

Small World Music Incubator 2026

Incubator guidelines

The Small World Music Incubator is a five-month professional development program designed for newcomer, immigrant, and artists from underrepresented communities who are building their careers in the Greater Toronto Area. Artists receive industry-led hands-on professional development sessions, peer collaboration spaces, mentorship and curated showcasing and networking opportunities. The program supports artists in strengthening their artistic direction while building practical pathways into Canada's music landscape.

Many artists arrive in Canada with strong artistic foundations but limited local networks. The Incubator helps bridge that gap by offering structure, guidance, and meaningful access to the Canadian music industry.

Currently led by artists, at its core, the Incubator is grounded in peer connection, shared learning, and long-term support.

What the Incubator Offers

The Small World Music Incubator combines mentorship, skill-building, and industry access into one cohesive growth experience.

- **A Space to Grow as an Artist:** Industry guidance to help define goals, strengthen positioning, and map actionable next steps for your music career.
- **Professional Development & Mentorship:** Hands-on workshops covering music business, artistic development, and practical industry knowledge.
- **Community as Career Infrastructure:** The program is artist-centered and encourages open dialogue, shared learning, and peer exchange. It becomes an environment where artists grow alongside one another, collaborate, witness each other's process, and lift each other up.
- **Targeted Networking Access:** Facilitated introductions and connections with presenters, funders, and arts professionals within the Canadian music sector.
- **Curated Showcase Opportunities:** Performance platforms designed to increase visibility and connect artists with other artists, as well as presenters and industry professionals.

By the end of the program, artists leave with stronger positioning, expanded networks, and clearer pathways for continued growth.

Who is it for?

Are you:

- A musician or music artist actively building your path in the Canadian music industry?
- A newcomer, refugee, or artist from an underrepresented community?
- A professional artist who is new to Canada's music scene?
- Someone with a strong artistic foundation but limited local networks?
- Based in the Greater Toronto Area?
- 19 years of age or older?

The Small World Music Incubator is open to musicians and music artists with a strong foundation in their craft who are ready to intentionally grow their presence within Canada's music scene.

All music genres are welcomed (and celebrated!)

* Who is considered a professional musician:

A professional musician is someone who has developed expertise in their craft, actively engages with an audience, and presents their work with the intention of building a career. While financial compensation is a common marker of professionalism, there are other important factors that define a professional artist, their commitment to their craft, their creative growth, and the way they share their work with others.

* Who are the under-representing communities?

"Under-represented communities", include but are not limited to: IBPOC (Indigenous, Black, People of Colour), 2SLGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities (physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric, learning).

* Who is considered a newcomer?

An immigrant or refugee who has lived in Canada for less than 7 years; a refugee is a person who was forced to leave their home country and is now located in Canada.

Program Schedule & Commitment Requirements

When does the program take place?

The Small World Music Incubator runs for five months, with the 2026 edition starting in early August and concluding in mid-December.

Commitment Overview

Participants must be available for the program's three key components:

- **Orientation:** A mandatory one-day in-person introduction to the program at Small World Centre.

- **Retreat:** A mandatory three-day retreat experience outside Toronto.
- **Weekly Sessions:** Saturdays (in-person): 11 AM – 5 PM, with some exceptions (to be communicated upon selection).

Key Dates

- **Orientation:** August 8
 - **Retreat:** August 14 - 16
 - **Saturday In-Person Sessions:** Starting August 22, 2026 (specific dates and exceptions will be shared upon acceptance)
 - **Graduation showcase:** Mid December
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How do I apply?

You can find the application form on our website <https://smallworldmusic.com/incubator/>

How is my application assessed?

Applications to the Incubator Program are reviewed through a multi-step selection process to ensure fairness, transparency, and alignment with program objectives.

- After the application deadline, all submissions undergo an internal review to verify eligibility based on funding requirements, including immigration status and equity considerations.
- Eligible applications are then forwarded to a jury panel of industry professionals and artists, who assess the submissions using program criteria.

How do I find out the application results?

Selected applicants will be contacted via email and phone between in mid June, 2026 to confirm participation and review contract details. A buffer period allows for final confirmations and any last-minute cancellations. The final confirmed participant list will be completed by the end of June.

Selected applicants will receive a Letter of Understanding that will detail the terms and conditions of the program and commitment requirements. It must be signed and returned to the program coordinators.

More questions? Contact Program Leads

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