAC CONNECTION

The consensus from the group consultations and those respondents who participated in the survey reveal that although Black artists and arts organizations are aware of Toronto Arts Council, a stronger effort needs to be made to increase the connection between TAC and the Black Arts Community. Despite some respondents reporting that they have received TAC funding, with a select few being consistently supported through funding, only 14% of independent artists felt that TAC was accessible, while 33% felt that it was not accessible to the Black arts community at all. Key messages that we heard reiterated were:

- I haven't felt that Toronto Arts Council promotes itself as open to funding diverse art forms
- Somewhat accessible, only through programs like ArtReach, that are specifically geared towards working with and enabling communities experiencing oppression to have an equitable chance at resources.
- I didn't know about it until this year!
- It has been too daunting to truly engage in the system
- I don't feel like there is a community that's inviting nor help for people not already established.
- I don't think enough people in the community know that they can apply and receive help for their grants. Also, even if we know about the program, you can complete an application exactly as required and never receive a grant. It feels like you need to know someone in the arts community who has experience writing grants to write your first one so that you can go on from there. It feels rigged to me personally.
- It depends on artist with the connections to white spaces

54% of respondents did respond that they felt that TAC was somewhat accessible which is a significant starting point for TAC to begin a deeper engagement with the Black arts community. Mistrust of TAC as an institutional funder is still high, and when focus group participants were asked about their excitement or interest in the proposed Black Arts funding stream, much of the response was actually skepticism. Comments included:

- Hope that we are actually addressing the actual structural issues of the arts, and that this isn't just a bandaid on the issue. What are the structural changes within the organization, to ensure that this will be a permanent granting stream.
- Hopes that TAC is not trying to use this as a solution for all of their issues with their grants. There needs to be more inclusion in all of the different grant programs. There needs to be more focus and outreach to the Black community to up application rates. Can TAC facilitate bridges between Black artists and organizations to garner more direct private support?



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- \$300,000 isn't a lot of money and won't go very far to help the Black community. How many different streams can that amount of money really support? TAC needs to think about how they can amplify that funding. And at the end of the day, we need to talk about the granting process itself. It is daunting.
  - Wouldn't say that I'm excited, but cautiously hopeful that it will start a movement at TAC.
  - Why did it take this long for TAC to realize that there was a need for Black Artists to have grant support within the TAC? \$300,000 is a start, but how well is this program thought out? Is the program going to help or harm? What are the hoops that they will have to jump through to obtain the funding. Who can help them through the process? How often can they apply?
  - I'm not quite excited, because it is just not enough money. But I'm willing to be involved in the process because it is headed by Black artists.
  - I'm not excited. \$300,000 is better than nothing, but it's a drop in the bucket. I hope that it is not a one time thing. Up until 2 minutes before the call, I was not planning on joining the call, (but showed up to meet other Black artists.)
  - I'm glad that there will be a jury of all Black or BIPOC people and that there is some money available, but hoping for more in the future.

The Black community is aware of TAC however only a select few are actually connected. This was evident in the fact that 60% of respondents reported they have never received funding from TAC (this includes independent artists and arts organizations); of those who did receive funding, 33% was for project funding, while only 2.5% received operating funds.

TAC is still a long way from being connected with the Black Arts community with many artists regarding it as another institutional funder they must navigate simply to try and receive some funding for projects, but isn't serving a purpose outside of this in regards to community building.

Regardless of this, 90% of respondents agreed that TAC should create new granting programs specifically for Black artists as many responded that Black artists and Black-led arts organizations have been underfunded for years, and that a Black focused arts grant would encourage many to apply for funding. Funding for the Black arts community would, as one participant put it,

"... aid in the development of more independent work and in organizations functioning sustainably. New granting programs will also give artists the opportunity to present their work to a jury that may have a deeper understanding of themes and subject matter. The existence of additional new programs focused on the development of the Black arts community will support more artists as more artists may apply and will create some new relationships with this segment of the Black arts community for TAC. It is important for us to have leaders in a tangible sense and be able to offer space and resources that will aid in the development of Black artists / the work of Black artists."

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It is critical that despite the community's skepticism and concern that TAC continue to push through to begin to make changes that will ensure that the Black arts community is well resourced after being systematically denied for years. This will have significant impact for Black artists and organizations as outlined in the following way:

- This grant will help creation without consequences, relief with paying bills and rent.
- It will help pay other black artists and arts workers and support people in the community.
- Gives hope that black voices are being heard. A possibility to create real change.
- Legacy. Multiple black communities and black artists coming together. Black artists making and creating work. It will make a difference in the community.
- Gives hope about the future of black artists.
- If this granting stream can support artists long term, develop their capacity and develop sustainability then this can be a strong change. It can be a good start
- I feel it can empower people in TAC and it can reach other people. We need to start one person at a time. If one feels hope it can spread to other people. It will be a ripple effect that will affect other Black communities. It helps people to talk in their own way.
- Gives hope that black voices are being heard. A possibility to create real change. Legacy. Multiple black communities and black artists coming together. Black artists making and creating work. It will make a difference in the community.
- Wants to make sure that this grant takes into account that a lot of Black artists have a lack of access and are at the mercy of gatekeepers. How will this program change that in the future? You can create and create and create, but if you don't have access to support, how far can you get?

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## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### The Black Arts Community & The TAC Connection

- *TAC should develop a Black arts funding stream, but consider increasing the funding pool to at least match that of other programs considering the number of possible art forms and levels of artists that would consider applying.*
- *Beyond the support TAC should acknowledge its own complicit behaviour in maintaining barriers for Black artists and organizations, work to address the internal systems within its structures to demonstrate to the Black community that the change is beyond increasing funding.*
- *TAC should consider ways to create space within its organization (virtually and in person) that invite Black Artists and organizations to connect and dialogue, transforming TAC from just a funding body to more of a cultural arts hub.*

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## GRANT INFORMATION, OUTREACH AND SUPPORT

A large number of artists both in the focus groups and those who took the survey responded that they were not aware of TAC or the fact that they could receive grants for their projects or were intimidated by TAC's grants process and/or the institution itself (mainly due to a lack of community reflection in its staffing).

Respondents encouraged TAC to come out to "where Black art is happening" and try harder to connect with the Black arts community beyond the artists they already have a relationship with.

When asked about supports outside of direct funding that Toronto Arts Council could offer through this new funding stream, 82% of respondents said that providing access to professional development opportunities was another way that TAC could support Black Artists; 75% said artistic mentorship opportunities and 73% that marketing and audience development support would be helpful.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Grant Information, Outreach and Support

- ***TAC should engage Black artists and organizations within their own communities and staff at all levels should do the work to ensure they are visible and are in tune with the arts and culture scenes and the artists who are leading them.***
- ***TAC should consider running more frequent grant info sessions, grant writing and grant review clinic sessions. This could be done by increasing partnerships with local arts organizations such as ArtReach, NIA, SKETCH, CPAMO, Dance Immersion, RISE to provide deeper engagement activities that connect Black artists directly with TAC program managers.***
- ***TAC should encourage program staff to partner with community organizations and "be accessible and work in the community" not just stay within the offices of the institution.***

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Other suggestions directly from respondents included:

- Create progressive programs designed to increase the hiring of Black artistic directors, curators and leaders.
- Embed stronger hiring requirements for your operating clients, or offer additional funds to create new positions.
- Hold those receiving the most money more accountable for their racist hiring practices and require them to seek out Black and POC applicants for major positions.
- Work with dept heritage summer student programs to prioritise Black students in arts orgs.
- Help to facilitate access to capital / access to investors who might sponsor an artistic company
- The organizations themselves have to change. You can work to "professionalize" the Black artists but you are just trying to train the Black artists to be like all other artists when the issue really is that TAC may need to change its values , hire more racialized and Black staff and ensure that their juries - understand or are educated in the way they have privilege or not. And that art is in the eye of the beholder.
- Provide cost-free or affordable space for work at an unhurried pace.
- Create partnerships and community relationships so that the work can be led/organized/manifested by Black people
- If possible I think trying to involve artists is, in general, to work DIRECTLY with major brands in some capacity would prove life-changing. If for example, BMW Toronto needed a campaign done they could put out a community call to TAC and then vet the artist's works via guidelines given to TAC from BMW allocating their marketing budget to a local artists vision to then be polished via collaboration with whichever marketing agency BMW would normally work with.

## APPLICATION STRUCTURE AND ACCESS

A repeated phrase that was heard throughout the consultations is that the “grant application process itself is daunting.” This isn’t exclusive to the TAC grants process, however it is clear that for many Black artists that responded, aspects of the TAC application process itself seemed to be a barrier.

Therefore we are recommending that TAC rethink its understanding about accessibility when it designs the application process, including the following recommendations outlined below.



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## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Application Structure and Access

- *TAC should consider accessibility when developing the application questions and process which includes:*
  - *Providing a rolling deadline for this grant stream*
  - *Ensuring that questions are communicated in plain language with examples*
  - *Potentially creating an eligibility form that is easy to fill out and intuitively directs applicants through their eligibility*
  - *Allow for options so applicants can use their strengths when pitching a project (ex. Writing vs media or video presentation)*
  - *Make it more clear/obvious that grants will be accepted in French or English*
- *TAC should consider using different communication tools to ensure the Black arts community, and potential grant applicants are aware of and fully understand TAC's Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct guidelines for jurors or anyone in a position to render an assessment on a grant application.*
- *TAC should consider creating a process/guideline for the jury that balances creating a fair number of opportunities for new applicants and rewards quality applications from previous recipients.*
- *TAC should consider creating opportunities for pre-application work that may include discussions with a panel beforehand and opportunities for group meetings with experienced and successful applicants to TAC's grants.*

## FUNDING SELECTION CRITERIA

When asking consultation participants what this new fund should prioritize in supporting it should be noted that many expressed one of two key points:

1. \$300,000 was not a lot of money to fund the varying individual and organizational funding needs that currently exist in the Black Arts Community.
2. It is hard to prioritize not only which aspects of the community the funding should focus on, but also which areas the funding would be best applied to in order to make the biggest impact.

The top areas that respondents noted should be most prioritized were **Professional Development (73%), Artistic Collaborations (66%) and Operating Costs (60%)**. More than half of all respondents also chose Broadening Audience Reach, Community Healing, Developing culturally focused expressions, Resource Development and Fundraising and Experimental Creation.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Funding Selection Criteria

- *TAC should consider supporting eligibility of various essential components of artistic practice such as concept development, artistic collaborations, professional development, experimentation in developing new ideas for culturally focused expression, travel for artistic training outside of Toronto, and resource development.*
- *TAC should consider that many Black artists utilize diverse disciplines and can touch on multiple priorities in their artistic practice when developing selection criteria.*
- *TAC should consider offering support for artistic disciplines beyond dance, visual arts, music and theatre and consider opening up support for Black cultural, traditional and other popular art forms such as carnival arts, comedy and fashion to name a few.*

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- ***TAC should consider not excluding artists who have applied to other TAC grants for other projects.***
  - ***TAC should consider not creating a message that artistic work must always speak to the “Black experience” and ensure jurors are trained to value applications that don’t explicitly speak to the Black experience.***

Other key messages from respondents include:

- Ensure that if a collective is applying all members must be Black
- Acknowledge that a project may involve a significant amount of admin
- Black Establishments should be able to apply as a project lead wherein they are collaborating with Black artists
- Quality of work should be the most important thing considered
- Ensure that participation in this program does not exclude Black artists from other funding programs at TAC
- Consider grants that fund experimental developmental or pilot so newer artists don’t have to finance their own films to be eligible to apply for a grant.
- It’s not a one-size-fits-all grant for Black folks. Multiple intersectionalities exist within the Black arts community thus the program manager needs to be from the community. There also should be a feedback mechanism both before applicants finish the application process and after the results are sent out.
- The idea of limiting whether you can apply year over year is good to increase opportunity, but also can discourage collaboration. Don’t make people feel like they have to talk about their Blackness to get this grant.
- The problem with the emerging artist category is that if you fund your own projects you may always be an emerging artist

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## JURY SELECTION CRITERIA

The jury selection process was a key topic of discussion in every consultation meeting. Most respondents understand that the decision making power lies with the jury and therefore were vocal about ensuring that the jury needed to be thoughtfully selected based on criteria that would best support Black artists from a multitude of lenses. Additionally when pulling together the jury, TAC should do the work to be more connected to the Black arts community in a way that would allow them to have a larger pool of jurors to invite to the jury, as opposed to the same few Black artists that are more closely connected to TAC and therefore are regular faces on juries.

Finally it should be noted that during consultations with staff the idea of removing the jury system all together did come up with the suggestion of looking at models of self adjudication. This could potentially be another avenue that TAC could take in the future but would need further consultation with the arts community.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Jury Selection Criteria

- ***TAC should ensure that juries are 100% made up of jurors who identify as Black artists. The jury makeup should also ensure that this should be a diverse group of Black jurors who represent as many of the intersecting identities that exist within the Black arts community including LGBTQ+, Francophone, Mental illness, Emerging artists, and those living with various abilities.***
- ***TAC should ensure that all jurors should undergo application assessment training which should also include equity, diversity and anti-oppression training.***
- ***TAC could consider using an alternative to the traditional jury structure which builds upon a communal, cooperative, and supportive approach.***
- ***TAC should consider continuing its exploration of community/group of practice adjudication models.***

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Other key comments from respondents include:

- Juries are too tokenistic and there needs to be more diversity on juries.
- It is important that the assessment is done by peers.
- We need a jury made up of all Black artists for this new program. Reshaping what the definition of professional is, especially for filmmakers, is also important.
- There is importance in having a span of experience on the panel. (ex. Emerging and established artists; Black people who may not be artists, but have an understanding of business and tech, multiple facets of community together, etc)
- Continually revolving panel/committee (3 years)
- You need Black people to be able to make calls about Black work.
- I feel I need to emphasize HOW important it is to have people on the TAC team that are black, queer affirming, anti-supremacist people. It is so unfortunate to know that people who are black are not always for black people. So that needs to be known. There needs to be this type of Black person in a position of power to make pro black decisions and over turn anti Black ones. Focus on not being anti-poor as this grant could be someone's main source of income. Also, I would like to note the extreme need for funding mental health supports in the form of art therapy as well- black just need spaces to not think about being black for a moment- and take a minute to breathe and actually DEAL with their trauma
- For sure the Jury system and having people on the jury who understand cultural differences language and what is important to that culture. Cultural Sensitivity Training for jurors.

## DESIGN PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Some of the participants within the consultations inquired about the next step in the process, citing some concerns about who would be engaged in the actual design process at TAC. Many participants made it clear that their engagement in the consultations relied heavily on their trust of the individual consultants, and wanted to know if the work of designing the program would also include Black leadership at the helm.

A list of key recommendations and questions in regards to the next steps in the design process are as follows:



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# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

## Program Design

- ***Things to consider for the design process***
  - ***The community's right to be an active self-determining agent in the design process.***
  - ***The community should also be a partner in ongoing assessment and evaluation as an integral part of the design process.***
  - ***Work to develop a process that balances priorities with a structure that emphasizes interactions based on cultural values i.e. Kujichagulia(self-determination), Ujima(collective work and responsibility), respect for elders(i.e asking permission from an elder to open a meeting), pouring of libation, ancestral acknowledgments.***
  - ***Develop awareness training for TAC staff that many people of African descent have been removed from these understandings through their experience of colonialism.***
  - ***We should think less about priorities and more about structures***
- ***Who should be involved in designing the process?***
  - ***Consult with Black artists and organizations, have a panel, let us brainstorm collectively to design what this support would be.***
  - ***Have the people designing this be Black people, and not just artists that fit traditional categories, but change makers, activists, innovators, mentors, young people, past grant recipients (across TAC/OAC/CAC).***

### **Additional Design Questions and Feedback**

- Is the idea of a program manager required?
- How much control is TAC willing to give up to the community in a co-design model?
- What can we learn from the current efforts of community co-design within other TAC initiatives?
- How is mutual accountability addressed in a co-design model?
- Who participates in a co-design model and how are they selected?

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## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

There were a number of critical points that repeatedly emerged from conversations regarding the design and implementation of this program. The first being a need for increased mentorship opportunities to be an integral part of this program and the other being the opportunity presented to TAC in rethinking resource redistribution in a way that is more radical in answering the question “Is this the best we can do right now?”

“87% of survey respondents stated that they would like TAC to connect Black artists and organizations to more mentorship opportunities as a direct part of the Black Arts Funding Program. Mentorship plays a significant role in reducing key barriers including lack of knowledge or understanding on how to navigate the funding system, providing direct support to those who are overwhelmed, unsure or intimidated by the granting bodies and their systems and providing direct support in program/project planning, feedback and editing on grant applications.

Mentorship opportunities included ideas such as:

- Emerging artists receiving mentorship from established artists
- Less tech savvy artists receiving mentorship from artists who are stronger in navigating and understanding the granting portal
- CADAC training and preparation for Black orgs/groups who are seeking operational funding Experts in fields like marketing, audience development, fundraising, etc being connected to Black arts organizations, collectives and individuals

Funding for projects is essential for Black artists and arts organizations to be able to create and operate, however mentorship allows for these artists and organizations to build and thrive beyond initial funding from TAC. Mentorship encourages growth, fosters a deeper connection to TAC and demonstrates a real step in shifting what it means to do real systems change work as a funder.

As TAC continues to see itself as a leader in shifting the role of a funding body for the betterment of those most marginalized within the arts community, the opportunity to think about a general reshifting of the 2021 TAC budget to reflect a real move towards significantly disrupting the status quo is the chance for TAC to be bold in its leadership and truly platform the statements within its own Equity Framework.

TAC should consider the historical impact and funding gap Black artists have endured and the legacy of those gaps on the way the present day arts scene has developed. Black artists and arts organizations continue to be on the fringes of the major arts scene, despite heavily contributing to many of the contemporary and modern forms of arts practice, especially those used most heavily in popular culture. With this in mind, TAC should consider the following key recommendations when re-thinking its future operating budgets and re organizing its infrastructure to make real impact to today’s most pressing equity issues, anti-Black racism being one of them.

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# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

## Other Considerations

- *Embed stronger hiring requirements for your operating clients, or offer additional funds to create new positions.*
- *Hold those organizations receiving the most money more accountable for racist hiring practices and require them to seek out Black and POC applicants for major positions.*
- *Review current budget levels for all programs at TAC and redistribute program budgets in a way that prioritizes and abundantly supports groups that are most affected by equity issues (Black artists, Indigenous Artists and Artists of Color with intersectionalities within their identities)*
- *Develop minimum funding requirements within ALL programs at the TAC that ensure that at least 50% of applicants funded come from high priority groups (at least 25% for operating grants)*
- *Ensure adequate funds are allocated for outreach positions and paid mentorship roles*
- *Restructure TAC's website as virtual arts hub space where artists can connect to funding opportunities, networks of Black artists, mentorship supports, etc. (Transform TAC into a community arts hub as opposed to an institutional funder)*

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**Additional Comments from Respondents:**

- Removing the opportunity for white centred companies to use us as minority clout to get approved funding. It's repulsive and in every company that I have been part of that quota, I have been treated sub par and as literal stage hands.
- More funding for black organizations and artists to put out experimental work that doesn't not have to be solely related to being the black experience or cultural differences. We need more black artists making the art about what they want to make and getting funding for it and not feeling like we have to talk about slavery or racism in our work to get those grants
- Please consider that there are several diasporas within the black arts community in Toronto.
- Looking at how to support art projects that are inclusive and follow a non-traditional format that is culturally relevant. Looking at how projects are funded are or are not inclusive to the communities they represent and cater to.
- Have more black folks adjudicate the applications. Put us in a position to make decisions for your organization if you really want us to prosper. Hire us.
- Establish various grants for Black artists with various disabilities, Black artists with mental health, Black Deaf/hard of hearing artists, and Black senior artists.
- Historically Black run organizations and artists have been shut out of funding. There should be a windfall provided for Black artists that have previously applied and not received funding. This should be posited as go and create!
- TAC needs to embrace changes to its organizations - hiring of staff and leadership approaches, its values regarding 'professionalism' in the arts, and how it chooses jurors and prepares those juries to judge artists. It has an opportunity through jury education to impact how Black artists and artworks are viewed by white and other artists. The exclusion of racialized and Black artists has been happening for a long time. It is truly a shame that it has taken the TAC this long to consider setting a strategy and embracing a role that is more invested in artists in the Black community. For our intellectual property regarding consulting on your behalf - will the 'consultants' be paid?
- Quarterly applications for grants for black writers, and other artists. We aren't encouraged and I can't even tell you more than 1 well known black author who's not writing about some 'super black' storyline & not just a good solid story. Being black is great but being treated like other writers would be great and not just black writers
- Stop making "viability" an important consideration. Almost nothing is "viable" where it has not been given the opportunity to exist before.
- Ensure arts programming is eligible because the value of certain art forms is understood from our early interactions and observations. If cultural art always exists in multipurpose rooms while mainstream art forms are experienced in professional rehearsal spaces, it reiterates the marginalization.
- More grant writing workshops. A web page where all available grants can be listed with respective deadlines and their corresponding 'workshop' that will address/support the application process relevant to each grant upcoming becoming available.
- Building trust within the community is essential. So many Black artists and organizations have felt shut out for too long - program support, feedback and evaluation need to be transparent and equitable
- A contingency program for applicants who are not granted funding, focused on developing the artist's understanding of the criteria. The intention is to improve their chances in the future and/or equip them with the information and resources that will put them in position to no longer need funding in part or at all moving forward, rather than being back where they started after an unsuccessful application.

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**Additional Comments from Respondents:**

- I would like to reiterate that as it stands, Toronto Arts Council (outside of ArtReach) has little understanding of the anti-Blackness this city casually perpetuates onto its Black residents. If funding is to be distributed, if mentorship and resources are to be extended, there must be Black oversight over this council so that both explicit and implicit anti-Blackness may be identified and snuffed out. Much of this city's artistic identity is drawn from our energy. It should not be up to those who do not understand us to then delegate who should be doing what work.
- Earnings matching.

## CONCLUSION

As presented earlier in the project overview, TAC has acknowledged that the resources allocated to this initial effort cannot in and of itself bring about systemic change for the Black Arts community. However, this new granting stream can be the beginning of opening the way to dismantling outdated practices that have restricted the growth and development of Black artists in Toronto. It is the opportune time for TAC to seize the moment and step into a bold leadership role as a model of sincerity and commitment to social justice to the broader arts community.

TAC should consider this Black Arts funding stream as an essential starting point on a deeper journey to engage, support and champion Black artists and arts organizations in the City. The most important consideration however is that TAC consider starting with a larger amount of funds, as at least 90% of focus group participants responded that \$300,000 was not enough money to make real significant change or convince the Black arts community that sustainable change within TAC was actually going to occur.



## APPENDIX A - KEY STATISTICAL FINDINGS

### Total Survey Respondents

**162**

### Length of Time Working in the Arts

**0-2 Years - 3.7%**

**2-5 Years - 22.22%**

**5-9 Years - 26.54%**

**10+ Years - 47.53%**

### Artist/Arts Worker Representation

**75.31% completed the survey as an Independent Artist**

**12.69% completed the survey as an Independent Arts  
Worker**

**11.73% completed the survey as an Arts Worker on  
Behalf of an Organization**

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## APPENDIX A - KEY STATISTICAL FINDINGS

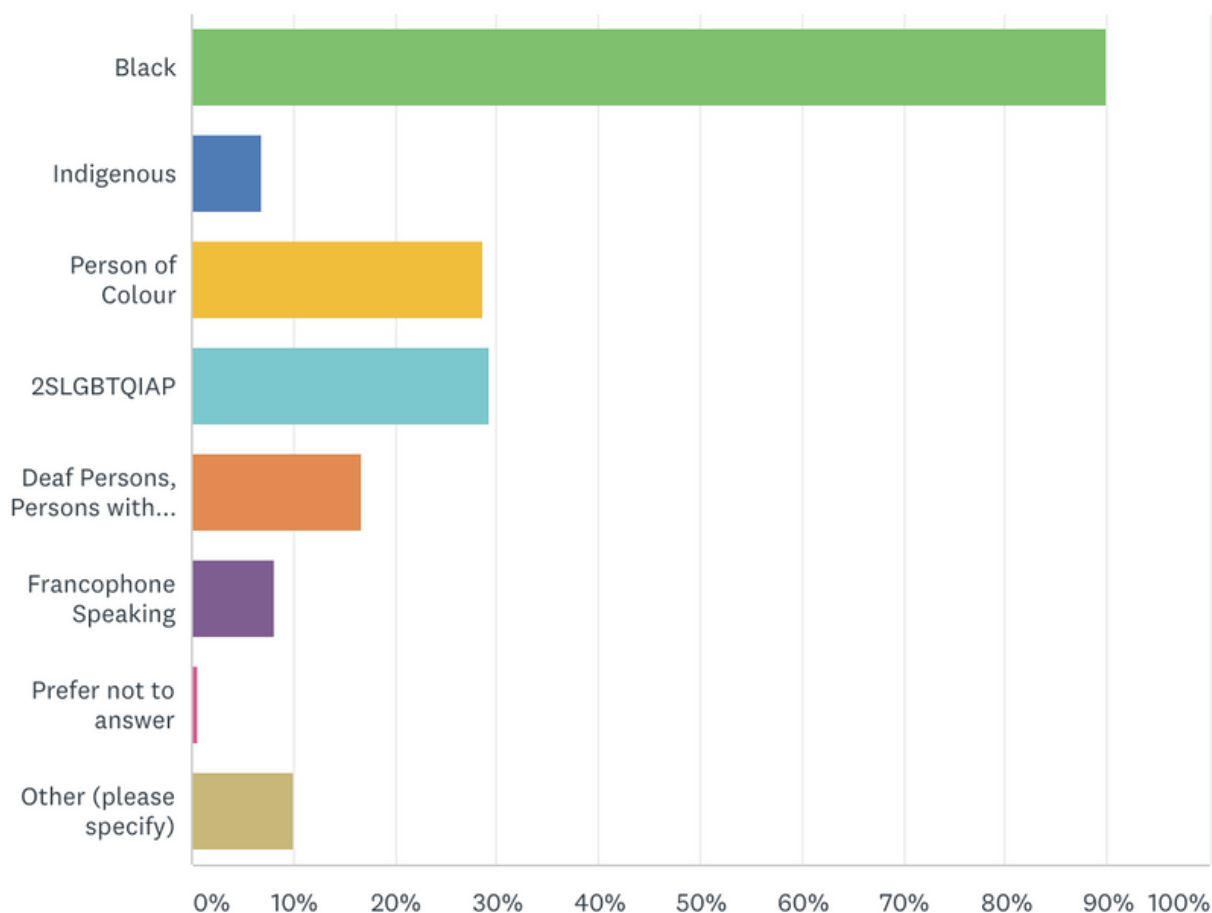
### Organizations that participated in the survey include:

- Arts Fellowship of Canada
- My Mentor Said
- PREMPZWEDNESDAYS
- Black Speculative Arts Movement Canada Institute (BSAMCI)
- Heritage Skills Development Centre ( HSDC)
- Ulysses De Paula
- Neilson Park Creative Centre
- Black Artists' Networks in Dialogue
- Stolen From Africa
- Oya Media Group
- Dance Immersion
- AMY Project
- Cahoots Theatre Company
- LUA SHAYENNE DANCE COMPANY
- D'LYFE DANCE COMPANY
- Coco Collective
- Freedom School
- Girl Power'D
- Emergence Music Distribution
- NWYE, inc.
- Crossfield house productions
- Debbie Deer Productions
- 1983
- Blue Daisy Consulting
- The UnObscured Community
- Ideas Love Life
- Regent Park Film Festival
- PIECE OF MINE Arts
- The Futurist

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## APPENDIX A - KEY STATISTICAL FINDINGS

### How Respondents Self Identified (Including identities that intersected with Blackness)



**Notes:**

In the above graph "2SLGBTQIAP" refers to individuals who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, intersex, asexual, pansexual or two-spirited.

"Deaf Persons, Persons with..." refers to Deaf Persons, Persons with Disabilities and Persons Living with Mental Illness

## APPENDIX A - KEY STATISTICAL FINDINGS

### Accessibility of Toronto Arts Council to the Black Arts Community

	Number of Respondents who feel the Toronto Arts Council was accessible to them personally	Number of Black Artists who feel the Toronto Arts Council is accessible to the Black Arts Community as a whole
Not Accessible	27.95%	33.33%
Somewhat Accessible	57.14%	59.88%
Accessible	13.04%	11.11%
Very Accessible	4.97%	2.47%

### Funding Received by Black Artists/Workers/Organizations that responded to this survey:

32.72% of respondents have received TAC Project Funding

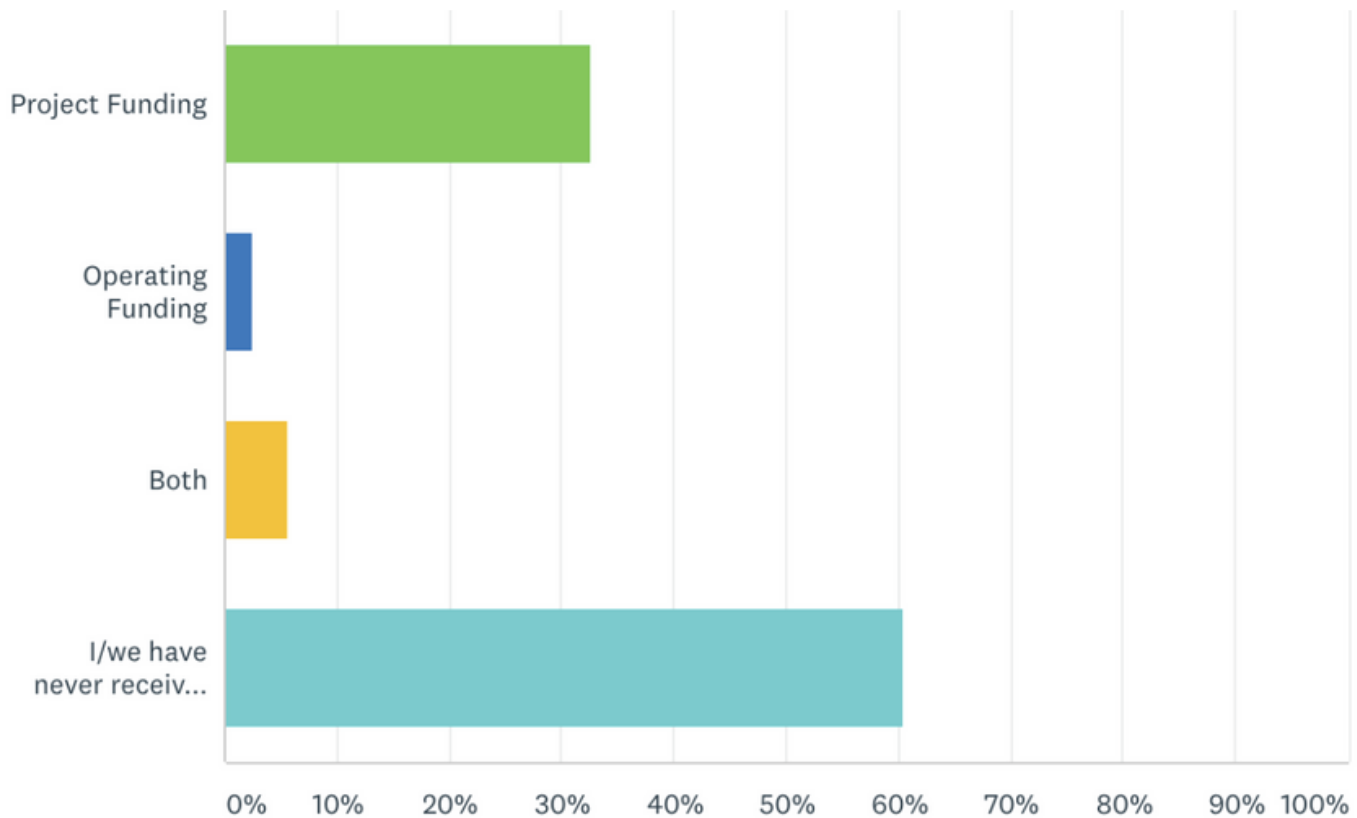
2.47% of respondents have received TAC Operational Funding

5.56% of respondents have received both TAC Operational and Project Funding

## 60.49%

**of respondents have never received funding from TAC**

## APPENDIX A - KEY STATISTICAL FINDINGS



### The Need for a TAC Black Arts Funding Stream

**90.47%** of respondents agreed that TAC should create a new grants program specifically for Black Artists and Black Arts Organizations

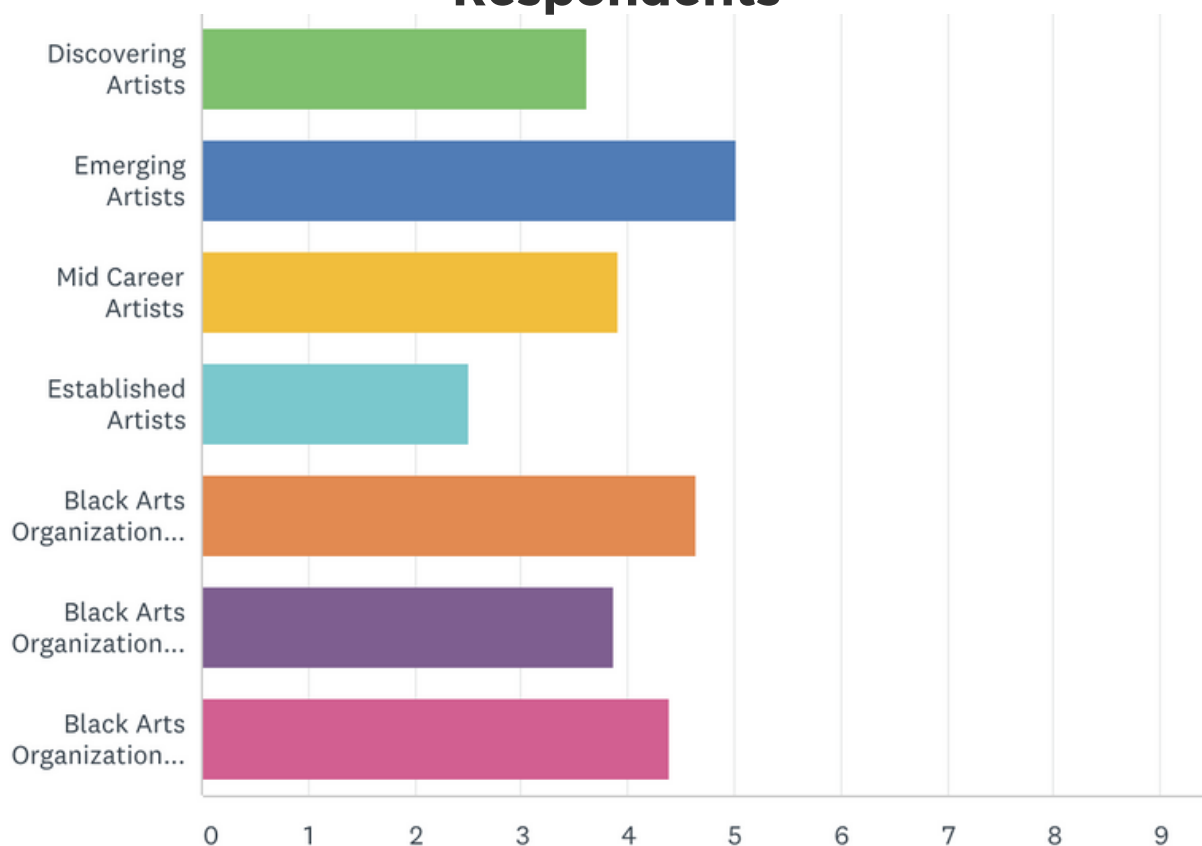
**3.70%** of respondents agreed that TAC should **not** create a new grants program specifically for Black Artists and Black Arts Organizations

**5.56%** of respondents were not sure that TAC should create a new grants program specifically for Black Artists and Black Arts Organizations



## APPENDIX A - KEY STATISTICAL FINDINGS

### Prioritization of Black Arts Funding according to Survey Respondents

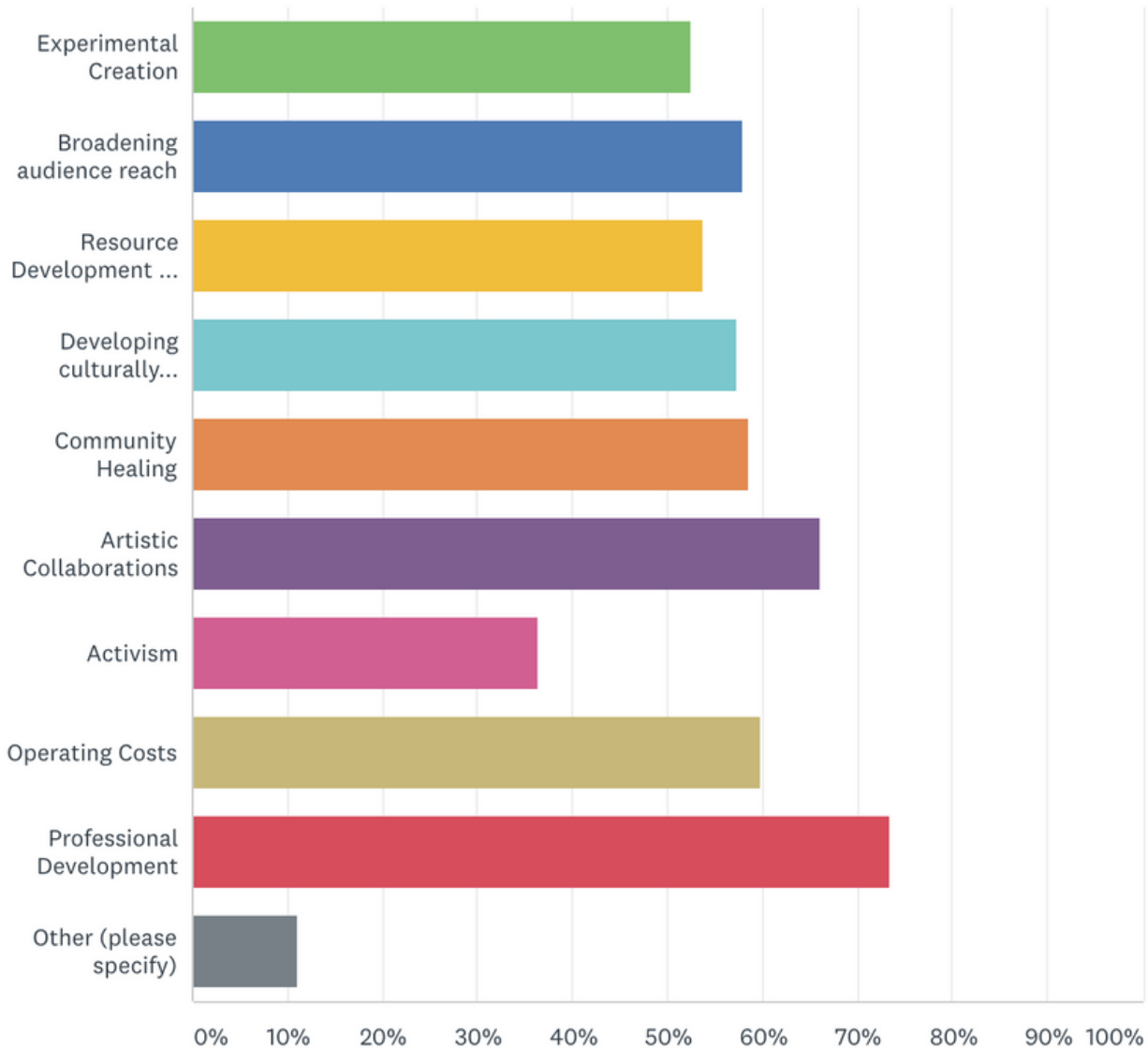


**Priority for these funds should be directed in the following order:**

- 1. Project Funds for Emerging Artist**
- 2. Core Funding for Black Arts Organizations**
- 3. Mentorship or Professional Development Funds for Black Arts Organizations**
- 4. Project Funds for Mid Career Artist**
- 5. Project Funds for Black Arts Organizations**
- 6. Project Funds for Discovering Artists**
- 7. Project Funds for Established Artists**

# APPENDIX A - KEY STATISTICAL FINDINGS

## Activities the Black Arts Fund should support



## APPENDIX A - KEY STATISTICAL FINDINGS

### Activities the Black Arts Fund should support

Experimental Creation		52.47%	85
Broadening audience reach		58.02%	94
Resource Development and Fundraising		53.70%	87
Developing culturally focused expressions		57.41%	93
Community Healing		58.64%	95
Artistic Collaborations		66.05%	107
Activism		36.42%	59
Operating Costs		59.88%	97
Professional Development		73.46%	119
Other (please specify)	Responses	11.11%	18

### Additional Supports that respondents would like to see offered by TAC to the Black Arts Community through this program:

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES
More grant writing workshops by TAC staff in the community		62.35% 101
TAC connecting Black Artists/Arts Orgs with Mentors		87.04% 141
Post Grant Feedback Sessions		66.67% 108
Other (please specify)	Responses	26.54% 43

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## APPENDIX A - KEY STATISTICAL FINDINGS

### **Black Arts Forms that not currently supported or under prioritized in other TAC streams include:**

- PODCASTING OR ANYTHING
- ORAL STORYTELLING
- SPOKEN WORD/DUB POETRY
- AFRO DANCING
- MULTI-DISCIPLINARY FORMS WHICH GROW OF THE AFRO-DIASPORIC TRADITION AND HISTORICAL ARTS PRACTICES.
- AFROFUTURISM, MONUMENTS AS TECHNOFOSSILS, 3D PRINTING, ACTIVISM, PROTESTS/PROTEST AS AN ART AND COMMUNITY ART FORM,
- PLACEMAKING
- ART MUSIC LIKE JAZZ AND CLASSICAL WITH BLACK COMPOSERS AND PRODUCERS/BANDLEADERS
- DIGITAL, SOUND ART, MIXED MEDIA AND MULTI-MEDIA ARTS
- COSPLAY OR MASQUERADE
- YOUTH LED VISUAL ART
- YOUTH DIRECTED THEATRE
- PAINTING AND AFRICAN SCULPTURE INITIATIVE.
- ACTIVIST ART
- AFROBEAT MUSIC
- DESIGN AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT
- FASHION
- WEAVE & WIG-MAKING
- TORONTO GRUNGE MUSIC
- ART SURROUNDING FINANCIAL EDUCATION
- MY COMMUNITY NEEDS A LOT OF HEALING, I THINK MORE PROJECTS THAT PROMOTE WELLNESS AND HEALING MAYBE.
- FILM
- PROFESSIONAL DEVPT FOR BLACK ARTS ADMINISTRATORS/ARTS WORKERS
- DJ ARTS
- CARNIVAL ARTS/CARIBBEAN FOLK ART
- BLACK CONTEMPORARY ART
- BLACK BURLESQUE
- TOURING FOR BLACK ARTISTS
- COMEDY
- MORE CURATORIAL PROJECTS FOR BLACK ART

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## APPENDIX A - KEY STATISTICAL FINDINGS

### **Black Arts Forms that not currently supported or under prioritized in other TAC streams include:**

- SEWING/CRAFT/TEXTILE
- ANIMATION WRITERS, GRAPHIC NOVEL ARTISTS, SCREENWRITERS
- INDEPENDENT RECORD LABELS AND BLACK MUSIC MANAGERS
- MULTIDISCIPLINARY COLLECTIVES, ART & HEALING INITIATIVES
- BLACK WOMEN IN FILM
- AFRICAN/AFRO-FUSION MUSIC PROJECTS AND OR COLLABORATIONS
- INTERDISCIPLINARY AND CONTEMPORARY EXPLORATIONS.
- EVENT CURATION
- ARTS-BASED RESEARCH; KNOWLEDGE CO-CREATION; CREATIVE ACTIVISM;
- GREEN ARTS/ENVIRONMENTAL ART
- MUSIC BEAT PRODUCTION
- SOCA AND DANCEHALL MUSIC

## APPENDIX A - KEY STATISTICAL FINDINGS

**TAC can promote and support Black artists and organizations in achieving their goals beyond funding in the following ways:**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Provide Artistic Mentorship Opportunities	74.69%	121
Professional Development opportunities	82.10%	133
Marketing & Audience Development support	72.84%	118
Fundraising support	63.58%	103
Offer capacity building training	55.56%	90
Other (please specify)	Responses	17.28% 28

### **Grant Assessment Criteria Prioritized Ranked in order of Importance:**

1. Project Funds for Emerging Artist
2. Impact to the Artist and/or community
3. Artistic Merit
4. Potential barriers to accessing existing funding elsewhere
5. Viability
6. Level of Artistic Experience

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## APPENDIX A - KEY STATISTICAL FINDINGS

### **Other assessment criteria that TAC should ensure that the jury consider:**

- Removing the opportunity for white centred companies to use us as minority clout to get approved funding.
- How the programs are promoted
- TAC should be doing a systemic analysis of its criteria and jury selection to ensure they do not pose barriers.
- TAC needs to consider multi-disciplinary art forms in particular for Black artists who by practice and tradition work in this form, one that is not funded by TAC and is, therefore, a systemic barrier.
- Support for collaboration.
- Mentor and pairing artists to work together make a bigger impact
- More funding for black organizations and artists to put out experimental work that doesn't not have to be solely related to being the black experience or cultural differences.
- Design for people with disability, BIPOC.
- Projects must have impact when created and residual effect if community based.
- Support art projects that are inclusive and follow a non-traditional format that is culturally relevant.
- Looking at whether projects are or are not inclusive to the communities they represent and cater to.
- I think black artists should be allowed to just create rather than only be given funds in support of the community. Community is important, but black artists also need to express and play just as white artists do in order to find their voice. The focus on community narrows opportunities for black artists to just be artists.



## APPENDIX A - KEY STATISTICAL FINDINGS

### **Other assessment criteria that TAC should ensure that the jury consider:**

- Include a way to also assess how Black inclusive projects and organizations are who are not Black-centered. For example, our literary festival usually has more Black authors (paid) than the Toronto International Festival of Authors and yet IFOA gets much more money than us and there are no extra funds or acknowledgement of Black representations. In fact, our funding has dropped over the last 3 years while the IFOA funding has increased with Toronto Lit Up.

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# REVIEWED RESOURCES

## Internal TAC Documents

- Toronto Arts Council 2019 Granting Data
- Toronto Arts Council Equity Framework Adopted 2017
- Toronto Arts Council Strategic Plan Action Plan for Implementation: Priorities. 2016
- viii CutlureForce. Final Report January 1994, Toronto Arts Council.
- ix Cultural Equity. Prepared by E.A. Julian for Toronto Arts Council. 1992
- Council consultation with Toronto's cultural sector 2013. Mass LBP 2013.
- xxii Toronto Arts Council Community Consultations Report on Findings. 2008

## External Reports

- Anti-Black Racism Analysis Tool for a Radically Equitable COVID-19 Response.
- City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, 2020
- Creating Value with Increased Investment in the Arts: Results of the City of Toronto and Toronto Arts Council consultation with Toronto's cultural sector 2013.
- Mass LBP 2013.
- The Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism. 2017
- vii Evaluation of the Impact of Increases to Cultural Grants 2012 to 2016.
- Nordicity report 2017
- xxvi Beautifulcity.ca Mandate and Use of the Btax Revenue. 2013