

CILT's Canvas: Envisioning Our Values

Commissioned Artwork

Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT)

Call Type: Commission (paid)

Application deadline: Friday May 8, 2026

1) Overview

The Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) is a consumer-controlled, community-based resource organization dedicated to supporting people with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in their communities. Grounded in the principles of the Independent Living (IL) movement, CILT is *“for persons with a disability... by persons with a disability.”*

This year marks an important milestone as we completed our new 2026–2031 strategic plan. Ahead of its full unveiling, we are commissioning a work of art to celebrate the values that will guide us into this next chapter. The artwork will be created through an engagement process that centres lived experience and storytelling from CILT staff, to generate rich imagery and themes for the artist to interpret. We are seeking a Deaf/disabled artist who is excited to translate values into a visual piece that is symbolic/metaphoric (rather than word-heavy) and that can be used primarily as a print for CILT's office reception, a showcase on our website, and future communications uses to be determined.

2) Who should apply

CILT encourages submissions from artists with lived experience of disability and other equity-deserving groups, and who live in Toronto/GTA or can travel to CILT's office (365 Bloor Street East in Toronto) for at least two in-person storytelling sessions. We are especially interested in artists who:

- Are open to, or have experience with, an organizational commission where the source material comes from staff stories and a values-based process.
- Can work collaboratively with a small reference group of about 4-5 staff for feedback without losing artistic independence.

3) Scope of work

The selected artist will:

1. Participate in an onboarding/kickoff conversation with CILT.
2. Attend 3 small-group (up to 15 staff per group) storytelling sessions led by a facilitator, approx. 1.5 hours each.

- a. The sessions are designed to gather stories of how CILT values show up in real life and work (not a discussion to define values).
 - b. Ideally 2 sessions will be in-person at CILT's office, and 1 session will be virtual; alternate arrangements can be discussed.
3. Develop initial concepts to share with a staff reference group (4-5 staff) for feedback.
4. Produce the final artwork that is suitable for digitizing.

4) Deliverables

- One completed original artwork, to be finalized with the selected artist.
 - While the medium/format is somewhat flexible, we are seeking a 2-dimensional piece such as a painting, drawing, or collage, rather than a 3D piece like a sculpture.
 - The artwork must be suitable for digitizing, which will be used for website/social publication and/or high-quality printing (e.g., communications materials, office reception display).
- Short artist statement in plain language, describing the piece and its connection to the values/story process.

5) Rights & permitted use

CILT requires perpetual (indefinite) rights to use the artwork image and reproductions for CILT purposes, including posting on CILT platforms (website/social), producing prints for CILT spaces, and using the image in CILT communications.

CILT plans to capture behind-the-scenes content for communications purposes during the project, and the artist will be asked to sign a photo/video/audio release form.

6) Timeline

- Call opens: Tuesday April 22, 2026
- Deadline to apply: Friday May 8, 2026
- Shortlist interviews: week of May 18th
- Artist selected and agreement signed: week of May 25th
- Story sessions: June/July (exact dates to be determined with selected artist and facilitator)
- Concept review(s): June/July
- Production: July/August
- Final piece delivered: early/mid-September
- Unveiling: Sept 25, 2026 (AGM)

7) How to apply

Please submit your application in written, audio or video format unless otherwise noted.

To apply, please submit the following:

1. **Portfolio link** (website/Instagram/drive folder) **OR** up to 5 images of recent work;
2. **Short statement** (max ~250–500 words) about:
 - Why this commission interests you
 - How your practice connects to independent living / values-based work / community (as relevant);
3. **Brief bio or CV** (or link);
4. **Commission fee**, including what the fee includes and/or excludes (e.g., time, materials, travel, etc.) and payment schedule;
5. **Note how you would approach developing an art concept/piece** in collaboration with CILT’s staff reference group and/or whether you have experience with commissions (experience with commissions is not required).

CILT is committed to providing accommodations throughout the application and commissioning process in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Ontario Human Rights Code. If you require accommodations to participate in this open call — including accessible formats, alternative submission methods, or communication supports — please contact cilt@cilt.ca.

8) Selection process

CILT will review submissions using a small selection group and may invite shortlisted applicants to a short interview. Shortlisted artists may be asked about their process for working from lived stories and values source material.

Submissions will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Alignment with the purpose (values-based, Independent Living spirit);
- Strength/quality of portfolio and alignment with the commission;
- Ability to work from story-based source material and iterate based on feedback;
- Ability to deliver by the target date, and;
- Willingness to provide support such as, collaborating on alt text, website descriptions, etc.

9) Contact + submission details

- Submit to: cilt@cilt.ca
- Subject line: “CILT’s Canvas: Envisioning Our Values—[Artist Name]”
- Questions: cilt@cilt.ca

- Deadline: Friday May 8, 2025, 5 PM EST

A.I. usage

Drawing from the Canada Council for the Arts' Guidance on AI in Grant Applications, CILT encourages thoughtful and transparent engagement with AI tools where they support fairness, reduce barriers to participation, and respect human creativity.

All visual components must be the product of the artist's own creative labour.

Applicants must disclose all use of AI tools at any stage of the project.

Please reach out if you would like more information on our A. I. usage guidelines.