

# Pillar Sponsorship FAQs

## Application Basics:

- 1. Where can I get more details about the program?**
  - See the Call for Proposals webpage for all details. Please read all posted details prior to applying.
- 2. Which kind of community impact stories are the most competitive?**
  - At a high level, we're seeking tangible, emotive, and inspiring stories of impact on the U of T community and beyond. You'll also see in the application itself a number of helpful questions to help tease out the compelling aspects of a story.
- 3. When does Pillar sponsored programming take place?**
  - To be eligible, sponsored programming is to take place in the calendar year ahead, rather than the academic year.
- 4. Is EDI a mandatory part of an eligible initiative?**
  - Encouraging Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is certainly of value and bolsters an application, but it is not a requirement.
- 5. Who manages the Pillar Sponsorship program?**
  - The Division of University Advancement, Alumni Relations, alongside our longstanding affinity partner sponsors, Manulife and TD Insurance.
- 6. If approved, must you proceed with the sponsorship agreement?**
  - If approved, you will be notified by email and given a few days to accept the sponsorship agreement via an online enrolment form. If upon review, you and your group do not wish to proceed with sponsorship, you may decline.

## Application Support:

- 1. What if I have questions about the application?**
  - Support is available by email, please reach out to [pillar.sponsorship@utoronto.ca](mailto:pillar.sponsorship@utoronto.ca) with any specific questions. Note that we cannot support application strategy, nor review a draft application, as this is a competitive process.
- 2. What if I have questions at the last minute before the deadline?**
  - We cannot guarantee a response to all inquiries due to volume. We recommend planning to draft and complete your proposal early so that there is sufficient time to get your questions answered by us or by others on your team.

## New Applicants:

- 1. Can my group submit a new initiative for sponsorship?**
  - Yes, each year is a new application process with a mix of new and returning applicants. It's a competitive program for approximately twenty spots, so you really want to put your best foot forward.
- 2. Who can apply for the sponsorship?**
  - Open to U of T alumni, students, and staff, who develop projects, events or initiatives which add value to alumni and students in the University community and embody the sponsor values laid out by our affinity partners (see *Sponsor Specific Criteria* section on the Call for Proposals webpage). Programs should be

non-academic in nature, with program focus in Canada, and take place between January 1 and December 31 of the upcoming year.

**3. How long does the application take to fill out?**

- This may take a couple hours, faster for a returning applicant perhaps. We don't recommend it to be done in one sitting, rather start a draft and come back to it later. The application has a save-and-continue feature built-in that you can enable to give yourself more time and peace of mind. The application has features to help you like real-time word counts, example responses, and an option to include attachments.

**4. How does this differ from a grant?**

- Unlike a grant, whereas effort is in applying with no strings attached, the sponsorship funding is an arrangement whereas funding is provided in exchange for delivery of sponsorship marketing within an initiative with community impact.

**Returning Applicants:**

**1. My initiative was approved last year, do I still need to apply now?**

- Yes, each year is a new application process. It's a competitive program for approximately twenty spots, so you really want to put your best foot forward. Past approval is not a guarantee of future approval.

**2. Are there any steps to take before applying?**

- Current year returning applicants must have submitted their interim or final report before applying in order to be considered for the Pillar Program once again. This report provides the sponsors with information about your community impact and the promotional opportunities your project delivered.

**Application Drafting:**

**1. How can I review my submission with others prior to submission?**

- We've provided a means to output a PDF of your application draft to help sharing the draft with others for review (see the last page of the online application). Additionally, you could share your save-and-continue link with someone else on your team, however multiple simultaneous logins are not supported.

**2. How can I draft my application?**

- We provide a PDF reference of all questions to help applicants prepare to apply (see link on first page of application). Once you're ready, the application must be filled out online. The application has a built-in save-and-continue feature which you must enable yourself – to activate this feature, see bar at bottom of any page of the online application).

**3. What if I miss the application deadline?**

- Only applications submitted by the posted deadline will be considered.

**Application Terminology:**

**1. What is sponsorship marketing?**

- The application will ask you to list all online and offline communication tactics, referred to as "ads". For example, you might have social media posts, website features, brochures, speech remarks, event banners, swag, e-newsletters, etc. Any tactic can count as an impression if it shows the sponsors names or logos.

One specific requirement is to plan at least one social post to include the affinity link (<http://affinity.utoronto.ca>).

**2. What are impressions?**

- Impressions are defined as a count of all views of an "ad" and allowing repeat views by the same person. Need not be actively engaged nor attendees; they could be email subscribers, web visitors, pedestrians seeing an outdoor banner, etc.

**3. Who are the sponsors?**

- Our sponsors are the two U of T Affinity Partners. The University of Toronto has long-standing affinity relationships with **Manulife** and **TD Insurance**. Our affinity partners offer U of T alumni preferred rates on competitive insurance packages and give a portion of proceeds from these services to support a range of diverse and valuable initiatives each year. [See all affinity products.](#)

**4. What are sponsor values?**

- Each of our sponsors has defined four distinct corporate values. Part of the application form will ask you to select one value of each sponsor which most closely aligns with your proposed initiative and then to explain the connection further (see *Sponsor Specific Criteria* section on the Call for Proposals webpage).