# The Seed Fund for Creative Entrepreneurs

## 2026-2027 Application Instructions

**DESCRIPTION OF THE OPPORTUNITY**

***The Seed Fund for Creative Entrepreneurs*** is an exclusive opportunity for OCAD U students and recent alumni to receive funding to help launch or grow their creative business.

We support creative businesses in all the possible forms they can take. Recipients will be awarded funding to help launch or grow their business.

**Awards:**

- First Place will receive **$5,000**
- Second Place will receive **$3,500**
- Third Place will receive **$2,500**
- A business with a connection to Brampton will be eligible for the **Brampton Arts Organization Prize** and receive **$2,000**
- A social enterprise will be eligible for the **Ample Labs Prize** and receive **$1,000**
- Applicants who identify as neurodivergent may be eligible for one of the **TD Access to Enterprise Awards**

**Format of the Seed Fund & Important Dates**

The Seed Fund for Creative Entrepreneurs is a multi-staged mentorship-focused funding program where finalists participate in a half-day, in-person roundtable mentorship session to ask questions, receive guidance, and refine their business plans.
Applications will be reviewed by an expert jury, and finalists will be selected to participate in mentorship before resubmitting their business plans for final review.
The timeline for each stage of this opportunity is:

- Virtual Application Information Session – **Tuesday, November 10, 2026, at 1:30 PM EST**
- In-Person Information Session – **Thursday, November 19, 2026, from 1:00 PM–2:00 PM**
- Application Clinics (In Person) – **Friday, December 11 and Friday, December 18, 2026, from 10:00 AM–3:00 PM. RSVP Required**
- Applications consisting of a business plan close on **Monday, January 11, 2027, at 9:00 AM EST**
- Up to 10 finalists will be selected by an external jury to attend a half-day in-person roundtable mentorship session at the CEAD (115 McCaul Street, 3rd Floor) to refine their business ideas during Winter Break on **Thursday, February 18, 2027, from 1:00 PM–5:00 PM**
- Finalists submit their revised business plans to the jury on **Monday, March 8, 2027, at 9:00 AM EST**
- Winners notified in **early April 2027**

For additional support, book a one-on-one session through the Talent Network, attend an information session, or email us at entrepreneurship@ocadu.ca.

**Eligibility:**

To be eligible for this opportunity, you must be:

- A current OCAD U student, or a recent alumnus from any program of study who graduated in **2024 or later**

- If your business idea involves personnel from outside OCAD U, one founder must meet the above eligibility requirement
- Your idea or business has not yet received more than **$10,000 in funding or revenue** at the time of application
- To the best of your ability, be available for the half-day mentorship session taking place on **Thursday, February 18, 2027, from 1:00 PM–5:00 PM EST**. Alternative accommodations can be made with advanced notice.
- Applicants who have not yet received funding from the Seed Fund may be prioritized

* Not sure whether your project qualifies? Email entrepreneurship@ocadu.ca with the subject line "*Seed Fund Eligibility Question."*

**SUBMISSION DETAILS**

This document provides an overview of the questions included in the Seed Fund application so that you can prepare your responses in advance.

When you're ready to apply, submit your application through the online form linked below. Because responses cannot be saved in progress, we strongly recommend preparing answers in a separate document before beginning the application.

**A COMPLETE APPLICATION CONSISTS OF:**

**Applicant Details**

- Full name and contact information
- Confirmation that you meet the eligibility requirements
- (Optional) Business name
- (Optional) Business website
- Your role in the business and the names of any co-founders
- (Optional) Voluntary self-identification as part of one or more equity-deserving communities
- (Optional) Voluntary self-identification for the TD Neurodivergent Awards
- Anticipated legal business structure

**Business Description** (1500 characters maximum)
Describe your business idea, including:
- What you do and how you do it
- Your advantage in realizing this idea
- Validation or traction achieved so far
- Where you hope to take the business in the future

**Progress & Challenges** (1000 characters maximum)
Describe:
- Successes or milestones achieved to date
- Challenges you face in realizing your idea
- How you are working to overcome these challenges

**Customer Segment (1000 characters maximum)**
Describe at least one customer segment, including:
- Demographics
- Mindset

- Needs and wants
- How they would engage with your business

**Marketing & Customer Acquisition (1000 characters maximum)**
Describe the channels you will use to:
- Reach customers
- Build awareness
- Convert customers
- Maintain ongoing engagement

**Business Model & Sustainability (1000 characters maximum)**
Describe how you plan to balance business costs and revenue, including:
- Pricing strategy
- Revenue model
- Key startup costs
- Your approach to long-term sustainability

You do not need to provide exact financial projections.

**Next Milestones (1000 characters maximum)**
Describe three milestones that will move your business to the next stage.
For each milestone include:
- Target timeline
- Two or three tangible actions required to achieve it.

**Brampton Arts Organization Prize (Optional, 1000 characters maximum)**
If you or your co-founders have a connection to Brampton, you may be eligible for the Brampton Arts Organization Prize.

Please describe:
- Your connection to Brampton
- Whether your business is based in Brampton
- Whether your business serves or benefits the Brampton community
- A connection may include living, working, studying, having family in Brampton, or operating a business that serves the community.

**Ample Labs Prize (Optional, 1000 characters maximum)**
If your business addresses a social problem, describe:
- The social issue being addressed
- Why this issue matters
- How your business creates positive impact

Organizations addressing social challenges may be eligible for the Ample Labs Prize.

**Access to Enterprise Awards (Optional, 1000 characters maximum)**
- How being neurodivergent has influenced your approach to entrepreneurship, creative practice, or business development
- Strengths, perspectives, or approaches that shape your work
- How Seed Fund support would help advance your business goals

Applicants are not required to disclose medical information, diagnoses, or documentation. Access to Enterprise is generously supported by TD Bank Group.

**SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

Submit your application at: https://ocadu-cead.typeform.com/Seedfund2026-27

Applications must be received no later than: **Monday, January 11, 2027 at 9:00 AM EST**

Late applications cannot be accepted.

For application support or advising: Book an appointment via the Talent network, RSVP to the application clinics or write to **entrepreneurship@ocadu.ca**

**Inclusivity Statement:**

OCAD U is committed to promoting access to this opportunity for equity-deserving groups that are underrepresented as creative entrepreneurs.
We encourage applications from individuals of equity-deserving communities including racialized and Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, neurodivergent individuals, and persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities/expressions.
Applicants are invited to voluntarily self-identify with any of these communities in their application.

**ABOUT THE AMPLE LABS PRIZE**
The ***Ample Labs Prize*** is part of an endowed gift provided by OCAD U alumni and Ample Labs co-founders CG Chen and Geordie Graham. The prize supports students and recent alumni who want to launch a company tackling a social problem. **Ample Labs** is a social start-up using AI & Data to help cities prevent homelessness.

**ABOUT Access to Enterprise Awards by TD Group AWARDS**
If you identify as neurodivergent and would like to be considered for the Access to Enterprise Awards, describe how being neurodivergent has influenced your approach to entrepreneurship, creative practice or business development, the strengths, perspectives or approaches that shape your work, and how Seed Fund support would help advance your business goals.

Award recipients will be selected from among eligible applicants through the Seed Fund review process. Eligibility is based on voluntary self-identification. Applicants are not required to provide medical documentation.

**ABOUT THE BRAMPTON ARTS ORGANIZATION PRIZE**
The ***Brampton Arts Organization Prize*** supports a creative business that has a connection to Brampton.

The Brampton Arts Organization (BAO) is a non-profit that champions Brampton's diverse arts, culture and creative industries and advocates for the Brampton Artists. They work to build a thriving, confident, valued, and empowered creative scene by offering a range of programs, services, and resources.

**OCAD U CONTACT**
**Andrea Rodriguez**
Program Lead, Creative Entrepreneurship,
RBC Centre for Emerging Artists & Designers (CEAD)
OCAD University
E: entrepreneurship@ocadu.ca
W: www.ocadu.ca/cead